The Filmic House in Hindi Cinema: Explorations of Lived Space in the Cinematic Representations of Domestic Architecture

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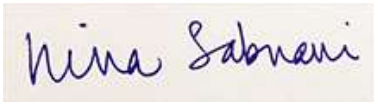

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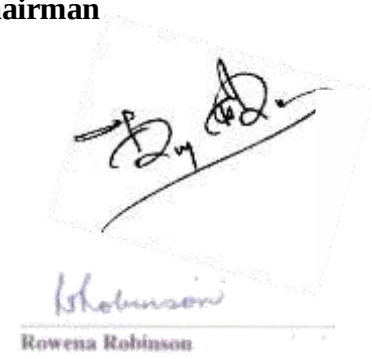

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Abstract

This dissertation aims to study the 'Filmic House' in Hindi cinema, a popular cultural medium, from an architectural standpoint by a systematic exploration of its architectural space. The domestic space is a most common cinematic image in cinema. In many cases, it forms the principal setting and displays distinctive characteristics. 'Filmic House' is defined as domestic space rendered in a film. It is conceptualised as a filmic space containing characters and their actions; a social space charged with narrativity; a lived space framing situation of urban domestic life that produces and communicates meanings in a film. The cinematic representation of domestic space forms mental archives of experience, memory, dreams and imagination. In this archive, the real and the represented have an inter-play.

The thesis discusses three dominant urban architectural typologies – the bungalow, the chawl and the apartment block – by way of their filmic representations in a set of chosen films. For film analysis that foregrounds architectural space, a model has been developed – 'The Model of Filmic Dwelling' that draws upon the architecture theory of Christian Norberg-Schulz based on lived space as existential space. In the model are defined three levels of spaces corresponding with modes of dwelling – 'The House', 'The Thing', and 'Urban Geography'.

In the act of creating a discourse around films that centralise a domestic space with significant narrative function, we are able to posit a category called 'House-Films'. They are potentially a rich resource for cultural studies as well as archives of lived space, for enriching architectural histories of residential spaces (in Bombay and in India), particularly in understanding the ways in which lives are shaped within them. A rich picture emerges of the domestic realm in Hindi cinema, a subject that has eluded the attention of scholars and critics. This picture points to diversity of house forms even within a typology.

Several conclusions are drawn about the representation of domestic space in Hindi cinema: At the level of 'the House', the filmic house functions as – a backdrop for domestic action, performing its basic function of communicating the status and social class as also contributing to the visual style of the film; as a narrative space, where it gets dramatized, becomes performative, and participates in the narrative alongside other characters; or as a concept house, where the house is also a conceptual space for representation of notions related to family, society or even the nation state, functioning as a metaphor, a symbol or an allegory, to represent values or concepts other than itself.

At the level of 'the Thing', the objects within the house show usage in many manners – things in the mise-en-scene, communicating location, status and lifestyle of characters anchoring them in their existential situations; as personalized markers, where the objects are used as details, to endow the characters with certain personalities; or things that receive heightened focus, where attention is drawn through filmic techniques to communicate synoptic or symbolic meanings.

At the level of 'Urban Geography', the house-films provide a nuanced perception of the urban space when viewed in relation with the house and throw a different light on the binary of home and the world. This relationship plays out variously – the urban as an invoked space; or as a narrative extension of the house, where the city forms a productive context to the house; as a space of freedom/escape, where the public space offers an escape from stifling or unsafe situations at home; or as a hostile/ corrupting/ alienating presence.

Being steeped in the traditions of the Hindi film, the manner in which the space of the house is framed can also be understood though the film form specific to Hindi cinema. Here, we observe the use of tableaux functioning as a spectacle, allowed by the vast interior of the living room space. Also observed is an attitude towards space making that uses the idea of 'juxtaposition' rather than 'continuity'. These forms are challenged when the filmic house is presented as a kinaesthetic space, in movement sequences with camerawork and montage, where architectural space is in conformity with the lived experience. In many house-films, we find song sequences have an extended role, expository to the lived experience, more than just an unrelated interruption in the film narrative.

While conventionally, the house is understood as an inner, privatised space of family bonding and a refuge from the outside world, it is also a contested space. Filmic narratives have captured these fractures or contestations for dramatic effect but at the same time point to the precarious condition of urban dwelling.

Finally, this research has produced a comprehensive appreciation of representation of domestic space in Hindi cinema and it furthers the understanding of architecture of home as a narrative and social space. This would be of interest to both film and architecture students and practitioners.

Organisation of Thesis

The first chapter of Introduction explains some of the basic premises of the thesis, defines and creates a background for the subject of 'filmic house' from various perspectives, presents a review of literature and sets out the objectives and research questions.

The second chapter on research design lays out the manner in which this dissertation deals with the subject area. The research design includes – devising a model for analysing the filmic house, setting out a typological approach for the study, explaining the criteria of selecting films for discussion, and making a filmography for each of the three typologies under consideration. Towards the end of this chapter is described the common methodology adopted for each of the three typology chapters.

The thesis has discussed three dominant urban architectural typologies – the bungalow, the chawl and the apartment block – by way of their filmic representations. A chapter each is dedicated to each typology where they become individual essays, generating a set of readings.

Finally, in the last chapter, the readings generated in the previous chapters are collated to present general conclusions on the subject area.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

"Yeh raha mera makaan … saari duniya mein aisa makaan nahin milega.
Haan, iss makaan mein saari duniya zaroor mil jayegi."[1]

The architect Aldo Van Eyck has said, "A house must be like a small city; a city like a large house."[2] The domestic realm, ordinary as it is, contains the world of life experiences of people living in it. The house is a site of a sense of being, which is a combination of experience, memories, dreams and imagination. The domestic space is a most common cinematic image. In many cases, it is the principal setting and has distinctive characteristics. It is this narrative space, where lived experience of urban existence is chronicled in an ever-present architecture, that I call the 'Filmic House'.

This dissertation proposes to study the 'Filmic House' from an architectural perspective by a systematic exploration of portrayal of domestic space through its architectural mise-en-scene. Cinema has been a medium of its time and has chronicled it through its own way of story-telling. As a popular medium its reach and influence has been acknowledged. Film studies is now valued as an essential and recognizable part of cultural studies.

Our specific focus is intended to be on the representation of domestic space in Hindi cinema, a popular cultural medium that film scholars have found a rich resource in reading political and social meanings in context of the evolving project of the post-colonial nation-state (Virdi, 2003; Chakravarty, 1993). An exploration of the Filmic domestic realm will reveal readings and communicate meanings of domesticity in a social and cultural context.

[1] "Look at my house… there is none like it in the whole world, if you search for it. Yes…you will find the whole world in it." Says the landlord to his prospective tenants in 1957 Hindi film *Musafir*.

[2] As cited in Karin Jaschke, City is House and House is City, in Di Palma, V. et al. (eds.) *Intimate Metropolis: Urban Subjects in the Modern City*, 2009, p. 176.

1.1 Motivation for this research

The motivation for this study is two-fold: the first is an interest in drawing connections between architecture and cinema as an architect and a cinephile, the second is an interest in the domestic realm as an architectural academic.

There are several obvious similarities between architecture and cinema. They are both the result of collective effort and collaboration over a considerable time period, and yet can be considered works of auteurs with individual artistic vision. In general, they are intended for mass consumption, and are mediated by society either as users or viewers; and as such are shaped by the cultural ethos of a society. Most important correspondence between the two is that they are both spatial and imagistic – both articulate space and produce visual imagery. During my stint of attending a film appreciation course,[3] I learnt about the aesthetics of moving image and about similarities with paintings and architecture and their mutual influences on one another. Films such as *The Red Desert*, *Ugetsu Monogatari* and *Chunking Express* evoked a memorable spatial experience and a lasting impression of architecture in my mind. Films such as *Where is My Friend's Home?*, *Tokyo Story* and *Ellipathayam*, each centered on domestic space made one alive to the multiple cultural ideas of home embedded in the cinematic idiom. It became of interest to me to seek architectural in cinematic space and when this became the subject of my research, the intuitive choice fell on the domestic realm portrayed in films. Here, one could see a possibility of foregrounding architectural space in cinema to analyse how it participates in the film narratives.

Although the domestic realm forms the bulk of a built environment, architectural theory and history have been traditionally concerned with study of monuments and public buildings – buildings of grand design, emphasising the works of men of genius. This attitude suggests that architecture of significance is to be found only in monuments as compared to houses in which people live. This attitude is further replicated in architecture curricula where design projects set for students show a preference for the civic over domestic, indicating a certain hierarchy of importance. In film studies too, representations of domestic is largely ignored in preference for the more heroic urban sphere. Moreover, any mention of architecture in film invariably conjures images of spectacular sets limiting the discussion to valorising the monumental, the urban (period films or futuristic visions) or fantastical. This dissertation

[3] In 2006 – a four-week residential course conducted annually by the National Film Archives and Film & Television Training Institute, Pune, India.

would argue that there is an abundant scope in turning the gaze inwards towards domestic spaces rendered on screen to excavate social significance attached to such residential spaces.

Recent interests in architectural theory lean towards humanistic interests in experimental and experiential architecture, moving away from Euclidean and Cartesian forms and conceptions (Ots, 2011). Due to the rising influence of critical theory and culture theory, there has been a shift in thinking about architecture – by bringing in ideas and theories from other disciplines. There is an interest in exploring meanings in architecture, and we argue that there is value in seeking them in representations of architectural space from other mediums.

In many architecture schools too, the most recent interest is cinema. Films are studied for the purpose of discovering a more subtle and responsive architecture. Cinema offers us a unique opportunity for spatial investigation. There is extensive scholarship in the west on the subject of cinematic architecture, but significantly lacking for Indian cinema. Hindi cinema has been chosen as a canvas for the present study owing to its pan-India appeal and influence and its base in Bombay's film industry, a city in whose architectural and cultural history I am rooted. Exploration of Hindi cinema, particularly its representations of the domestic sphere from architectural or spatial perspective will add to the understanding of the house as well as this cultural medium.

1.2 Objectives

While it is inevitable that films produce architectural space, what becomes more pertinent is that filmic space narrativises architecture and offers a possibility to seek its lived-in experience. Cinematic depictions of domestic space have a potential for excavating rich meanings about the nature of home and urban living and may either reinforce or subvert generally understood notions regarding it.

With this regard, the objectives of this dissertation are framed as:

- To create a rich picture of the Filmic House in Hindi cinema as representation of urban domestic architecture by mobilising architectural and cinematic perspectives of home. To examine the filmic house in various modes of urban living from within as well as its relationship with the urban space.

-To highlight performative roles of the architectural space in the context of film narrative by analysing the architectural mise-en-scene of the filmic house.

-To consider the Filmic House as a lived space that communicates explicit and implicit social meanings of domesticity.

To explain these objectives further and to put forward our position regarding the key concepts therein, we discuss what constitutes architectural space in cinema and the notions of house/home and domestic space using available literature, including the discourse on depiction of domestic space in cinema.

1.3 Architectural Space in Cinema as Lived Space

Architecture and cinema share many common features, particularly qualities of the spatial and the imagistic. Cinema and architecture are mediums that create both spatial and temporal structures. Both articulate spaces experienced in time. Both create spaces that acquire meanings when occupied by people by mediating experiences of life. Sergei Eisenstein, the celebrated Russian film maker and theorist, also a trained architect, in his article 'Montage and Architecture' (1938), states that in its capability of representing imaginary movement, film's undoubted ancestor is architecture.[4] Walter Benjamin in his well-known essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1936),[5] states that watching a film is like moving through a building – a kinesthetic mode of moving through a space experienced through touch and habit(ation). Peter Wollen in 'Architecture and Cinema' (2002), infers from Benjamin that both architecture and cinema provide a kinesthetic experience of space rather than merely contemplative or visual.

[4] Eisenstein in his essay 'Montage and Architecture' (1938) dwells on how montage in films has close analogy with the imagery of negotiating architectural spaces. As an example, he cites the historian Auguste Choisy's description of the path traced at the Acropolis of Athens. He asks for reading that description with the eye of a film maker. "…it is hard to imagine a montage sequence for an architecture ensemble more subtly composed, shot by shot, than the one that our legs create by walking among the buildings of the Acropolis." Eisenstein says that the Acropolis of Athens has a right to be called the perfect example of one of the most ancient films.

[5] Benjamin, W. (1999). The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction (1936). In Hannah Arendt (ed.) *Illuminations*, 1999, pp. 211-244. London: Pimlico.

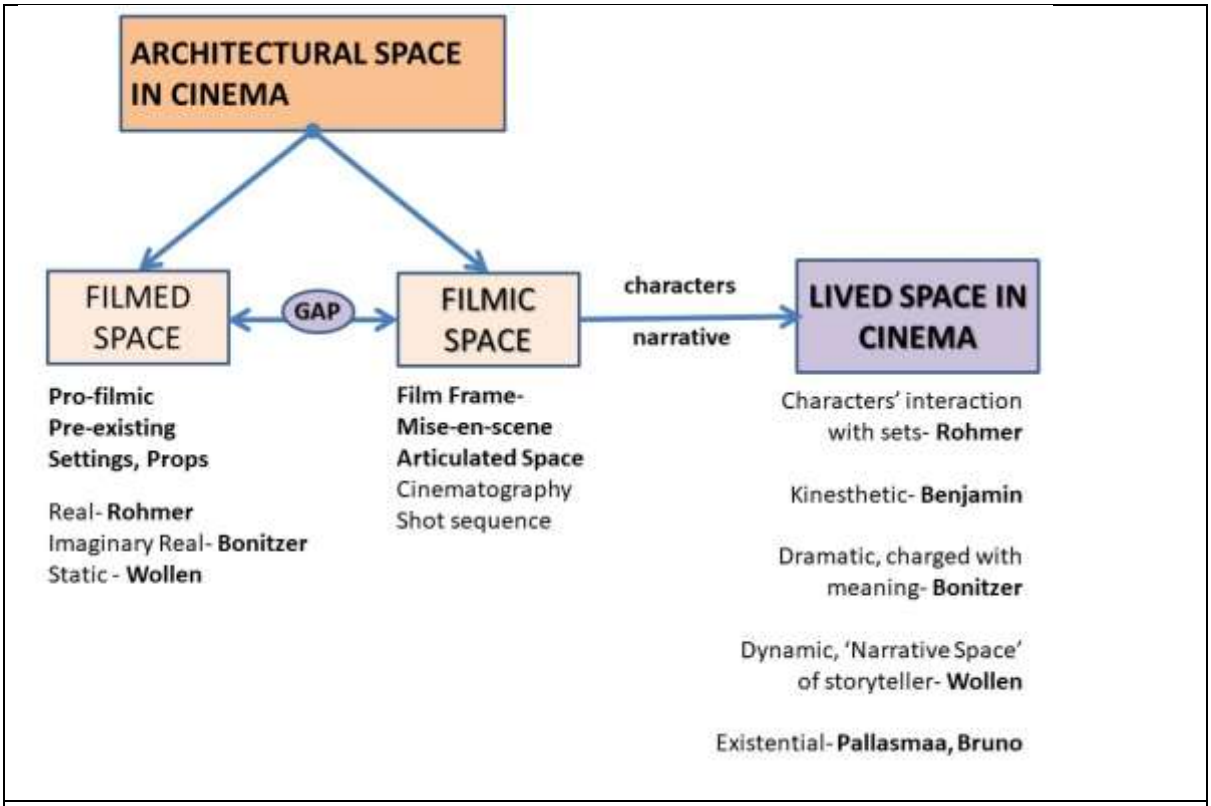


Figure 1.1: Architectural space in cinema as 'Lived Space'

Consciously or unconsciously, film makers articulate architectural space, only, the mode of its construction is specific to the medium of cinema. Let us consider how this space is conceptualised. Johnson (1974) and Dix (2010) talk about films confronting the viewers with two kinds of spaces –

the 'pro-filmic' space, the implied space of the setting and the things contained within;

and the 'filmic space' that appears on the screen as a result of a dynamically produced visual composition of the raw material. It is a space articulated by movements of characters, cinematography and sequencing of shots in the process of editing. Together, they have a major impact on mise-en-scene[6] of film shots and sequences, influencing the visual aesthetics of the film.

[6] *Mise-en-scene* is a French term and originates in the theater. It means, literally, "put in the scene". In cinema, it refers to almost everything that goes into the frame of the shot, including the composition itself. Framing, movement of the camera and characters, make-up and costumes, lighting, set design and general visual environment all contribute to this.

The film narrative unfolds within a physical space referred to as setting, which appears in two principal modes: as real locations or as constructed reality through sets. Sets are mostly created in three modes and their combinations: by constructing full scale settings, by way of scale models, or by creating computer graphic imagery (CGI). The design discipline that is concerned with creating settings is variously known as art direction or set decoration; it plays a crucial role in laying the ground for the visual quality of the film.[7] The setting is not merely an inert container for action but performs crucial functions such as establishing the status and moods of characters and time and place of the narrative. The filmic space, as rendered on the screen, reflects social norms and aspirations, evokes emotional response and communicates cultural codes.

An interview of Eric Rohmer by Pascal Bonitzer in *Cahier Du Cinema* (Bonitzer et al., 1970) is instructive to understand different ways of thinking about these two kinds of spaces. Rohmer describes the pro-filmic or pre-existing space of settings as 'filmed space'. For him, the pre-existing is apriori and real (not abstract) – a film maker confronts it as he finds it. Whereas, for Bonitzer, the pre-existing is an 'imaginary real'. He asserts that the film is not a document of the setting. The real or a concrete film set is invested by the dramatic and charged with meanings through the process of film making. Once the film is made and watched, there is only the filmic space, according to Bonitzer. The 'filmic space' substitutes itself for 'filmed space' which then no longer exists. Moreover, there is always a gap between the real space and the filmic space (like real time and film time). Bonitzer considers this gap as necessary for cinematic expression – the film maker plays with this gap and inscribes themselves in it.

The two-fold division of space in cinema is described differently by Peter Wollen (2002). For him, the first is the static space of the settings created by set designers that he refers to as 'space of the architect'. The other space is dynamic, created by action of characters, cinematography and editing, this is the 'narrative space', the space of the story-teller. The space of the architect is a construction of a physical place to be looked at; the space of the story-teller is produced by movements and actions and is concerned with construction of a

[7] Historically in the west, many architects have been drawn to the field of set design as their training in space design and architectural history makes them very suitable. One of the attractions for the architects to engage with set design is that it allows them a free reign to their imagination unlike in real world architecture. In case of Bombay's film industry, for quite many years the set designers came from the world of art. In recent times, architects have entered the field of films and television alike.

mode of looking. Cinema for Wollen is suspended between these two spaces and a film maker's attitude towards them. Sets determine the experience of watching a film, however, sets can also overawe by drawing attention to themselves by their size, sophistication or splendour. A good set design according to Wollen should be unobtrusive, hardly noticeable, simply a 'discreet, ever-present character'. This distinction between approaches to set designs mirrors the distinction within cinema between narrative and spectacle. Wollen is critical of celebration in contemporary film study – in work such as Nuemann's (1999)[8] – of representations of the spectacular architecture. He advocates examining films where architecture is a 'character' rather than 'star', and participates as narrative space rather than dominates the narrative.

Moreover, Wollen considers architecture produced in films as never in itself but a subjective representation. For instance, the city of one director is a different place from the city of another director, making it clear how narrative space is charged with significance and not a mere backdrop. Thus, the filmic space, as an articulated *and* narrative space, cannot be a value neutral space but is endowed with meanings via life situations and emotions of the characters in the context of a film's narrative. It becomes a lived space.

For architect and theorist Juhani Pallasmaa (2007), this is the most significant correspondence between architecture and cinema: that they both articulate lived space that frames experiential life situations. For him, lived space is a combination of external and internal worlds where physical and experiential dimensions are fully intertwined. The concept of 'lived space' refers to the spaces of human existence mediated by life. Lefebvre in *Production of Space* (1974), elaborates on the concept of lived space. He talks about a three-way characterization of space that is socially produced:

[8] Dietrich Neumann (Ed.) (1999). *Film Architecture: From Metropolis to Blade Runner*. New York: Prestel. The book presents some of the manifold examples of a dialogue between film and architecture. Neumann elucidates major roles of film architecture as commentary on architectural developments, particularly, modernism as also being a realm in architecture in which innovative practices can be realized. The film theorist Peter Wollen (2002) has critiqued this study as relying only on films that feature architecture as 'star'. Wollen laments celebration of spectacle in such studies where film architecture gets clustered in the genres of dystopian science fiction, horror and crazy comedy.

‘lived space’ as the space of inhabitants and users,
‘conceived space’ of architects represented by abstract means,
and ‘perceived space’ as a network of experiences as spatial practices of a society.

“When compared with the abstract space of the experts (architects, urbanists, planners), the space of the everyday activities of users is a concrete one, which is to say subjective. As a space of ‘subjects’ rather than calculations ...it is in this space that the private real asserts itself”.[9] Lived space according to Lefebvre is representational, embodying complex symbolism of social life, is of users as well as of artists, writers and philosophers who conjure it up through their descriptions.

The space conceptualised by the architect and visualised as abstract geometry is not the same as space perceived and experienced by the users. There is a gap between the two. Lived space integrates these ways of thinking about space and provides a context for place-making that is not merely abstract or indifferent but full of significance and meanings in terms of human task or lived experience. Such an understanding of space creates a common ground between cinema and architecture that is fruitful for our study. We summarise our position on discussing architectural space in cinema as follows:
The space of the settings (Filmed Space) is replaced by the Filmic Space which is kinaesthetic, and is articulated by way of movement characters, camerawork and shot sequences. The Filmic Space is a narrative space charged with meanings. As lived space, it frames meanings in a cultural context.

Although pragmatically different from the concrete space of real-world buildings, we argue that at a conceptual level, space created on a film screen is also architecture and can be discussed as such at a disciplinary level. While the specificity of producing this architecture is different from that of real world, there can, nevertheless, be common ground for appreciation and discussion. For that, we must expand our definition of architecture to include the real as well as the represented, the built as well as the imaginary.

[9] Henri Lefebrve, The Production of Space (extract). In N. Leach (Ed.), *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, 1997, pp. 139-147. London: Routledge.

Jacobs (2013) and Martin (2014) have stressed the need for architectural histories to be inclusive of representations and evocations of architecture in arts, cinema and popular culture. We take this argument forward to examine its implications in Hindi cinema. Rather than limiting the debate in terms of set design or art direction, it is intended to discuss architecture in terms of its filmic articulation and meaning making. Through a variety of techniques, a filmmaker generates space, immerses the viewers, creates a narrative space from rooms and passages, focuses the eye on specific features, and commands our sensory experience – all of which provide another way of imagining architecture.

The viewers' perception of filmic space can be considered as both imagistic and immersive just like their experience of concrete space in the real world. Yet, the filmic space is a heightened phenomenon – either exaggerated or subdued, it collapses or expands time and distance, according to Bruno (1997), who uses the metaphor of travel, an act of inhabiting and traversing space to describe an experience of watching a film. The viewers' traversal takes place through the eye of the camera and identification with the characters. The emotional response to the space is through the narrative as well as the previous filmic experience. The audience while watching a film interprets it and reads meanings within their own social and cultural frame work. Christian Metz in *'Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema'* (1974, p. 93) states that the visual culture of films is revealed through an act of seeing and interpreting, cinema possesses various dialects, and that each of these dialects can become the subject of a specific analysis. Architectural space in cinema is worthy of such a focus.

Filmic images also interact with a viewer's real-world experience as well as myths prompted by those places. According to Pallasmaa (2007), "we do not live separately in material and mental worlds, these experiential dimensions are fully intertwined." Richard Koek (2012) writes that film watching today is no longer a separate and distinct activity. It is performed on the go. The representation of spaces and places on the screen are interwoven with our physical existence in multiple ways. We gain spatial experience and memories through filmic imagery produced by filmic language and turn it into a corporeal or a complementary reality.

We may argue that cinema can allow us to understand architecture as an effect (as different from architecture as conceived) because the experience of viewing a film includes an impression of architecture. Moreover, this impression is never isolated, but is a cumulative

experience of real life and filmic memories. Capturing this filmic experience will add significant value to the shifting discourse in perception of architecture as more than abstract creations.

There is a growing realisation that stresses the importance of active, embodied, sensorial engagement with world, summed up as a phenomenological approach. Its main thrust in architecture is the significance of space as lived experience of inhabitants and not just as abstract or neutral space. Viewed from cinematic perspective, the viewers get a simulated experience of relationship between bodies in space that is charged with existential meanings.

Lived space as existential space is an integrated experience according to architectural theorist Norberg-Schulz that is a continuum of conceptual, cognitive, perceptual, experiential and lived (1971). Such a theory of space can become a basis for formulating a method of analysing and interpreting filmic space. This dissertation takes up Norberg-Schulz's theory to devise a model for film interpretation and this shall be elaborated in the following chapter. In many films, the architectural space forms a significant part of its mise-en-scene communicating several meanings in the narrative. Film analysis from an architectural standpoint will foreground cinema's spatial characteristics and its significance. Using architectural theory to analyse and interpret cinema will bring a new way of seeing and seeking meanings in a cultural environment.

1.4 House/ Home/ Domesticity

The concept of house or home alludes to domestic space pertaining to a household, a place to reside. Whereas the term 'House' refers to the physical or material entity, a building or an architectural space; 'Home' refers to a personal, perceptual or emotional way to refer to where someone lives, dwells and belongs. Both these terms have overlaps in the English language. "It is our use of a pile of bricks and mortar which makes it a 'house'; and what we feel, think or say about it that makes a 'house', a 'home'." (Hall,1993, p.3). The term 'domestic' refers to qualities relating to the running of a home or family relations while the term 'domesticity' in ordinary sense refers to life at home or family life, the quality or state of being domestic. In a cultural sense, it refers to discourses around the social space traditionally linked with the house/ home and everyday life.

There are many ways to discuss the ideas related to home and the architectural implications of house and residential spaces that reflect them. Amos Rapoport in *House Form and Culture* (1969) describes the tradition of the domestic as the direct and unself-conscious translation into physical form of a culture, desires, dreams and passions of a people. It is a world-view writ small (p.2). He posits, "house form is not simply the result of physical forces or any single causal factor, but is the consequence of primarily socio-cultural factors seen in their broadest terms […] family structure, position of women, privacy and social intercourse." (p.47). Gaston Bachelard in *Poetics of Space* (2014) views the space of home from a poetic perspective and suggests that "our house is our corner of the world" (p.26). For him, the house is a lyrical place and accommodates fantasy, family, and memory in its various nooks, corners and crannies. The everyday space is transformed by imagination, where daydreaming is possible.

The first task of architecture is to mark man's place in the world. As Heidegger (1952) expresses -- we are thrown into the world, and through architecture we transform our estrangement into the feeling of domicile. The Domestic is the most fundamental of existential spaces according to Norberg-Schulz (1971), however it is observed that its experiences are largely ignored as less worthy of attention, especially by the modernists who sought the transcendent rather than the embodied. Juhani Pallasmaa (2007), ventures that houses are built into the world of Euclidian geometry but acquire meanings through human habitation. In order to understand the House we must go beyond the limited constraints of a realist Cartesian conception. Citing Bachelard, Pallasmaa suggests we need to resort to the world of daydream where 'memory and imagination remain associated'.

The tradition of domestic is formed by the evolving ethos of a society, its architecture contains within it social history of cultural groups. For a social historian, home is generally understood as the private space of the family and as a site of consumption and reproduction of domesticity, familiarity, as a womb of safety. It is frequently defined in opposition to those spaces marked as public, political and unsafe. It is also a contested notion that problematises these divisions. Domesticity is the study of social space traditionally linked with the house, home and everyday life, and implies the analysis of daily practices, discourses and images that produce and reproduce it in time (Cieraad, 2006).

Domesticity[10] in practice and ideology was quite well developed in Indian society and involved a hierarchical power relationship between men and women and a subordination of women under a patriarchal system. Swapna Banerjee (2010) traces the genealogy of domesticity from India's pre-colonial past and considers the newly evolved notions of colonial domesticity as a moment of [re]consideration rather than a break with the past. She considers the concept of home and family life in the Sanskrit term *'grahasthya jivan'* and the traditional roles assigned to women whose connection to the home or *griha* was clearly established with sacred duty for maintaining order within the family and thus within society as a whole. Later, popular or folk literature depicted women as ideal homemakers (*sugrihini*) and paragons of sacrifice, tolerance, fortitude, and courage. The concept of family as a private domain developed during the colonial times of late 19th century as an outcome of several factors – the colonial civilising mission (McClintock,1995), actions such as legislation, reformist movements and most importantly, the nationalist movements (Chatterjee, 1994).[11] Together, they conveyed certain notions of domesticity and had an impact on the gendering of the domestic space vis-à-vis public space. Satyajit Ray's *Ghare Baire* (1984, Bengali) depicts this late 19th century socio-political milieu and aptly exemplifies the concepts described above. The film is a spatially-configured narrative of a built on a socially-ordered division of places -- of being at home (*ghare*) or outside (*baire*); of the inner and the outer realms; or even of the *bhitarbari* and the *bahirbari*, the private and the public sections of the landed gentry's house (Chaudhury, 2007).

Banerjee (2010) suggests that domesticity became the new cultural logic in late colonial India in which notions of modernity, progress, and new nation were embedded and it can be argued

[10] Domesticity as a field of socio-cultural study has its roots in the upper and middle-class urban society in the west in the wake of industrialisation and urbanisation and is generally discussed with emergence of home as private sphere separate from the public sphere that was the realm of commerce, business, and society; where men belonged. The private sphere was the home front, which was a woman's domain, where she could create a warm atmosphere for male relatives to return. For more details, see Barbara Welter, The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860, in *American Quarterly*, Summer 1966, pp 151-174. These concepts travelled to the colonised world and influenced the pre-existing thinking about the domestic sphere in respective cultural context in various ways.

[11] According to Partha Chatterjee (1994), nationalism during the freedom movement separated the domain of culture into two spheres- the material and the spiritual. The claims of the western civilisation were most powerful in the material sphere, symbolised by the outer world, typically a male domain. But the imitation of the west was undesirable and unnecessary in the spiritual sphere, the inner self, symbolised by the 'home' represented by the women. Thus, the colonised / not colonised dichotomy was played out in the familial sphere of domesticity of world/ home corresponding with outer (compromised)/ inner (true identity).

that this logic extended itself in the post-colonial period. The newly formed nation-state aspired to modern ideals of democracy, rationality and progress. During this time a nationalist consciousness sought to cultivate only what was 'modern' from the contaminating cultural influences of the 'Western' world and it was believed this differentiation could be achieved by retaining the strong and distinctive spiritual essences of the national culture through a circumscription of the outer, material world from the spiritual, inner world of the home with women as their custodians of 'Indian-ness' (Sangari & Vaid, 1989).

The idea of modernity as avant-garde meant to be forged in the outer domain and thus divergent from domestic ideals of inner sanctity apparently sets up an oppositional relationship between domesticity and modernity. However, at the level of practices, there is an observed complicity between modernity and domesticity as Heynen (2005) points out. Technological advancements improved living conditions and as such came to be associated with cleanliness, better hygiene, better means of providing comforts and leisure. Sangari and Vaid (1989) view domesticity in selective relationship with modernity in the context of the modern nation state.

The values that comprise the notions of home and domestic space as inner and private domain, comfortable refuge from the outside world etc. are defining features of modernism. Yet, modernism suppressed the domestic as a lesser art and as subordinate and marginal to the public realm. Christopher Reed (1996) has put together a number of cases in arts, architecture and literature to state: "This has been a standard of modern art: a heroic odyssey on the high seas of consciousness, with no time to spare for the mundane details of home life." (p.15). For modernists such as Le Corbusier, the House was a machine to live in and he considered the production of space in abstract, mechanical and mass produced terms. There was little consideration for the house as a social space where architecture produced and impacted experiences of individual and collective life.

According to Reed, the domestic is returning to a position of cultural prominence. The heroic postures of modernist manifestos crumbled in the post-war years and later. The changing scenes of paradigm of domesticity are played out in arts, architecture and popular culture. There is a renewed interest in the notions of domesticity in cultural theories. In the world today, the domestic has regained its value as a site of cultural and social practices, its experiential qualities valuable to understand the phenomenological condition.

Giuliana Bruno (2002, p.91) says that despite interest in cultural studies, especially in the notion of home and its inclusion in historiography by way of historical studies of private life, the connection between architectural and cinematic perspectives on the subject have yet to be mobilised. There is now an interest in architectural theory excavating notions of domesticity through an interface with other disciplines such as cultural studies, with an interest in mass or popular culture, seeking and creating meanings in the social and symbolic realm. This study therefore advocates an inter-disciplinary approach that combines architectural and cinematic perspectives. It proposes to focus on the less discussed area of depiction of domestic space in Hindi cinema. It intends to examine narrative role of the Filmic House through its architectural mise-en-scene to excavate meanings in domesticity in the cultural context and analyse how these meanings are communicated.

1.5 Defining the Filmic House

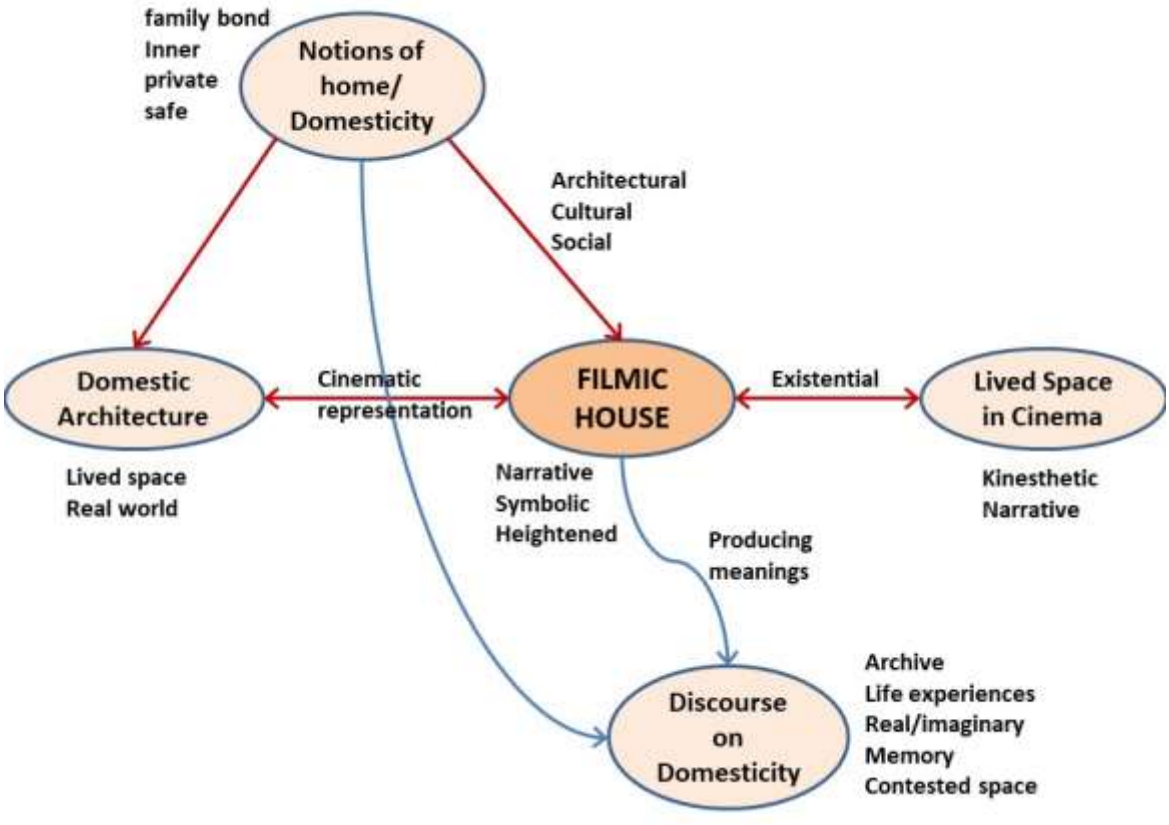


Figure 1.2: Defining the Filmic House

The discourse on architectural space in cinema when viewed with a specific focus on domestic spaces with multiple perspectives – architectural, cultural and social – allows us to define the subject of this dissertation (Figure 1.2).

We define the term 'Filmic House' as: domestic space rendered in a film. It is conceptualised as a filmic space, as material space containing characters and their actions; a social space charged with narrativity; a lived space framing situations of urban domestic life in a film. It conveys the existential, embodied and sensory experience in architecture. It contains clues and codes about domesticity and home, an inner, private and safe refuge for family. In cinema, lived space is dynamic articulation of filmic space. It is an existential space that establishes the being-in-the-world for the characters. The Filmic House is a narrative space which provides a fictional, synoptic, condensed or heightened experience of architectural space.

This dissertation addresses connections between architectural and cinematic notions of house through the idea of lived space. The Filmic House contains clues and codes regarding notions of domesticity that are architectural, cultural and social. Space provides the context for places as imbued with meanings. Places are not objective or indifferent but full of significance in terms of human task or their lived experience. The filmic house produces meanings of domesticity, facilitating a discourse that adds nuance to accepted ideas about home/ domestic space or contests them. It forms archives of life experience, memory, dreams and imagination. In this archive, the real and the represented have an inter-play.

1.6 Ways of Looking at Filmic House

1.6.1 A Review of Significant Studies on the Filmic House

Although there is an abundance of scholarly work in the West on film architecture and set design, the studies focussing on domestic spaces are few. Here we present a brief survey and their methods of dealing with the subject.

Spaces of the Cinematic Home: Behind the Screen Door (2015) is an anthology of essays that draws dimensions of architecture and film to make house and home its central theme. In their introductory essay, Andrews et al. state:

"the Cinematic House is more than just a statement in architecture, its spatial/ filmic significance involving the complex interrelationships between external architecture and the intrinsic and inter-textual connotations of individual rooms and their position, size, shape and contents." (p.14)

In the essay, they consider the cinematic house as an interplay between architectural and filmic space. In discussing how such representations mediate meanings, they consider factors such as external appearance, internal architecture, relative position of each room, construction of the setting and their filmic function, artefacts within the rooms etc. Each of these factors are further elaborated in respective essays that follow, they provide useful clues in analysing mise-en-scene of any given filmic house to unravel its architectural strategy and narrative roles.

Among many examples cited by Andrews et al., one is that of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). In this film all of the above factors come into play. They show how the spaces in the Bates House have a role to play in the narrative from the exterior to its internal workings. For example, the first viewing of the Bates house in *Psycho* creates an impression of a place of menace. Filmed from a low angle, with its steep roof set in silhouette, it looms large and threatening. When different characters venture inside this house, each room, its space and mise-en-scene conveys different information. Norman Bates' childhood belongings are still intact, and indicate his failure to mature and so on. The authors cite Slavoj Zizek who aligns the three levels of the Gothic house in *Psycho* with the id, ego and superego – the cellar representing the id as a repository of primal drives, and the attic corresponding with the controlling superego. Steven Jacobs (2013) analyses both the Bates house and the motel in *Psycho* in their contrasting positions as schizoid architecture symbolising the personality of the owner-occupant. Jacobs in his detailed analysis of the architectural mise-en-scene of the film makes several interesting observations such as successions of bedrooms being linked to the film's theme of voyeurism; significance of several objects notably the stuffed birds, mirrors, wall paper and paintings; or the blinding white brightness of the bathroom inverting the usual darkness of a diabolical scene.

Steven Jacobs in *The Wrong House: The Architecture of Alfred Hitchcock* (2013) creates an extensive survey of individual houses appearing in Hitchcock's films, focussing on set design and through repeated viewing of the films, interprets and translates the fragmented cinematic spaces into architectural drawings. In most part, such interpretations resulted in fairly

complete and consistent drawings akin to a real building whereas in some cases, inconsistencies were observed or absent or invisible spaces were discovered in the fragmented constructions. Jacobs considers Alfred Hitchcock as an architect of these screen houses because the legendary filmmaker provided vision for and actively participated in the processes of production design. Combined with camerawork and editing, this screen architecture reflected architectonic practices of the filmmaker and played important roles in his films. One can say that the analysis of architectonic practices in the filmmaking process is far more interesting than the impulse to translate them into conventional architectural drawings. Jacobs' study shows that in Hitchcock's oeuvre there are houses in several diverse styles such as Victorian mansions, modernist villa, city penthouse, apartment complex or suburban house; the specific architectural imagery of these from outside and inside conveyed information about the characters inhabiting them even before they appeared on screen. Jacobs asserts that the house in general and specific design elements or motifs of 'Hitchcockian' architecture closely connects to his narrative structures and themes such as suspense, horror, voyeurism, confinement, secrets and concealment. The extensive study by Jacobs suggests both an auteur approach and within that a typological approach of analysing the Filmic House. Besides focussing on the houses and their interior spaces in Hitchcock's films, Jacobs also analyses his use of urban spaces and other public spaces, monuments and museums in the city, providing context or counter-point to the houses. Such an approach contextualises the domestic space in its locational milieu.

Another study that focuses on a different auteur is Richard Martin's *The Architecture of David Lynch* (2014). Here he explores the relationship between architecture and David Lynch's films. His stated aim is to demonstrate the extent to which the film maker's distinctive universe (highly pressurised environments) – cities, small towns, homes, natural wonders – relies upon architecture (p.1). Specific architectural elements such as doors, corridors, staircases, curtains, brim with intensity and recur in Lynch's work. There is a spatial awareness while watching Lynch's films. The filmmaker's overall architectural project, says Martin, is borne out of engagement with urban landscapes, to streets, homes and objects decorating a single room. This, in a way, also provides the structure of the book, with dedicated chapters on city, home, road, and stage; dealing with a set of films analysed at all these various perspectives.

Sue Thornham in *Spaces of Women's Cinema* (2019) also follows a similar structure where she discusses exploration of spaces and places in films by women filmmakers in chapter

themes such as wilderness spaces, city spaces, interior spaces, border spaces etc., albeit with a different set of films for each chapter. In the chapter titled 'Interior Spaces', she discusses the 'enclosed' worlds – the domestic and private – spaces more easily identified with women (than the first two), redolent at once of the maternal nurturing and of enclosure and imprisonment.

In *The Architecture of David Lynch*, in the chapter titled 'Home', Martin (2014) provides close readings of three principal domestic archetypes found in Lynch's work: the urban room, the small town family home and the Hollywood residence. Lynch's domestic theatres emerge as the stage for unsettling family drama. His films, grounded in urban framework, feature domestic architecture with both symbolic and material power and navigate intimate relationship with characters. Martin's analysis of Lynch's films suggests that typology of the domestic space in a film reflects the characters and narrative and has a bearing on the interplay with urban space and urban geography. Thus, in both Jacobs' and Martin's studies of representation of domestic spaces in works of two different filmmakers point to a typological approach of looking at filmic domestic spaces as well as placing them within their urban or geographical context. This observation prompts a certain methodological approach for the present study and it will be elaborated in the next chapter.

1.6.2 Objects and architectural details in the Filmic House

Gambarato (2010), in her paper on the role of objects in films, describes various cinematic techniques or strategies used to provide objects with a larger or smaller relevance, expressiveness and functionality. According to Andrews et al. (2015), the minutiae of spaces, corners and artefacts within the 'cinematic house' establish facets and details of the characters and depending on how they are framed in the film connote several meanings.

Martin (2014) observes that directors and critics have long been aware of cinema's distinctive relationship with domestic objects. The cinematic medium has the capacity to imbue material items with tangible life. He observes David Lynch's manipulation of audience's desire to attach metaphorical value to banal domestic items such that every object he presents radiates meaning, the impact heightened by intense close-ups, unsettling angles or tracking shots. In cinema for instance, the staircase has remained a crucial piece of interior architecture, he says. It has been presented in a variety of ways to amplify emotions. Jacob (2013) also notes use of furnishings, objects and architectural details in Hitchcock's films – for example of the

motif of closed door with a key relates to secrecy of forbidden rooms, windows with voyeurism and the use of staircase, a central spine of domestic space as an arena for psychological tension.

1.6.3 Filmic House as a Contested Space

The house/home in the Ruskinian sense[12] may be described as a place of peace and shelter from all forms of perils and external pressures; it is also a contested space of anxiety and strife in which issues of class, culture, and gender have plays a part. Many films have reproduced or exploited such schisms – while the house may feature as place of family unity and belonging, it also is often the site of alienation, strife, of melodramatic events. Ordinary homes can be sites of terrible happenings in films belonging to social genre, family melodrama or even that of horror. Although melodrama focuses on family relationships and domestic scenarios, the genre also brings out the divisions such as public/private or inner/outer that have historically defined domestic space to introduce conflict in the narrative. The spaces of nurturing often turn out to be stifling and cause for gender oppression.

The horror and suspense genre bring to the fore the unhomely in the domestic space and in this specific design features or filmic techniques play a role. The house as a site of supernatural, fear, mystery or violence is explained by Freud's concept of uncanny or unhomely (unheimlich), a sense of fear originating from the familiar.[13] Alfred Hitchcock is considered to be a master of cinematic uncanny and often the settings for the terrible events are seemingly safe and intimate realms of homes. Jacobs (2013) characterises Hitchcock's filmic houses as places of uncanny labyrinth, trap, confinement, terror, haunting; thereby undermining the idea of the home as realm of stability and security. Hitchcock famously declared that he would bring "murder back into the American home where it always

[12] John Ruskin in *Sesame and Lilies*, first published in 1856 reflected on nature and duties of men and women and the prevailing Victorian ideals of domesticity, where home is a refuge from the outside world, maintaining whose peaceful atmosphere is duty of women.

[13] Laura Mulvey in *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*, Reaktion Books, 2006, explains Freud's concept of uncanny initially focussing on two meanings of the German word Heimlich – the first associating with homely and familiar, the second with secret and concealment. These two seemingly different meanings are connected by topography. The home encloses and thus gives comfort while the secret is enclosed and thus hidden.

belonged."[14] Similarly, in David Lynch's films, homes are sites of disturbance and alienation. According to Martin, Lynch's domestic spaces may maintain Bachelard's faith in the poetic image and the psychological dimensions of home, yet they refuse to ignore more disquieting consequences. The Bachelardian home is one of romance, joy and security. However, for Lynch, most familiar surroundings inevitably contain unhomely elements. David Lynch contends, "Home is a place where things can go wrong."[15]

1.7 Hindi Cinema and Filmic House – a view from the literature

The canvas of this dissertation is post-independence Hindi cinema, and it is pertinent to understand its specific cinematic idioms that would have a bearing on a study of portrayal of domestic spaces. In this section, we provide a context to this study by reviewing available scholarship in terms of Hindi cinema's trajectory of film form over the years as also its conventions of framing architectural space. This is followed by a collation of discourse within the literature on representation of the urban and domestic realms.

Film scholarship on Hindi cinema focuses on film narratives, their structures and forms, plot devices and character types to foreground themes and motifs, and narrative strategies to represent its ideologies. In the process, the scholars also construct a historical development of Hindi cinema in the context of political developments in the country. Sumita Chakravarty's *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema 1947-1987* (1993) and Madhava Prasad's *Ideology of the Hindi Film: A Historical Construction* (1998) are most significant in terms of their scope and influence on the film scholarship. More recently, M.K. Raghavendra's *Seduced by the Familiar: Narration and Meaning in Indian Cinema* (2008) is more expansive meditation on both chronology and thematics of Film form in Hindi cinema. Ashish Rajadhyaksha's *Indian Cinema: A Very Short History* (2016) constructs a historical account of the workings of Bombay's film industry and its economics that shapes the evolving cinematic idioms. These works discuss Hindi cinema's film forms and aesthetic modes and assert that it responds to changes wrought by political events upon popular consciousness and

[14] From James Naremore, 'Hitchcock and Humour', in Richard Allen and Sam Ishii-Gonzales (eds,), *Hitchcock: Past and Future*, London: Rutledge, 2004, pp. 22-36, as cited in Steven Jacobs, *The Wrong House: The Architecture of Alfred Hitchcock*, 2013, p.40

[15] From Chris Rodley (ed.), *Lynch on Lynch*, London:Faber and Faber, 2005, p.10, as cited in Richard Martin, *The Architecture of David Lynch*, 2014, p. 64.

address their time. We delve into these and other scholarly works to provide a view of its trajectory of film form over last seven decades, this provides a brief historical background of Hindi cinema to situate the subject of the thesis.

1.7.1 A Trajectory of Film Form in Hindi Cinema

Before we begin the account of the post-independence period, it is pertinent to mention briefly the developments in the preceding decades that continue their sway in the subsequent periods in Hindi cinema.

Cinema arrived in India right after its inception in the west. Suresh Chabria (2013) in his work on the silent era of Indian cinema (1912-1934) notes that by the decade of the twenties, Bombay film industry was flourishing with a number of production companies and studios engaged in producing highly popular mythological, devotional, historical, social and stunt films.[16] He notes that cinema was already becoming an inseparable part of the Indian cultural landscape.

In the thirties and forties, besides mythological and historical subjects, domestic melodramas dominated the film subjects. Scholars have pointed to the difficulty in assigning generic specificity to Hindi films. Prasad (1998) describes the dominant social genre as all-inclusive one that subsumed other generic forms. Amongst the significant films that could be described as reform socials, is *Duniya Na Mane* (1937) made in melodramatic mode, in which a young woman is forced into marriage with a much older widower with grown-up children and her resistance to these circumstances. Films like *Neecha Nagar* (1946) or *Dharti ke Lal* (1946) were made in a seemingly realist mode, but deep within they were studio derived melodramas, according to Rajadhyaksha (2016).

The post-independence period saw a continuation and popularity of social melodrama. Many films in the fifties also addressed the issue of nationhood and its modernisation in the light of Nehruvian idealism guiding the new Nation State. A key notion in the years after

[16] The first Indian story film is *Pundalik*, made by N.G. Chitre and R.G. Torney in 1912. More well-known feature *Raja Harishchandra* by D.G. Phalke was released in 1913. Besides Bombay, other cities such as Calcutta and Madras were also became bases for film production in the silent era.

independence (that persisted until the early sixties) is that of modernity with ambivalence – both as the attraction of progress bestowed in characters of say, a doctor or an engineer on one hand; or the perils of nightclubs and western dance on the other. *Andaz* (1949) has been discussed by Vasudevan (2000) and Raghavendra (2008) as addressing this ambivalence in its theme. This double edged attitude to modernity is also seen in the way the idea of city is depicted vis-à-vis village in the films made in the social realist mode.

The period of the sixties on the other hand is associated with escapism in films in the wake of defeat in the Sino-Indian war in 1962 and the dilution of Nehruvian idealism and nationalistic optimism. In cinematic preferences, the harsh city is side-lined in preference for locales like hill stations and picturesque spots or even foreign locations as seen in *Sangam* (1964). During this time, a trend of glitzy interior spaces in homes, restaurants and clubs make an appearance, best seen in *Waqt* (1965). Mainstream commercial films continued to use such tropes of fantasy spatial transportations in various avatars to entertain their audiences.

The seventies marked a number of departures from such escapist fares. Madhava Prasad (1998) observes that political upheavals beginning in the late sixties, and its attendant crises resulted in the segmentation or disaggregation of the social genre into three aesthetic forms in Hindi cinema – new cinema, middle class cinema and cinema of mobilization respectively. A brief account of each is illustrative of the sheer diversity of narratives that emerged in the seventies, well into the early eighties.

The 'new cinema' was engendered by an intervention by the state into film production and setting up of the Film Finance Corporation (FFC) with a stated aim of searching and supporting a national cinema (Rajadhyaksha, 2016). It marks the beginning of art house films in the social realist aesthetic mode. *Bhuvan Shome* (1969) and *Sara Akash* (1969) were among the first films produced under the aegis of FFC. The emergence of new cinema and its success among the discerning audiences prompted a reflection in popular cinema of creating a kind of middle ground between the starkly realist art films and commercial mainstream films, resulting into what scholars refer to as 'middle cinema'— represented by films made by directors such as Basu Chatterjee and Hrishikesh Mukherjee. Prasad's appellation of 'Middle Class cinema', refers to these films that revolve around middle-class subjects, whose generic specificity derives from the effects of ordinariness, familiarity or spectator identification and the real world. Prasad cites examples of films such as *Anand* (1972) and

Rajanigandha (1974) amongst others that deal with this middle-class identity. The breakdown of socialist ideals, creeping social injustice and disaffection prior to and during Emergency coincides with the rise of Angry Young Man in the form of Amitabh Bachchan. His star persona emerged as a proletarian filled with anger, self-absorption and rebellion. Prasad refers to this as 'the aesthetic of mobilisation': "These films constructed the mobilised (and mobilising) subaltern hero as an agent of national reconciliation and social reform." (p. 141). *Zanjeer* (1973) set the tone and was emblematic of this kind of cinema that became a huge success with the audiences.

The sway of these three aesthetic forms continues through the early eighties, where the films of the late eighties mark a predilection towards the depiction of on-screen violence in mainstream Hindi cinema. Themes such as rape and dishonour of women and associated revenge are seen in films such as *Pratighaat* (1987) where conflicts arising out of class and regional identity and weakening of state authority are observed, according to Raghavendra (2008).

The economic liberalisation of 1991 resulted in a break from Nehruvian socialism, an embrace of capitalism and the withdrawal of the State from the national space. The key film to reflect the changed perception, according to Raghavendra (2008) is *Hum Aap Ke Hain Kaun* (1994) – 'clean', escapist entertainment, all about an upper class, happy family with the complete erasure of the outside world. Also seen are films based on nostalgia – films imagining the NRI (Non Resident Indian) experience and the desire to recreate the ideal Indian community in a foreign land. In both these types, the influence of the Hindu nationalist movements can be seen in the re-imagination of a neo-traditional globalised new aspiring middle class.

In nearly two decades of the new millennium, beginning from its cusp, we see an emergence of technology driven, sophisticated and even edgy experiments by a new breed of film makers, independent or part of a stable. Rajadhyaksha (2016) notes major changes in these years in the functioning of the film industry and its economy such as the arrival of multiplex, digital distribution often via satellite, and corporatisation of the film financing. He notes the birth of an independent sector within the mainstream Hindi cinema characterised by gritty realism, authorial signature exploring genres like horror movie, gangster film and the cinema of urban brutalism. *Satya* (1998) and *Black Friday* (2004) are examples of the thematics of the gangster films in the way the city is represented in visceral realism in a crime thriller.

In the seven decades since independence, the nation witnessed, with varying results, experiments in democracy and modernity. Socialism made way for the liberalization of economy and capitalism is no longer considered anathema. Film form in Hindi cinema has tacitly reflected these periods and their transitions. While doing so, this cinema has been a space of representation of city, home or urban life, this is explored here briefly but before that we continue the discussion on film form to enunciate some of the observed traits of framing of architectural space.

1.7.2 Hindi Cinema's Modes of Framing Architectural Space

In general, film scholars agree that popular Hindi cinema operates on a melodramatic mode as opposed to realistic modes of story-telling. There is an exaggeration of plot and characters, and emotions are observed with little emphasis on the psychology and lifestyle of a unique individual. Stylisation is often employed to heighten exterior display of emotions.

Vasudevan (2000) identifies 'frontality' and 'tableau' as two modes of framing commonly used in Hindi films to give the spectator an opportunity to see meanings represented and emotions rendered. Citing Roland Barthes, he says that the tableau represents a moment caught between past and future, a 'pregnant moment'. M.K. Raghavendra (2008) observes the tableau arrangement in the domain of the action as self-defining, as off-screen space is not invoked as a site of reference. Instead of using match cuts or tracking shots to establish a total space of the action as in a classic Hollywood film, here there is a tendency to use medium shots to catch the action within a designated space. Moreover, relations between spaces are rarely established due to a lack of continuity editing. This may pose peculiar challenges while analysing the architectural mise-en-scene of filmic houses, where expectations of a certain totality of space may be belied and one may be presented with unrelated fragmented imaginations.

Like continuous space, universal time is absent too, remarks Raghavendra. Explicit markers of historicity that establish the time of the narrative are generally unaddressed in Hindi cinema. The films are innocent of happenings outside of their own internal narratives. Simultaneous tracks or cross cutting is usually not there to show parallel lines of action. Instead the narration is episodic to establish a causal chain.

Apart from the discontinuities in dealing with space and time, the scholars also speak about discontinuities such as song and dance sequences. Lalita Gopalan in *Cinema of Interruptions* (2002) however argues that instead of dismissing these features (or 'attractions') as disrupting the diegetic universe of the film or its narrative flow, one should accept them as the most common narrative feature in Indian popular cinema and acknowledge how viewing pleasure arises from these interruptions and creative ways in which these sequences develop a relationship with the diegesis. We find this observation useful for the present study.

Raghavendra (2008) refers to the character of the camerawork in Hindi cinema as the 'omniscience of the camera eye' due to a general lack of POV (point of view) narration which is usually associated with character subjectivity mediating spectator's identification with it. Raghavendra observes that there is a tendency to transform an individual into the 'type',[17] and there is a similar tendency to move away from the specificity of the image, with an eschewal of detail leading to a level of typicality or abstraction of say, a 'hospital' or an 'affluent household' and so on. This statement is applicable to many other space types. For instance, many Hindi films have courtroom scenes that take place in a typical set that bear only a tenuous resemblance with the actual places and their transformed nature, but through countless repetition, create an instantly recognisable image for the filmgoers. It would be interesting for us to examine such tropes from the standpoint of 'typologies' of domestic architecture.

While there is an abundance of writing on film architecture, set design, its history and cinematic production in American cinema, referred most commonly as Hollywood, there is no book length study on the subject in Indian cinema, nor does this aspect of film making find a place in discourses of film scholarship. Passing references to set design are almost always in relation to spectacular sets appearing in certain genres of films like the historical-mythological. Examples are – *Aan* (1951) or *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960) or recent films like *Jodha Akbar* (2008), *Bahubali* and its sequel (2015, 2017). This association of set design with the spectacular ignores its ubiquitous presence in all types of films and its role in any film's visual communication in ordinary sense.

[17] Female characters in Hindi cinema are more prone to conform to this tendency, leading to stereotypical categories such as dutiful wife, suffering mother, golden-hearted courtesan or evil westernised woman.

Rachel Dwyer's essay *'Film Style: Settings and Costume'* (2002) is the only work dealing with the aspects of set design in Hindi cinema. She remarks how sets are considered a part of the main attraction of Hindi films along with stars, song and dance sequences, stunts and comedy tracks. Dwyer's essay gives a broad account of the trajectory of set design in Hindi cinema. According to her, most sets were ad-hoc or put together from lifestyle magazines until the producers began to appreciate the value of a professional art director. She discusses film settings from the perspective of fashion trends, showcasing lifestyles of urban rich, influencing popular tastes. There was a trend of hiring large bungalows for film shooting, however, in recent times, bungalows and stately homes are used only as exterior and studio sets are created for interiors which allow for more dynamic camera movement. Dwyer's account of set design in Hindi cinema is broadly sketched within the scope of an essay. She provides a few general insights into the visual character of Hindi films: for her, the filmic world is constructed and stylized rather than real or authentic and props are often used for their symbolic meaning. Any mismatch between exterior and interiors is not seen as disrupting continuity, she remarks.

The settings in contemporary Hindi cinema in general make use of real locations or sound stages and ground lots in film studios. The use of painted backdrops may have given way to blue screens but more sophisticated techniques like manipulation through scale models or CGI are not fully utilised. Full scale constructions of cityscapes or even an entire village is, on occasion, carried out on hired grounds for better control of simultaneous sound recording and autonomy of filming. In films such as *1942: A Love Story* (1994) or *Devdas* (2002), we see entire mansion houses were created as settings on studio grounds to show the wealthy and upper middle classes living princely lifestyles in palatial interiors.

We obtained a first-hand account of set construction in two locations – the Film City, Mumbai – a state facility for producing films and television shows; and a private studio of a highly successful art director in the outskirts of Mumbai. There was an opportunity to observe an interior set construction in a sound stage, and full scale house sets erected on grounds. The insights gathered during the visits confirmed the illusory nature of the sets and the vast gaps between the space of the settings and the filmic space. A film set does not resemble any realistic built space and yet it is meant to create an illusion of a real space when filmed. There is also a marked difference between the construction of sets as compared to the actual buildings – here, the planes are manipulated to enclose only a requisite amount of

volumes within the visual field of camera, thus surfaces assume a primacy more than the structure. Ease of filming is an uppermost consideration, resulting in bigger volumes than one would have in a similar house, and they need not grapple with structural limitation of roofing large spans. Conversely, camerawork combined with special effects such as manipulated perspectives can create an illusion of a labyrinthine space out of a smaller set. The visits to studio sets clarified the distinction between the filmed and the filmic spaces and helped to confirm the researcher's hunch to focus on the latter in the light of the objectives of the dissertation.

1.7.3 The city in Hindi cinema

Representation of city in Hindi cinema is a well developed subject in film scholarship, many scholars and critics have commented on its changing relationship with the urban sphere or analysed in great detail the 'city films'. Sumita Chakravarty (1993), in *'National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema 1947-1987'*, states that Hindi cinema presents the city as a microcosm of the nation via the formal structure and use of narrative space.

Madhava Prasad in his paper, 'Realism and Fantasy in Representations of Metropolitan Life in Indian Cinema' (1999) tracks Hindi cinema's attitude towards the city. He observes that Bombay is the default choice of metropolis in popular Hindi cinema. He cites the song, "*Yeh hai Bambai meri jaan"* in *CID* (1956), as evoking for an average viewer a city of pleasure and danger. Prasad alludes to the city/village binary playing out as a conflict in films such *Naya Daur* (1957) and *Ganga Jamuna* (1961). Large parts of the country were rural and the pressures of urbanizations and technological progress affecting and transforming village life were the sites of both aspiration and anxiety. Prasad cites *Shri 420* (1955) as a reformist tale of class conflict, Chakravarty (1993) speaks of it as the film in which the closed world of the city becomes a testing ground for their characters' moral sense.

Raghavendra (2008) has extensively commented on Hindi cinema's use of the city or its representation and also tracked its evolving attitudes over the passing decades. He suggests that the 'city films' of the 1950s represent a response to Nehruvian modernity in an ambivalent manner- sites of progress as social optimism as in *Aar Paar* (1954) or sites of corruption of innocence as deep pessimism as in *Shri 420* (1955). He observes that the city was a space marked out for encounters with modernity in the fifties and the sixties, whereas

the films in seventies and eighties regard the city as emblems of opportunity, nominally corrupting but full of attraction of material advancements. Prasad (1999) on the other hand, observes that the city films from the seventies onwards and in the eighties show a preoccupation with crime, poverty, urban squalor and alienation. Prasad remarks that this was also a period in which Bombay inscribed itself into the cinematic register in its own right and in more concrete form of urban existence, rather than merely being a concept city of symbolic representation of opposing values such as city-country. He cites many examples including *Deewar* and *Nayakan* (1987) which are alike in their emphasis on the confrontation between community and state, whereas in both *Parinda* (1989) and *Satya* (1998), the emphasis is on individual desire and longing for a normal life in the violence ridden life of gangster city.

In fact, *Satya* is a classic example of the trend seen at the turn of the millennium and continuing further where many films set in Bombay presented a definitive version of the city as steeped in crime and gang wars with gritty realism (Rajadyaksha, 2016). Alongside the Bombay films, there also emerged a distinct Delhi cinema, observes Rajadhyaksha, with emphasis on the contemporary, on local subaltern idioms and languages, citing examples such as *Khosla ka Ghosla* (2006) and *Oye Lucky Lucky Oye* (2008). The other contemporary trend as pointed out by Mazumdar (2007) and Raghavendra (2008) of which *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* (2001) is good example, is that of non-acknowledgement or blanking out of the messy city in neo-rich, glamorous family extravaganza or removing to altogether foreign urban locations of imaginary NRI experiences.

The 'city films' in which the Bombay city inscribed itself have been subjects of analysis by scholars and critics alike. What Madhav Prasad describes as cinema of mobilisation has attracted a good deal of attention from the film scholars, particularly *Zanjeer* and *Deewar* has been analysed for its representation of the city in relation with emergence of the "angry young man" persona of their male lead actor (Mazumdar, 2007; Prasad, 1998). Ranjani Mazumdar in *'Bombay Cinema: an archive of the city'* (2007) looks at the relationship between popular cinema and urban life as the space of what she describes as the 'cine-city'. She analyses the representation of urban landscape through cinematic articulation of issues such as anger, violence, *Bambaiya* language and gender. Sandeep Pendse (2003) has analysed in detail the narrative arc of the protagonist in *Satya* in the background of Bombay city's changing landscape and the dynamics of its gangster world.

1.7.4 House/Home in Hindi Cinema

Representations of the city and their various implications has been a favoured subject for both film and architecture scholars. House/home in Hindi cinema and their implications is on the other hand an under-studied subject in film scholarship as we observe here.

Chakravarty (1993, p.103) states that in a typical Hindi film, the central conflict engaging the characters allows for a division of narrative space. She alludes to the space of home as privatised fictional space – the part that represents harmony, happiness or refuge from the space of the big city. This public space of the city and its largely perilous nature has attracted most of the attention of film scholarship, leaving the privatised space of home largely unchartered, and its benign domesticity unquestioned, with flitting exceptions of the horror genre. Moreover, such a division of the public and private creates stark binaries ignoring the possibility of their connecting with one another.

The debate on modernity is also seen by the scholars to be framed in the urban sphere and not in the domestic; except for *Andaz* (1949) which has been pointed out by Vasudevan (2000) and Raghavendra (2008) as addressing this ambivalence in its theme. The film offers a glimpse of "rituals of modernity through modern subjects" – characters whose actions inform us, and interestingly, who live in modern houses, their architectural and spatial codes, once created, became tropes for modern living in later films. Keeping with the Nehruvian socialist mode, many films allude to class divide and inequality. For these scholars, the city remains its space of representation, however, the houses may become markers to communicate class difference goes unremarked.

Jyotika Virdi (2003) observes that the 'nation' is one of the central preoccupations in Hindi films and plays out as a prominent trope. For example, in the representation of 'the suffering mother' she observes a metonym for the nation, in the nationalist imagination. She charts the terrains of the city for such symbolic representation, as well as gender, family and community but stops short of discussing the domestic space.

Just as there are 'city films', there are bound to be 'house films'. The social as a dominant genre in the initial decades and its later manifestation in the seventies as the middle cinema indicates a strong possibility for their eminence. In the writings on these genres, we get a

glimpse of this possibility as scholars devote themselves to the discussion on the film form and narrative themes, yet the house as a concrete space in which these narratives play out remains unchartered and its narrative and symbolic role unexplored.

With reference to middle class cinema, Prasad (1998) identifies a sub-type that includes films which take up the question of space and privacy in the domestic terrain. He says, "While *Piya ka Ghar* (1972) deals with the problem of private space in a humorous fashion, *Anubhav* (1971) and *Dastak* (1970) in a complex mode, uncharacteristic in general, employs the thematic of private space to explore questions related to the institution of cinema itself as well as transition to class society." (p.164). Prasad calls them uncharacteristic because in general, Hindi cinema eschews the portrayal of private. This indicates a potential of studying the houses featured in such films and the participation of architectural space in the narrative theme. Also, such a class society is connected with the specific modes of urban living, in chawls and modern apartments. Basu Bhattacharya's critically acclaimed trilogy of *Anubhav* (1971), *Aavishkar* (1974) and *Grihpravesh* (1979) highlights the issues of conjugal space within the anonymity of apartment living, but is largely ignored in the scholarly works.[18] Collective living in chawls and its representation in films is discussed by Amrit Gangar (2011), his essay[19] is a survey of several Hindi films that feature the Bombay chawl, we will return to his work in the later part of the dissertation. Speaking of middle cinema, as mentioned earlier, the films of Hrishikesh Mukherjee are the best examples. Jai Arjun Singh (2015) while reviewing the filmmaker's oeuvre in a semi-popular work, makes a mention of houses featured in several of his films as settings for self-discovery for the characters.

The presence of the filmic house is bound to cut across all genres of film, and many related themes may arise out of their representation but are not dealt with so far. For example, among the new wave films, *Sara Akash* is an authentic portrayal of the domesticity of a middle-class

[18] This is because the domestic themes are largely absent in the scholarly works on Hindi cinema. Madhava Prasad's *Ideology of the Hindi Film: A historical Construction(1998)* is the only work that discusses films such as *Anubhav* and *Dastak* to some degree, although analysing the concrete space of the house is not the purview of his work.

[19] Amrit Gangar in his essay, Chalchitra/Chawlchitra: The Representation of Mumbai's Chawls in Hindi Films, in Nira Adarkar (Ed.), The Chawls of Mumbai: Galleries of Life (2011) has created a first survey of its kind for Hindi films that prominently feature a chawl. He discusses films such as *Asli Naqli* (1962), *Bluff Master* (1963), *Baharon ke Sapne* (1967), *Piya ka Ghar* (1972), *Mohan Joshi Haazir Ho* (1984), *Katha* (1983), *Vaastav* (1999), *Pran Jaye par Shan na Jaye* (2003), *Taxi No. 9211* (2006).

traditional family in small town Agra, while *Tarang* (1984) portrays working class Bombay in an epic conflict with the capitalist elite; in both films, domestic spaces are centre-staged and are integral to the narrative deserving a detailed analysis. Among the cinema of mobilisation, Raghavendra (2008) mentions *Trishul* (1978) as an interesting film in which the protagonist avenges his wronged mother by setting up a rival company to compete with his real-estate tycoon father. It is one of the few films that directly address the real estate scenario and the corruption of builders. Other films to take up these issues are *Dil Daulat Duniya* (1972), *Gharonda* (1977), *Jaane bhi Do Yaron* (1983), *Mohan Joshi Haazir Ho* (1984), and much later, *Khosla ka Ghosla* (2006). The issue of housing in urban living provides a backdrop to the Hindi film narrative as early as *Shri 420* (1955) but scholars have not highlighted this crucial aspect.

One of the chapters in Ranjini Mazumdar's *Bombay Cinema: An Archive of the City* (2007) is titled, 'The Panoramic Interior', in this, she discusses a post-liberalization trend of increasing use of panoramic interiors combined with design techniques as a new fetish in Hindi films. She cites family melodramas such as *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (1994), *Dil Toh Pagal Hai* (1997), and *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* (2001) in which there is a depiction of "scenic interiorization". Mise-en-scene in such films is dominated by designed interiors celebrating a spectacle of the commodification of affluence, global mobility and a renewed love for tradition. She describes such interiorization as 'virtual cities' in which the space of the real city is marginalised. The neo-traditional family space sees reinventing both 'Indian-ness' and 'modernity' according to her.

The social as a dominant genre is no longer a valid proposition in the new millennium, yet one sees several instances of domesticity and filmic houses that are remarkable. One such instance is the contemporary horror film in which the haunting occurs in middle class respectable homes of urban educated – as in *Bhoot* (2003). Sangita Gopal (2011) comments that central figure of the modern horror film is an upscale domestic space occupied by a nuclear couple. The spatial imagery privileges interiors, sanitised and chic, filled with objects of modern life – an "aspirational" space of middle-class utopia. Films such as *Bhoot* (2003), and *Vaastushastra* (2004) deal with issues of habitation and the protagonists' desire for finding, renting, owning a home that turn out to be *'unhomely'* (Gopal, 2011).

The above exposition suggests a considerable potential in excavating deeper on the subject of representation of domestic spaces in Hindi cinema which remains largely unexplored. While there are no longform works specifically on domestic space in Hindi cinema, a couple of essays deal with specific house types. One is Gangar's essay on filmic chawls (2011) as mentioned earlier, and the other is Priya Jaikumar's essay on the haveli (2017) – each dealing with the respective house type's cinematic representation. Gangar has surveyed many films that depict the life in a Bombay chawl, he considers them as narrativized record of this unique architecture. Jaikumar discusses several Hindi films featuring havelis – large courtyard homes of aristocratic elites, and shows how Hindi cinema exceeds the social history of the architectural form, and renders it a 'place of circumscribed encounter exhibiting the traditions and terrors of socially ritualised hierarchical relations.'

This suggests a possibility of taking a typological approach in our own work and focus on important urban house types for a detailed analysis of their filmic rendition. Another way is to follow a filmmaker's work and their treatment of filmic houses in the manner of Martin (2014) and Jacobs (2013). The typological approach meets the objectives of this dissertation better as it allows us to freely choose films creating a richer and more diverse filmography for the filmic house than can possibly be achieved by focussing on any one filmmaker, not to mention the limitations of auteur theory in Hindi cinema. Moreover, both Martin and Jacobs use typological classification to discuss a filmmaker's treatment of houses.

By reviewing relevant literature, on American films and Hindi films, we infer that the cinematic representations of ordinary realm of domesticity and its everydayness has a great deal of potential for a deeper study about how this lived space can unravel several facets of home/house in which its architecture participates in myriad ways. We also infer ways of contextualising and analysing the filmic space as modes of urban living. We can say that this potential is fairly unexplored in the case of Hindi cinema, doing so will add to the existing understanding of this popular medium. Such a study of domestic spaces will also contribute to understanding architecture as social space with cultural meanings and implications. Even though the category of middle cinema may have a greater potential for our study, the review of literature suggests that interesting examples of films and filmic houses are to be found in all generic and aesthetic forms in Hindi cinema, allowing us to create a rich picture of representation of the domestic realm.

1.8 Identifying Gaps and Framing Research Questions

In our survey of literature on Hindi cinema, we find only a few attempts to discuss either architectural space or the representation of the domestic sphere. Hindi cinema has dealt with urbanity in the context of the nation. Film makers have variously employed the notion of *'cine-city'* as a metaphor for power, corruption, pleasure or progress. In general, the city as a space of representation is a much explored theme in Indian film scholarship. It is clearly evident therefore, that film scholarship has largely privileged city over house. It would be interesting to reverse this privilege, by foregrounding the *'filmic house'* and its interior space and moving outwards to seek its connection with the space of the city.

There is an abundant scope for bringing the scrutiny closer to the experience of urban living to examine the possibilities of Filmic House as a represented space as well as a space of representation (of several social issues) in Hindi cinema. While much is written about the cine-city, it would be pertinent for us to examine the location of the Filmic House in its context – how does urban space extend the narrative space of the house and to what effect?

Keeping this at the forefront, based on our explorations into the current knowledge of the representation of domestic architecture in Hindi films, we frame the following research questions, which we will seek to answer in the course of the dissertation:

1. What is the nature of dwelling as represented in Hindi cinema? How is the domestic sphere represented by examining different modes of urban living in Hindi cinema?

2. How does architectural space in Hindi cinema shape the lived experience of its inhabitants? How does the Lived Space of Filmic House participate in the film narratives and what are its performative functions?

3. How does analysis of the filmic house in Hindi cinema contribute to the discourse on house/home as a social space? What implicit and explicit meanings of domesticity are communicated in the lived space of the filmic house?

4. How do modes of framing of filmic space in Hindi cinema impact the appreciation of filmic house?

5. What are the implications of studying the filmic house for practice of filmmaking and architecture?

1.9 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The canvas chosen in this thesis for discussing the filmic house is post-independence Hindi cinema. The study intends to create a discourse around the cinematic representation of domestic space. In order to create a rich picture, appropriate films are chosen for discussion from across the decades and grouped around architectural or social themes. While a certain trajectory in the manner of thinking about the domestic space is visible in the act of creating this discourse (and commented upon when appropriate), the study is not intended as a chronological account. The analysis of films is exclusively based on the filmic space, the architectural space rendered on the screen and does not delve into their production or making of sets.

1.10 Organisation of the Dissertation

The first chapter of Introduction explains some of the basic premises of the thesis, defines and creates a background for the subject of filmic house through a review of literature and sets out the objectives and research questions. The second chapter on research design lays out the manner in which this dissertation deals with the subject area. The research design includes – devising a model for analysing the filmic house, setting out a typological approach for the study, explaining the criteria of selecting films for discussion, and making a filmography for each of the three typologies under consideration. Towards the end of this chapter is described the common methodology adopted for each of the three typology chapters. The thesis has discussed three dominant urban architectural typologies – the bungalow, the chawl and the apartment block – by way of their filmic representations. A chapter each is dedicated to each typology where they become individual essays, generating a set of readings. Finally, in the last chapter, the readings generated in the previous chapters are collated to present general conclusions on the subject area.

Chapter 2

Research Design: Developing a model for film analysis, defining architectural typologies of the filmic house and making a filmography

2.0 Introduction

This dissertation seeks to unravel connections between architectural and cinematic notions of home through the idea of space in which experiential life situations are framed. The filmic space is a narrative space, in which social meanings of architectural space are sought. This chapter lays out the manner in which this dissertation deals with the subject of Filmic House. The research design includes devising a model for analysing the Filmic House, explaining the approach of selecting and categorising the films for identifiable house typologies, and describing the methodology adopted for structuring the typology chapters which follow.

How does the Filmic House in Hindi cinema shape and communicate the lived experience of its inhabitants? To address this question, we consider the filmic house as a lived space, and examine it as a represented space as well as a site for representation of explicit and implicit social meanings of domesticity. Our aim is to create a discourse around the notions of home through filmic representations. To achieve this, a model is developed around architectural theory that co-relates architectural space with lived space and use it to analyse and interpret the depiction of the filmic house in specific films. The first half of this chapter discusses this model in greater detail.

To create a fuller discourse around domestic space in Hindi films, we aim to create a rich picture of the Filmic House in post-independence Hindi cinema. The literature points to a typological approach for studying filmic houses which we find eminently suitable for Hindi cinema. In the second half of this chapter, we discuss the principal modes of urban living in terms of house types and their filmic implications. Further, we also discuss broad criteria for

film selection that allow us to create a useful filmography populated with films that centre stage houses in respective typologies as well as present a variety of roles from performative to allusive in the context of the film narrative.

2.1 Developing a Model for Film Analysis through Architecture Theory

This dissertation focuses on the architectural space of houses rendered in a film, and to that end, we take the route of architecture theory[20] to generate a methodology for film analysis. As discussed in detail in the previous chapter, the architectural space in cinema is considered as lived space charged with narrative significance.

The model for film analysis is based on architecture theory espoused by architect, historian and theorist Christian Norberg-Schulz, who is considered a central figure in architectural phenomenology. In his work, he theorises a "new approach to the problem of architectural space"[21] that goes beyond the usual abstractions and moves in the direction of idea of lived space[22] as existential space[23] which integrates with architecture several concepts from phenomenologists such as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Bollnow. In his writings, he provides a link between the philosophical tradition and architectural theory (Ots, 2011). We explore this through a brief survey of his essential writings and seek to understand how his conceptualisation of space as existential space is useful for us to generate a model for film analysis.

[20] Architectural Theory may be considered as the evolution of objective principles and subjective values that guide individual and collective decisions about, and assessments of one's own and other's architectural work. From, Korydon Smith (Ed.), *Introducing Architectural Theory: Debating a Discipline*, Routledge NY, 2012.

[21] Norberg-Schulz (1971). Existence, Space and Architecture, p.7. Here he articulates and theorises a different conception of space and develops it further in his later works as explained in this chapter.

[22] Lived space is space of inhabitants, a category for inquiring into the ways we experience spatial dimensions of our day-to-day existence.

[23] Relating to, or affirming of existence. Grounded in existence or the experience of existence. Having being in time and space.

2.1.1 The Architectural and the Phenomenological

Norberg-Schulz is one of the first to extend the notion of the phenomenological to architecture. His writings, initially channelled Heidegger in describing how structures of 'being' are revealed through structures of human existence, i.e., built space. Four of his books have been very influential in reconciling structuralism with phenomenology for the purposes of architecture theory. His first book *Intentions in Architecture* (1965) discusses architecture from a structuralist (semiotics and gestalt) lens. His next three books indicate his phenomenological turn – *Existence, Space and Architecture* (1971), *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (1980) and *The Concept of Dwelling: On the way to Figurative Architecture* (1985) – but also create a middle ground between structuralism and phenomenology (Haddad, 2010; Habib and Sahhaf, 2012). Norberg-Schulz borrows concepts from a number of thinkers in diverse fields to create a theory for interpretation of architecture that is integrative in nature.

In *Intentions in Architecture* (1965), Norberg-Schulz critiques modern architecture as having been unable to account for the significance of perception as central to the appreciation of built space.

In *Existence, Space and Architecture* (1971), he redefines the notion of architectural space as 'existential space', which is qualitative, as space of human action, marked by concepts of orientation and identification. He differentiates this space from the hitherto accepted Cartesian or mathematically defined entity; rather he structures it into organizational schemata of *levels, places or centres, directions or paths and domains*. Architecture is concretised into the phenomenon of existence. Existential space is the "the concretization of environmental schemata necessary for man's being in the world" (p.14). Moving from the architectural concept of building to the existential concept of dwelling, Norberg-Schulz locates the House as the central place of human existence. We find this articulation most useful in our study of the Filmic House (and will discuss this at length later in this chapter).

In *Genius Loci: towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (1980), he talks of the significance of 'concrete images' that constitute our experiences, which are represented by poets, architects and artists (Haddad, 2010) He stresses on the relation between the man made and the natural world and develops the notion of Genius Loci or the 'spirit of place'. The search

here is for a sense of 'place', which is not a mere location but marked by character and spirit, providing common identity to a group of human beings (Haddad, 2010).

In *The Concept of Dwelling: On the way to Figurative Architecture* (1985), he returns to the semiotic and uses behavioural studies to reconcile his phenomenological approach to the understanding of architecture. "Man's being in the world is structured, and the structure is kept and visualised by architecture" (p.29). Norberg-Schulz explores the concept of 'dwelling' as a means of going beyond the modernist stresses on functionalism in favour of a more 'figurative' architecture.

Together, these works provide the development of a way of thinking about architecture and space that is different from the otherwise dominant emphasis (in architectural academia) on formal and abstract space, and point to the primacy of spatial experience of human existence. While studying filmic space, these ideas resonate and help to develop a methodology of appreciating the architectural space in a film. Norberg-Schulz evokes Heidegger in his own articulations – "To dwell between heaven and earth, one must experience meanings; only when the man-made environment is meaningful can man be at home". (as cited in Mitrovic, 2011, p.137). He says that the given world consists of the objects we know. This is significant. When we watch a film, we experience meaning through the pixels of moving light on the screen. These meanings emerge from our own pre-existing knowledge, which allows us not only to identify landscapes, spaces and things but also to root ourselves in the perceived world.

This is especially true in the depiction of the domestic. We create meaning out of symbols. Through this cultural symbolism, architecture shows that daily life has meanings that transcend immediate situations. As observers of the filmic space we can therefore appreciate the spaces and places depicted within and beyond the confines of the narrative to build a larger (and richer) picture of the houses in which the characters of the film have their lived experiences.

Film and architecture historian Richard Koeck suggests that Norberg- Schulz's notion of space as existential can be gainfully applied to inform our understanding of film and of cinematic spaces. "…if we take one of Norberg-Schulz's central claims, that man 'gradually constructs the image of a structured world, in which the notion of space, that is existential

space, forms an integral part'[24], similar assumptions could be made about our reading of film. It is well established in film studies that the representation of a film space on the screen plays a vital part in the reading of the film." (Koeck, 2013, p.66).

In our work, we propose to advance this mode of thinking about architecture for film analysis and interpretation. Approaching cinema from the perspective of such a theory of architectural space can yield new ways of looking and understanding how films communicate meaning. Combining both architectural and cinematic notions of domestic space will add to the understanding of the notion of home. Such an inter-disciplinary approach will provide a fresh perspective of both fields.

2.1.2 Norberg Schultz' Schema of Lived Space as Existential Space

In *Existence, Space and Architecture* (1971), Norberg-Schulz redefines existential space as "a relatively stable system of perceptual schemata, or 'images' of the environment." (p.17). This definition brings together all our central concerns—the location of the lived experience in the environment, in our case the built environment, and the appreciation of existential space seen through the perceptual or through images, in our case through film. Norberg-Schulz claims that a necessary part of his 'being in the world' is man's architectural space as a concretisation of man's environment. Space is therefore a dimension of human existence. Existential space establishes a relation between man and his environment that makes one belong to a social and cultural identity (p.14).

This relationship is expressed in four levels of existential space each corresponding with a mode of dwelling –
geography and landscape
the urban
the house
the thing
– Wherein he considers the level of the house as the "central place of human existence" (p. 31). From the level of nature to the level of things, the range narrows and precision of form and structure increases; says Norberg-Schulz: nature contains, while things focus.

[24] Norberg-Schulz, 1985, p.29.

Norberg-Schulz further qualifies each level with elements such as place or centre (proximity), path (continuity) and domain (enclosure) that articulate all the levels of dwelling mentioned above (p.18). He illustrates these concepts with concrete examples derived from multiple sources including the work of Mircea Eliade, Otto Bollnow, Gaston Bachelard, Jean Piaget and Kevin Lynch among others. The levels and the elements together form an organizational schema of existential space that forms a structured totality of man's dwelling in an environment.

This is explained in the graphical representation (Figure 2.1) which places his essential schema of levels and elements, with the level of 'the house' in the centre.

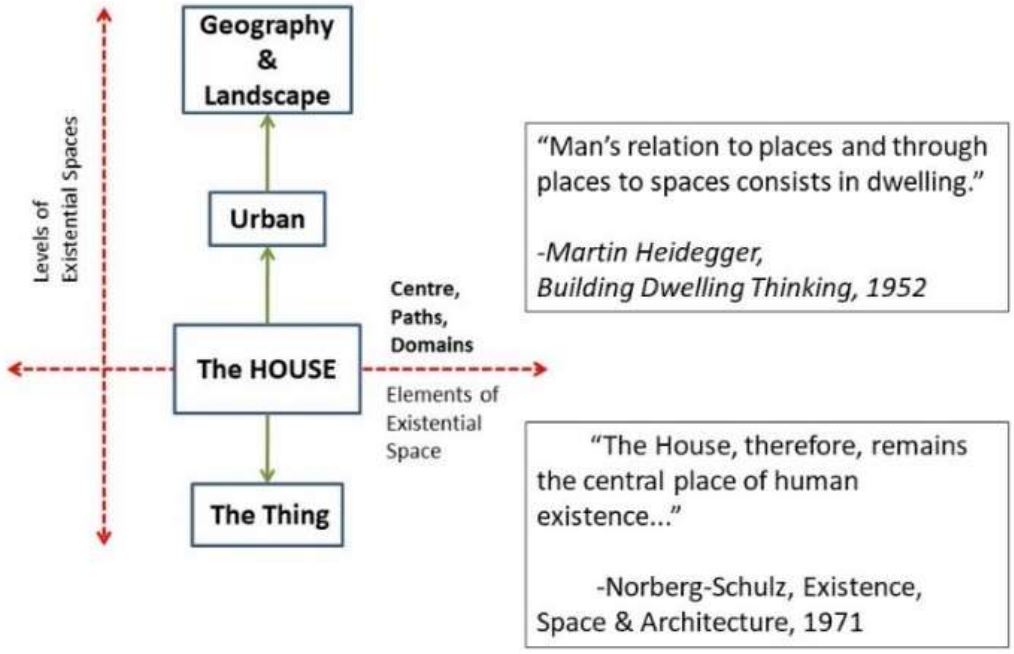


Figure 2.1: Graphical representation of schema of existential space based on Norberg-Schulz (1971)

Norberg-Schulz takes this schema of existential space and creates a correspondence with architectural space. The levels of existential space which are theorised in environmental terms by him, are then correspondingly described as concrete architectural spaces of Landscape, City, Building and Thing (objects within a building) respectively. "Architectural space is a concrete physical aspect of the relationship between man and environment." (1971, p.37). Based on such a schema, Relph (2012) has suggested an interpretative matrix for

architectural space. Relph in his essay suggests that Norberg-Schulz provides a comprehensive concept of 'lived space' by considering 'place' as a 'space' endowed with 'character' – a concrete term for human existence.

We propose to deploy this schema of existential space to create a correspondence with filmic space as it is considered as lived space by us and conceptualise an interpretive model to study the Filmic House. This also aligns with our objective of discussing films that centralise the house in the narrative space and then explore its relationship with the urban environment or any larger geographic or symbolic landscape.

2.2 Using the Schema of Existential Space for Analysing Filmic House

Norberg-Schulz in his schema describes a hierarchy of existential space from the most comprehensive to the minutest, defining man's relation with his environment. In this, the level of House assumes a central position, extending both outward and inward, relating with higher and lower modes of dwelling. "The more man is 'at home', the more precisely he can define his environment." (1971, p.31).

Our interpretive model for film analysis adopts these levels and redefines them in cinematic terms, adapting the schema suitably to recognise its limitations when applied in a different context. Let us elaborate this by first considering Norberg-Schulz's appreciation of a particular level of existential space and then its adaptation for corresponding filmic space.

2.2.1 Urban Geography

We begin by considering the higher levels of existential space in the schema that form outward extension from the level of 'the House' and provide a context to it.

The level of 'Geography & Landscape' in the original schema of Norberg-Schulz (1971) pertains to a larger sense of environment or natural landscape, the place for natural dwelling, whereas the level of 'The Urban' is determined by social interaction, being a part of the social context, a public realm for houses to exist. In his later work (1985), he looks at this notion from across the levels and introduces categories of settlement, urban space, public building or institution, and house. The urban space is therefore an outcome of Landscape and

Geography, Norberg-Schulz calls this mode *collective dwelling*. It is a place of informal gathering or accidental encounter. Within this larger urbanity, smaller collectives are formed based on complimentary values. Norberg-Schulz refers to these as public dwellings or institutions, where a more structured kind of togetherness is enacted.

Seen together, the two levels (Geography & Landscape and the Urban) form a geographical context to the house and determine a known and safe world that secures the inhabitants' foothold in relation to the unknown world around. Here, inhabitants also conduct their lives based on a series of mutual agreements and negotiations, forming a society. Geography for the community of humans is also a settlement, a building in its urban context is also an act of settling. This is according to Norberg-Schulz, "an answer to the original problem of finding a foothold in a given world." (1985, p.13). The levels are largely the 'ground' on which the 'figure'[25] of existential space of the house develops.

For film interpretation, while adopting the schema of existential space for analysing Filmic House, we need to adapt it to our objectives and specific context of Hindi cinema. While Norberg-Schulz considers natural landscape as integral to define the complete environment, films that focus on tales of urban living might not feature them or do so minimally. This is the main limitation of applying the schema for film interpretation. We find his later exposition of settlement, urban space and institutions as modes of public dwelling more relevant for our purpose. Moreover, considering the higher levels together to imply urban geography where nature, settlement and urban space may form a part is a more useful way of incorporating them in our model while still keeping the spirit of the original schema. For instance, Bombay's seashore and the sweep of buildings along the water's edge forms a ubiquitous feature of many Hindi films that establishes the context for the narrative.

Thus, in our model, we propose a category of 'urban geography'[26] as an integrated level of existential space which will help to establish the outward context for the filmic house and

[25] This refers to the architectural notions of figure and ground. For example, the city has a figural character in relation to the surrounding open landscape. Or buildings have a figural character in relation to the plots and the streets.

[26] Urban geography is a study of cities and urban processes. It pertains to various aspects of urban life and the built environment. and notions of socio-spatial inclusions, exclusions, and everyday life. It is concerned with the ways in which cities and towns are constructed, governed and experienced. Urban geographical research can be part of both human geography and physical geography.

allow an analysis of its interrelationship with urban space and its features. Jacobs (2013, p.138) cites Hitchcock having stated in relation to how he chooses locations for his films, "Many filmmakers forget how important geography is to a story." Cinema is both an index to our urban past and an influence on future forms, according to Richard Martin (2016) as our impressions of cities have been shaped by the screen. It would be pertinent for us to examine how the film imagines the urban space and how it extends the narrative space of the filmic house.

In general, in Hindi cinema one is made aware of the division of space between the urban and the domestic according to Chakravarty (1993), where the former signifies a space of opportunity or danger while the latter signifies a space of retreat and refuge. The relationship between the two could be more complex than this in many films, its many nuances need to be brought out that will add richness to the analysis of the filmic house.

2.2.2 The Filmic House

While discussing the level of 'house', Norberg-Schulz refers to Heidegger's essay on dwelling and the etymological roots of 'building' which goes back to 'dwelling', stressing the role of the house as the "central place of human existence".

> "The House, therefore, remains the central place of human existence, the place where the child learns to understand his being in the world, and the place from which man departs and to which he returns." (1971, p. 31)

According to Norberg-Schulz, the level of the house occupies a central position and gets its dimensions from extended bodily movements and actions, as well as from the 'territorial' demands of the dweller. He describes the house as 'private space' which brings us 'inside' and represents the need for 'being situated'. In his later work, *The Concept of Dwelling: On the Way to Figurative Architecture* (1985), he elaborates this further. He says, dwellings comprise of spaces where withdrawal is possible, which is necessary to develop an identity (p.13). Norberg-Schulz calls this the *private dwelling* or the House. This is in relation with and in contrast to the *public dwelling* in 'public space' of city that is 'outside'. The House is the place where "where man gathers and expresses those memories which make up his personal world" (1985, pp.13). The house is a private place where an inhabitant can seek both

.

solitude as well as a place to develop, it is a concretization of an individual's existential space.

Further, the house expresses the structures of dwelling as a space consisting of differentiated places. The house is primarily considered as a 'place', but as such it also contains an interior structure of dwelling with 'domains' and basic directions of vertical and horizontal as 'paths'. Although essentially, an interior space, in its relation to the urban level, it functions as a landmark – that is, its properties as a mass and form also become relevant. Thus, the house as a place has a twin aspect of mass and space.

Similarly, for film interpretation, the Filmic House occupies a central position in our model as an interplay between architectural and filmic space, and will be analysed in terms of its exterior appearance, the interior organisation of domains and their inter-relationship, paths and places, its architectural mise-en-scene and filmic specificity of articulation of space through camerawork and shot sequencing. This analysis will reveal the situatedness of the film characters who dwell in the houses as their personal worlds and lend them an identity. The analysis will also enable us to comment on the attribute of the filmic house as inner and private space.

2.2.3 The Thing

'The Thing' occupies the lowest level in Norberg-Schulz's schema, and is determined by the body itself – as in sitting, bending, lying down or by the hand, as in grasping, in the carrying of articles. This is the most tactile of the four levels of existential space. Gaston Bachelard (1958) also gives an interpretation of such 'things' as cupboards and chest of drawers – their use, according to him, are actions of hiding and revealing, of conserving and remembering.

For film interpretation, this level consists of things, objects or props (short for property) used to populate the film setting. They are often used for their narrative functions providing background information about the moods and status of the characters. Filmic techniques can bring them into sharp focus to heighten their meaning-making abilities and invest them with symbolic meanings. Props deployed in the scenography of a film contribute to its iconography, most filmmakers exploit this for creating a distinctive visual style. The objects

or things within the filmic house can denote time and place as well as speak of status and identity of the characters and provide a symbolic charge to the narrative space.

2.2.4 Summarising 'The Model of Filmic Dwelling'

Thus, in the model for film interpretation, we have adapted levels of existential space to filmic space and refer to it as 'The model of Filmic Dwelling' (Figure 2.2). In the context of any given film, a house will assume its full significance through the analysis of its form, internal spatial arrangements, the objects within the filmic space as well as its relationship with the urban milieu in which it exists. The 'filmic house' remains at the core of the analysis, which then moves inwards and outwards, creating a fuller impression of the environment of the film in terms of its architectural space. The objects within the filmic space assume the level of 'the thing'— providing a heightened focus at the smallest level. Together, these two levels constitute the modes of *private dwelling* in the model. At the higher level, 'urban geography' is discussed as immediate and overall context that extends the narrative space of the house forming the aspects of *public dwelling*.

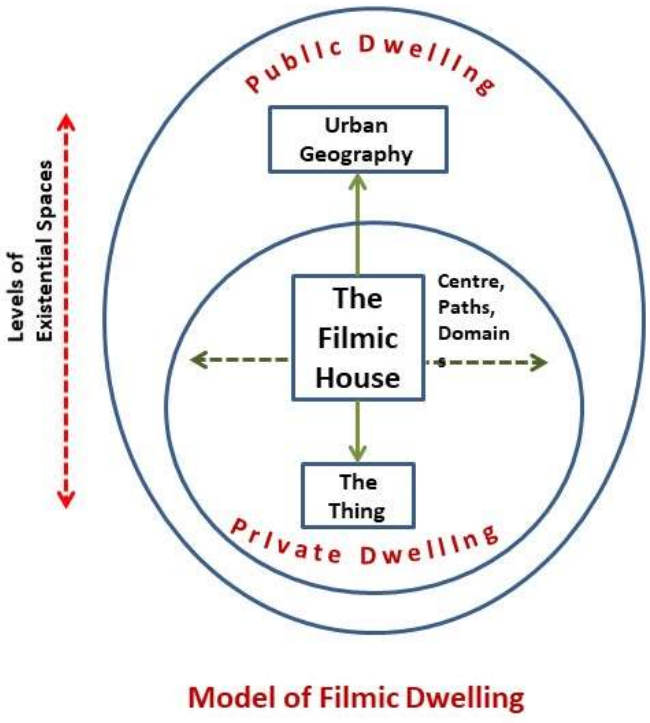


Figure 2.2: Model of Filmic Dwelling – A model for film analysis and interpretation

Each of the levels of existential space in the interpretive model is linked to the lived experience of the characters in a given film and are determined by the bodily interaction in the space besides their physical attributes. This is adapted from Norberg-Schulz's schema where he correlates the levels with the body in space. An individual orients the self by moving through the environment (up down, front back, in out—defined by movement) and identifies their place within it. As already explained separately for each level, we summarise this relation for the filmic space.

The Level	Body in Space	Mode of Dwelling
Urban Geography	Interaction with urban space and urban landscape, Social interactions, Common 'forms of life'	Public Dwelling
Filmic House	Extended bodily movements and actions, Territorial demands	Private Dwelling
The Thing	Most tactile interaction with Hand/ Body	

Table 2.1: Correlation of levels of existential space and their interaction with human body

In this model of film interpretation, the levels of existential space are defined in filmic terms. In the context of a film's narrative, they come together as mise-en-scene to describe its spatial environment. Just like Norberg-Schulz's schema, these levels are not mutually exclusive, but are simultaneous and related. "The interactions of these levels constitute the structure of existential space". (1971, p.27). The levels also have a capacity of representing each other. According to Norberg-Schulz: very often the higher levels are concretised by the lower and in reverse, lower levels project themselves outwards onto the environment. Thus, in our model for film interpretation, the levels are not considered in compartments but understood as providing a broad framework for analysis to produce a comprehensive structure of lived space in a film centred on a house.

2.3 Architectural Typologies of the Filmic House in Hindi Cinema

This section describes the typological approach adopted for the study of Filmic House. Film scholars have observed a tendency in Hindi cinema to transform an individual into a 'type', displaying common characteristics of appearance, behavioural tics or verbal quirks, affording easy recognition for the viewers. Similarly, there is a tendency of typicality or abstraction in the rendering of filmic spaces, with few signifiers standing in for a 'hospital',

say, or a ‘courtroom’, or an ‘affluent household’ and so on. Architectural or building typologies in Hindi films represent equivalents in real life by displaying certain similarities in form or function. Such representations allow for quick identification and to communicate pre-determined meanings. When it comes to the category of ‘House’, we can identify several such types in filmic representations. These types are ‘typical-ised’ from their equivalents in real life.

In Hindi films, the ease of consumption of content has been the result of an accretive influence of visual imagery (tropes) that the audience has, over time, become familiar with. This has led to a tradition of a naturalization of visual expectations in the presence of specific signifiers in the mise-en-scene. For example, crumbling plaster becomes connotative of poverty, a grand staircase connotative of wealth, and so on.

Such signifiers are first visible in the creation of establishing shots in Hindi films, whether exterior or interior. Thus we can find connotative shots for architectural typologies such as palaces (mahals for the rulers or aristocrats), havelis (for the landed gentry), *kothas* (for the *tawaif*), mansions (for the urban wealthy), bungalows (for the urban upper class, also for joint families), hotels (for the businessmen and those on the move), hostels (for the new migrants in the city to first find shelter), apartments (for middle class cosmopolitan living, especially for a nuclear family), chawls (for lower middle class community living), *kholis* (single room abodes for those with the least resources), urban huts (for the working class) and slums (for those who make their own abode in illegal conditions, without fixed tenure, under the ever present threat of demolition).

The academic studies centred on domestic spaces in cinema (Jaikumar, 2017; Martin, 2016; Jacobs, 2013; Gangar, 2011) discussed in the previous chapter suggest a strong direction for a typological approach. The above exposition shows that such an approach is quite suited for Hindi cinema. We propose to study three dominant architectural typologies to create a rich picture of the Filmic House—the bungalow, the apartment and the chawl. The attempt here is to mobilise architectural and filmic characteristics to derive insights for the house type. For this study, we have considered only such house types that are a part of some form of organised urban system of design and delivery of homes and not informally put together dwellings such as in a slum.

Let us briefly discuss the defining features of these typologies of urban living, their genesis in relation to Bombay and their filmic implications. The following passage from the Gazetteer of Bombay by S. M. Edwardes (1909) is instructive to understand the different housing situations emerging in colonial Bombay at the beginning of twentieth century:

"Under the pressures of land prices, the old style Hindu house with its *otla*[27] and *masaghar*[28] [is beginning to] disappear under the pressures of space and high rents. Only the wealthiest Indians still lived in houses: Parsis lived in European style houses, and Bhatias, Banias and Jains lived in traditional houses that allowed for separate women's apartments in the rear of the house. While the very poor lived in huts scattered around the city, the majority of the working classes and lower middle classes were making do in chawls. But for the more affluent middle classes, a new form of dwellings emerged known as the flats." (p.199).

This passage attests to the presence of both traditional houses and colonial style bungalows that housed the wealthy natives and influential British respectively. Also mentioned are scattered huts, which not just housed the poor as Edwardes indicates but in the form of vernacular cottages, they formed the fabric of several urban villages that nestled within the emerging industrial city. Together, each one of the above is a stand-alone house, whether small cottage or large bungalow. The passage also alludes to the already emerging collective housing typology of chawls with rows of tenements stacked on multiple floors. Chawls were built to house a large number of migrant workers (and later, their families) who provided the work force for the mercantile and industrial powerhouse. The passage further indicates another emerging housing typology known as blocks of flats (or apartment blocks) that provided an alternative to the white-collar migrants who could not afford independent houses and found chawl living unappealing.

R. S. Deshpande, a civil engineer and commentator on house designs, in his book *Modern Ideal Homes for India* (1939), describes the difference between chawl tenement and a flat (or apartment). He defines the flat as "self-contained, convenient, small dwelling, within a large building…" (p.131). By self-contained he refers to the fact that all essential functions were contained within the walls of the dwelling, including the kitchen and crucially, the bathroom

[27] Otla refers to an extended plinth of a house, facing the street, usually covered by extension of roof.

[28] *Masaghar* or *Mazghar* (Marathi) refers to a ceremonial front room in a traditional Indian house

and toilet. The self-contained nature of the flat was what distinguished it from the humbler cousin, the tenement in a chawl, according to Deshpande.

Thus, in the early part of the twentieth century, three major typologies were established in the housing scenario in Bombay and they continued to flourish in the modernising metropolis. The chawls packed with tenements continued to be built in the inner city until the forties, while the block of flats or apartment blocks using modern construction techniques continued to evolve, becoming a dominant housing typology in the growing suburbs in the decades to come. The bungalow would also evolve to adopt modernist expression but was limited to certain parts of the city, as rising land prices would make them unaffordable for most. We propose to take up these house types for studying their representations in Hindi cinema.

Thus, the typologies of urban living identified for this study are:

1. The Filmic House- Stand-alone House/ Bungalow
2. The Filmic House- Chawl
3. The Filmic House- Apartment Block

In Hindi cinema, we can observe representations of these house types across the decades. We recognize that in cinema, unlike in real-world architectural typologies, one would observe fluidity, overlaps and artistic license in the construction of the filmic house which aides as well as directs the narrative. Notwithstanding that, it would be interesting to draw parallels and draw out conclusions based on that.

The most ubiquitous urban house type observable in Hindi cinema is the stand-alone dwelling, home to a single family, more often than not, a joint family. This type of house comes in many forms and sizes, ranging from a hut, a cottage, a vernacular or a modern bungalow to a palatial mansion; from very poor and ultra-rich families in Hindi cinema appear to reside in such stand-alone dwellings discussed under a common umbrella term -- bungalow.

The Chawl as a residential type is deployed in many Hindi films to provide an architectural grain that indicates the working-class nature of the characters. In a few films, however, the chawl building and its social architecture is given a centre-stage in the narrative, and shall be discussed for its characteristic form of communal living.

There are only a few films that feature apartment blocks but those that do portray a more urbane form of living than in a networked urban village, a ground hugging bungalow or a bustling chawl. While the apartment block only occasionally features in a film, a single apartment or a flat is not so uncommon, featuring narratives involving a nuclear family.

2.4 *Shri 420* (1955): house typologies as an extension of character types

One of the earliest films to exhibit a variety of building typologies demonstrating various modes of urban living (strongly associated with its principal characters) in the specific context of Bombay city was *Shri 420* (1955). This is one of the iconic films in Hindi Cinema. In its time it was a super hit and, ever since, has remained in public consciousness. In a sense, this film provides a template for several tropes that followed in Hindi cinema.

It is a 'city-film', a socialist commentary on the big bad city, but has underlying to it is the issue of habitation in the city that is so skewed against its poor. The film also deploys several tropes of habitation or house types to reinforce its central message of class divide in an exploitative city.

The film presents stereotypical characters such as Vidya, a poor and honest school teacher; Maya, a socialite and temptress; Seth Sonachand, a corrupt capitalist and Ganga Mai, a kind hearted worker by locating them in matching settings such as chawl and humble cottage, posh club and hotel room, colonial style mansion, and slum respectively. There is a correspondence in *Shri 420* with real-world urban housing types in the context of Bombay city. Several tropes are employed to denote their presence and connote their specific meanings. The epilogue of the film even shows for a brief moment a township of apartment blocks, nestled in a valley – a utopian imagination as a counter to the bleakness of city. Raj the protagonist who has arrived in Bombay in search for honest work ends up becoming a con

man in the service of the corrupt Seth[29] and his business associates and has no fixed location in the narrative.

We can summarize the building types of *Shri 420* associated with the respective characters as follows (Table 2.2):

Name	Character	House Typology
Ganga Mai	Fruit Seller/ hawker	Slum
Sheth Sonachand	Capitalist	Palatial Bungalow
Vidya	Working class	Chawl, Vernacular cottage
Maya	Upper class socialite	Hotel room
Raj	Migrant (educated), Nomad	No fixed domesticity
Raj and Vidya (epilogue)	Ideal middle-class citizens	Township of apartment blocks

Table 2.2: *Shri 420* – association of character types with house types

2.4.1 Sample Analysis of Shri 420 using the Model of Filmic Dwelling

Let us analyse *Shri 420* using the framework of the model of film interpretation elaborated earlier. The analysis is centered on the category of house, its architectural mise-en-scene, the objects within, to highlight narrative significance and performative roles and its connections with urban geography.

The film explores the binaries of socialism and capitalism and of class difference, which are projected by differing value systems of the characters and the contrasting worlds they inhabit. Wealth, luxury, poverty are denoted by way of exteriors and interiors of houses in the film. Thus, Vidya's house located within a lower class chawl neighborhood, a dilapidated cottage, with precarious wooden posts, fallen roof tiles and peeling plaster, is recognizable as a working class dwelling even if it is two storied with multiple rooms inside. In contrast, the Seth's bungalow, a colonial styled mansion, sparkles with a balustraded entryway and imposing balconies overlooking, almost dominating over the nearby slum. The Seth has a habit of appearing in his balcony to berate the slumdwellers below whenever they disturb his slumber by breaking into song and dance. The connotations of the balcony as a perch for a higher up in the social hierarchy talking down to the unwashed masses is unmistakable.

[29] Seth, a colloquial appellation for a wealthy merchant, Hindi cinema's favourite stereotype for a heartless and corrupt capitalist.

In the narrative space of the film, Raj the protagonist oscillates between worlds of honesty and corruption and has no fixed location (unlike the others). An architectural device of 'portal' or gateway is deployed in the settings to indicate this slippage.

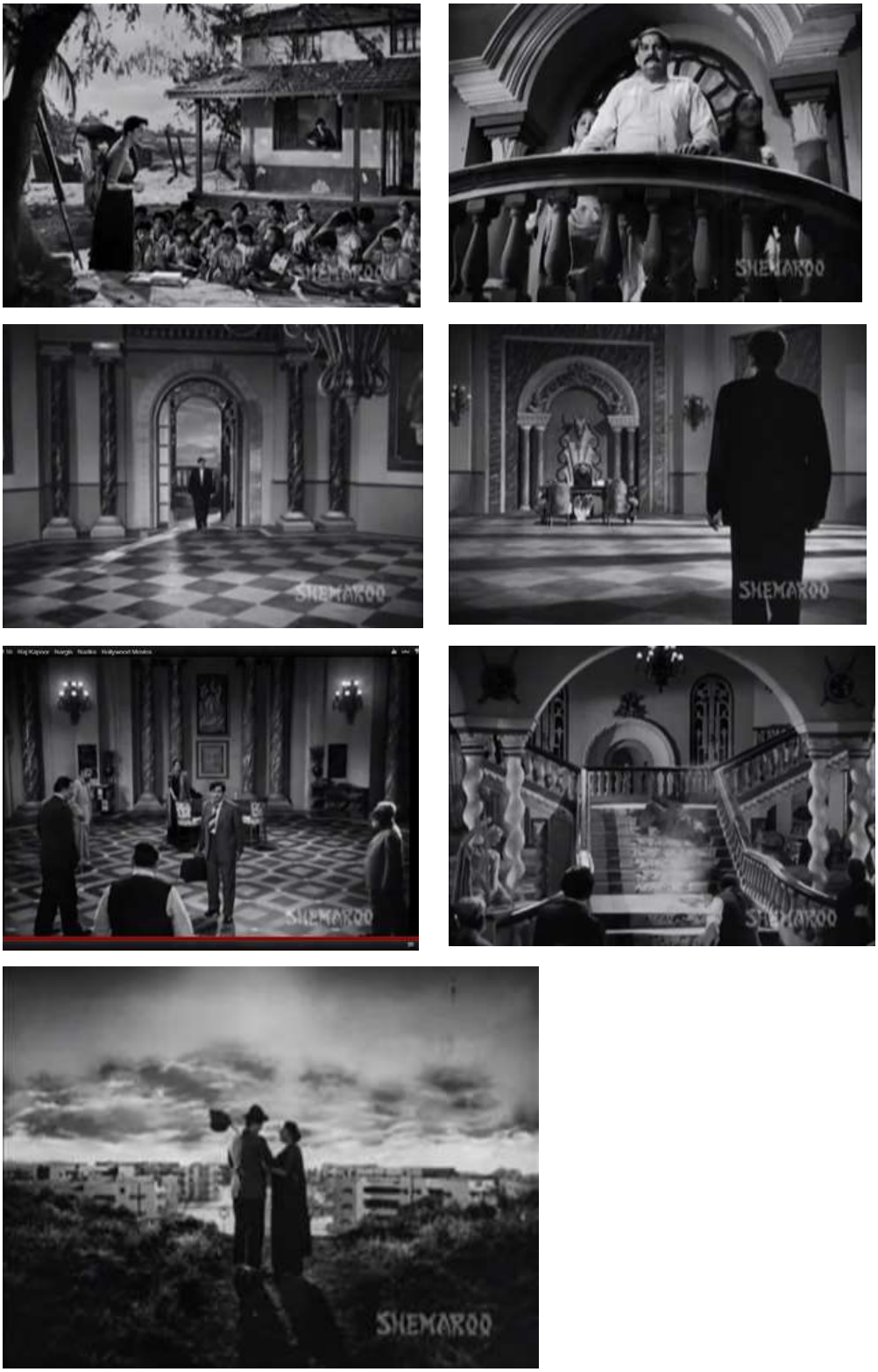


Figure 2.3: Stills from the film *Shri 420*

Raj's entry in the world of *charsau beesi*[30] is framed in spatial terms when he leaves behind the world of his hard-working friends and enters the portals of Seth Sonachand's bungalow. The larger than life scale of the space dwarfs his figure, as if lying in wait to engulf yet another victim. As he approaches the Seth seated at a desk framed by an arched niche with an image of a horned beast, the camera reveals large portraits of saintly figures hung on the walls. These contradictory objects dramatize sinister duplicity of the Seth, his outer garb of saintliness and an inner world of evil.

One particular scam devised by the Seth is that of promising a house to the poor for one hundred rupees. This scheme is named '*Janata Ghar'* (people's house) that promises to the poor a house that has a room, a kitchen and a verandah. Pamphlets and posters (in three languages) are distributed advertising this scheme with a slogan – "No need to live on pavement anymore". Poor in large numbers are enticed and line up to deposit the required sum put together from their meager savings. When Raj realizes that his own friends from the slum have fallen for the con, he confronts the Seth and demands an explanation as to how anyone can build a house in one hundred rupees. The Seth replies that he is not selling a house, he is trading in dreams. Needs and aspirations of the homeless are simultaneously objectified here, with the elusive promise of fulfillment, which is why the con succeeds. The absent house dominates the present circumstance.

Seth Sonachand's bungalow becomes the location for the tumultuous climax of the film, where the struggle between greed and honesty reaches a tipping point. It places Raj in the centre of the very space where his earlier initiation into the world of con took place. He now clutches a bag supposedly containing the loot from the '*Janata Ghar'* scam. Suddenly, one by one several doors open, from each one emerges one of the Sheth's partners. A high angled shot captures them closing in menacingly on Raj from all sides. In the ensuing melee, everyone tries to grab hold of the bag for themselves. The chase takes Raj and the businessmen up and down a grand staircase, and through wide corridors opening onto lavish rooms. Raj is shot several times by the Seth, and comes crashing down the steps. The baroque staircase framed by a grand arch provides a dramatic setting for this fall from grace, witnessed by the slum dwellers who had gathered in anticipation of receiving keys of their promised homes.

[30] A colloquial term, denoting cheating and fraud, derived from Section 420 of Indian Penal Code, which deals with cheating and fraud. The film derives its title from the same source.

The fall however leads to redemption as the entire act was a set up by a remorseful Raj to expose the businessmen. Once Raj has proved his innocence to the people gathered, he breaks into a speech. The staircase itself now becomes a pulpit for launching into an exhortation for the masses to rise and demand their due, such a revolution being the way for the nation to progress.

The two houses, the vernacular cottage and colonial styled bungalow, are meant to perform their symbolic roles of locating the stark binary of value systems in the city. This they do by their iconic presence more than the lived experience within. The cottage even though existing in the context of a neighborhood, is placed at its fringe where the painted backdrop hints a pristine sea shore in the background and the bungalow is placed cheek by jowl with a slum. Such juxtapositions in the settings in the former case elevates the purity of the heroine and in the latter reinforces the inequalities inherent in the city, the higher/lower placement furthering this hierarchy. The interiors and the things within them follow the same theme of connotating the contrast. The bungalow itself is presented as a theatre of capitalist greed, as a den for the corrupt dealings of the Seth and his acolytes. The absent house, the promised *Janata Ghar,* articulates the aspirations of homeless in a newly minted republic and is emblematic of the state's inability to house all its urban populace, leaving the field open for the private players to step in and capitalize or even exploit this situation.

The prologue of the film shows the nomad protagonist traverse various natural and rural landscapes before arriving in the city that at once stole his innocence: *"Yeh Bambai hai mere bhai, yahan sab kuch bikta hai."* (This is Bombay my dear man, everything is on sale here). The epilogue mirrors the prologue in reverse. We see Raj walking away from the city, down a path in the middle of a vast landscape. Here, he is joined by Vidya who then leads him atop a small hillock from which they behold nestled in the valley a township of small, modernist apartment blocks. This is a utopian vision of a classless society, away from the city, where dreams are not traded but actually take shape.

In *Shri 420,* Bombay is presented as a site of corruption and this is linked to the various Filmic Houses. The luxurious space of bungalow extends to the city directly in the spaces of swanky clubs and hotels as dens of vices, as playgrounds for the rich capitalists. While the toiling classes are seen to be occupying streets and the pavements, the messy reality and complexity of the urban space, the two worlds do not meet in the film.

2.5 Criteria for Film Selection

In order to create a fuller discourse around the Filmic House, and to create a rich picture of representation of domestic realm in post-independence Hindi cinema, films need to be identified that may feature domestic spaces of significant character and narrative value. Although most films would feature houses in some form or the other, not all of them feature them in significant ways. We need to create a pool of films around which a focussed discourse on the Filmic House can be created, and for that we require to lay down certain criteria that will aid us to select suitable films.

Our objective here is to identify themes or patterns in the representation of the space of domesticity in Hindi cinema using the typologies discussed above. To make a selection of films for analysis and discussion, the following criteria are laid down that will guide that selection.

1. **Films that centralise domestic space of significant architectural characteristics.**

Films are considered in which one or more domestic spaces are principal settings in which the bulk of the narrative unfolds and have distinctive typological or spatial characteristics.

2. **Filmic Houses having an integral narrative and performative role in the film.**

Films are considered in which the domestic spaces have performative functions, communicating about the characters, their family lives, status and moods. Films in which the filmic house has a significant bearing on the narrative, where they play an integral role in the film narrative.

3. **Films with narratives of urban living that communicate explicit and implicit meanings of domesticity.**

Films are considered in which the narrative spaces communicate explicit and implicit meanings of domesticity and its socio-cultural notions in varied forms and modes of urban living. These filmic spaces will reveal meaningful linkages and relations between domestic realm and its urban environment and provide a possibility of exploring meanings in the larger scheme.

Giuliana Bruno in *Atlas of Emotions* (2002) cites *Craig's Wife* (1936) by Dorothy Arzner to emphasise the central role of architecture of the house in the film's narrative which offers a spatial meditation on the relationship between the house and wife. Harriet Craig, the upper-class housewife, over the course of the film becomes one with her house and comes to embody a literalised definition of the term housewife. Thus, both the character and the space of the house are main actors in the film.

"Architecture is conceived not merely as a set, nor is decor simply an object of set design. The house is the centre of the film- indeed; it is the film's main protagonist. It is the core of (domestic) action and movement." (p. 89).

According to Bruno, as the example of *Craig's Wife* suggests, the house is both an architectural and a cinematic construction, playing a central role and expressing meanings. She strongly advocates to mobilise the connections between architectural and cinematic perspectives in such films in order to further studies of homes and private life. The movie 'house' (or Filmic House, as our preferred term) according to her is a habitation of gender dwelling and gender roaming, constantly transforming the views of public and private by turning them inside out. (p.92).

Guided by these criteria, we can now create a filmography featuring Hindi films that centralise domestic spaces, particularly of the three identified urban house types, for their representational qualities and performative abilities in equal measure.

2.6 Making a Filmography

The filmography for this dissertation is populated with films spanning seven decades of post-independence Hindi cinema beginning from the fifties. The films for each of the three house types are chosen guided by criteria described above – for a significant presence of filmic house performing a vital role, such that they are potentially a rich source of analysis. The filmography includes films that have been taken up for discussion in the respective chapters on each typology – for a general discussion forming the background for the typology and some select ones for a detailed analysis.

Literature on Hindi cinema has pointed several possible candidates for choosing films. Another important source for creating the selection is *Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema*

(1994) by Ashish Rajadhyaksha and Paul Willemen. Here, the year-wise entries were read through to pick out narratives of domestic life, which were then further cross checked with online sources to ascertain their suitability. This was greatly aided by the literature on film history when it discussed domestic spaces directly or indirectly. Lastly, the personal and popular engagement of a virtual lifetime of watching Hindi films has suggested a few films that have eluded attention of film scholarship and even receded in collective memory, but, as will be shown, have very interesting possibilities of analysis.

2.6.1 Typology-wise Filmography

BUNGALOW/ Stand Alone House			
Andaz	1949	Mehboob Khan	Bombay
Awara	1951	Raj Kapoor	Bombay
Shri 420	1955	Raj Kapoor	Bombay
Musafir	1957	Hrishikesh Mukherjee	Unknown
Waqt	1965	Yash Chopra	Delhi
Sara Aakash	1969	Basu Chatterjee	Agra
Garm Hawa	1973	M.S. Sathyu	Agra
Tere Ghar ke Samne	1963	Vijay Anand, Biren Nag	Delhi
Teen Bahuraniyan	1968	S. S. Vasan, S. Balasubramanian	Bombay
Ittefaq	1969	Yash Chopra	Bombay
Bawarchi	1972	Hrishikesh Mukherjee	Bombay
Faraar	1975	Shankar Mukherji	Bombay
Dil, Daulat, Duniya	1972	Prem Narayan Arora	Bombay
Chupke Chupke	1975	Hrishikesh Mukherjee	Bombay
Golmaal	1979	Hrishikesh Mukherjee	Bombay
Khubsoorat	1980	Hrishikesh Mukherjee	Pune
Masoom	1983	Shekhar Kapur	Delhi
Hum Aapke Hain Kaun	1994	Sooraj Barjatya	Bombay
Hum Sath Sath Hain	1999	Sooraj Barjatya	Bombay
Kaun	1999	Ram Gopal Varma	Panvel (Bombay)
Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham	2001	Karan Johar	Delhi
Devdas	2002	Sanjay Leela Bhansali	Bengal, Calcutta
CHAWL			
Shri 420	1955	Raj Kapoor	Bombay
Asli Naqli	1962	Hrishikesh Mukherjee	Bombay
Biradari	1966	Ram Kamlani	Bombay
Biwi Aur Makan	1965	Hrishikesh Mukherjee	Bombay
Dastak	1970	Rajindersingh Bedi	Bombay
Piya Ka Ghar	1972	Basu Chatterjee	Bombay
Katha	1983	Sai Paranjape	Bombay
Mohan Joshi Hazir Ho	1984	Saeed Mirza	Bombay
Kali Salwar	2002	Farida Mehta	Bombay
Dhobighat	2010	Kiran Rao	Bombay

APARTMENT BLOCK			
Teen Batti Char Rasta	1953	V. Shantaram	Bombay
Jagte Raho	1956	A. Mitra, S. Mitra	Calcutta
Benaam	1974	Narendra Bedi	Bombay
Mili	1975	Hrishikesh Mukherjee	Bombay
Anubhav	1971	Basu Bhattacharya	Bombay
Grihapravesh	1979	Basu Bhattacharya	Bombay
Bhoot	2003	Ram Gopal Varma	Bombay
Trapped	2016	Vikramaditya Motwane	Bombay
Pihu	2018	Vinod Kapri	Delhi

Table 2.3: Typology-wise Filmography for Filmic House in Hindi cinema

2.7 Methodology for the Typology Chapters

The three typologies of Filmic House – Stand-alone House/ Bungalow, Chawl, and Apartment Block are elaborated in a dedicated chapter each to explore their representations in Hindi cinema. Although the frames of reference for discussing one typology may differ from another, the chapters follow a common structure, as explained here briefly.

In the case of each house typology, a brief account of its architectural character, its evolution and historical development in urban context is presented – here, the Bombay city provides the main (but not exclusive) reference point. This presentation of the typology as seen in real world forms the backdrop over which its representation in Hindi cinema can be discussed in a way that mobilises both architectural and cinematic perspectives to bring insights about the lived space of filmic house. A broad discussion of the typology's representation in Hindi cinema is presented, bringing in examples from a wide range of films. Here, relationship of filmic house in many forms with the narrative scheme may point to frames of references for the detailed analysis.

Selected films are then analysed in detail using the 'Model of Filmic Dwelling' in the manner we have shown in the case of *Shri 420*. The analysis will focus on the central level of 'the Filmic House', simultaneously move inwards to the level of 'the Thing' and then move outwards to the higher level of 'urban geography' to describe the total spatial environment in the film. The model is intended to provide a broad framework for analysing architectural space as lived space where dwelling occurs at three levels of inhabitation. To maintain the

narrative flow, the levels are not considered in isolation and the film analysis flows in a continuous description that touches upon the three levels as applicable. This analysis for individual films is presented in a succinct manner, except for a Key Film that best represents the performative function of the filmic house in the respective typology, such key films are analysed in greater detail.

The analysis of individual films centralises the house and focuses on the architectural mise-en-scene of the house in terms of its external appearance, internal organisation of spaces, principal domains and paths, and the objects or props within the setting to create a comprehensive understanding of the space of the house and its implications in the narrative. Key sequences from the film are analysed to relate the architectural space with the narrative space. Establishing shots of the house are discussed to mark their appearance as well as presence in the urban context. Selected movement sequences of the characters in the film are analysed to capture the kinesthetic experience of the space which itself is produced by a combination of camerawork and movement of the characters. Extension of the house outward in the urban realm is commented upon in terms of its immediate environment as well as a larger urban geography. The implications of these spaces and elements within and their communication of several meanings will be discussed. The performative or symbolic role of the Filmic House is elaborated upon.

Finally, the insights gathered from analysing films are consolidated in the form of several readings about filmic representations to comment upon the house typology as a whole. Each typology chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of the filmic house in that category. The performative roles of the filmic house and the social meanings mediated by its lived space are elaborated using the ‘Model of Filmic Dwelling’ and summarised under ‘private dwelling’ and ‘public dwelling’ respectively. The filmic house’s role to communicate meanings beyond the performative are also discussed, these readings extend the understanding of Hindi cinema itself. The readings of the films themselves provide an insight into domestic spaces and domestic practices in urban Indian society over the past seven decades. In the final chapter common conclusions are drawn about the filmic house in Hindi cinema based on the insights of the typology chapters.

Chapter 3:

The Filmic House-Bungalow/ Stand Alone House

3.0 Introduction

A stand-alone house, normally a residence of a single joint family, is the most ubiquitous Filmic House in Hindi cinema. This appears in variety of forms and sizes that can be broadly clubbed under a typology called ‘bungalow’. This type of building has been represented in Hindi films at all levels of scale, from the mansions of the very wealthy to the more modest dwelling such as a traditional urban house, or a colonial bungalow. In recent times the ostentatious bungalow and the urban house have been consolidated and pragmatized, given urban pressures of space into the modern bungalow, a functional design which the contemporary upper classes are shown to occupy.

Those with means have always built for themselves, unlike those without who have had to accept pre-built or rented accommodation. Those with means often build in their own perceived image, often with the imagistic gaze inverted to show the world the status of those living inside. This is particularly true of the urban house/bungalow, which while located in a relatively egalitarian context, still makes its presence felt for those outside it to contemplate, whether with awe or with jealousy. The bungalow is thus both detached from and tethered to the urban context. Filmic bungalow as an urban house type in its lived space and its contextualisation communicates several meanings. This makes it particularly appropriate to analyse using our Model of Filmic Dwelling.

3.1 The Development of the Stand-alone House/ Bungalow in Urban India

In the late medieval times the quarters of several Indian towns comprised of closely packed urban houses built in regional or local traditions. In these, one may find larger houses such as *havelis* of aristocratic families or more modestly sized and articulated *kothis* of the common folk. Such houses were usually inward looking and interacted with the narrow streets of the mohalla through front verandahs or sometimes simply with an entrance doorway. These houses consolidated to create a dense mixed-use urban fabric. In contrast, by early19th century, single-family houses in colonial towns (or cantonments and civil lines of historical towns) proliferated into a typology of isolated dwelling known as bungalows built on defined (and fenced) plots of land.

Desai, Desai and Lang in *The Bungalow in Twentieth Century India* (2012), describe a bungalow as a detached, single family urban house that originated in a recognisable form in early colonial India, but one that with the passing of time and changing socio-cultural-economic scenarios sprung several variants. The variations occurred due to several factors such as the colonial house absorbing, first, several indigenous influences of organising a home and then, the modernist impulses of technology and design, not to mention the scarcity of urban land and town planning schemes of plotted development that followed.

The colonial bungalow itself was, at the very onset, an adaptation of the traditional Bengali hut from which it derives its name,[31] combining with it features of an English cottage or a villa depending on the size of the dwelling. It emerged as a single storey detached house on large plot of ground, having a central room and a few function specific side rooms, verandahs on one or all sides and an overhanging roof for protection against sun and rain. The kitchen and the servants' areas would generally be placed in an outhouse. Over time, in a more elaborate form, the bungalow would come to be of two or more storeys, with pronounced neo-classical features such as colonnaded porticos or port-cocheres to serve as ceremonial entrances and more elaborate fenestration and ornamentation on the exterior.

In colonial Bombay of mid 19th century, the bungalow emerged as a housing type for high officials of the East India Company and wealthy Indian merchants. These colonial bourgeoisie preferred European styled bungalows of masonry construction, with large sloped roofs covered with clay tiles, and markedly classical/baroque detailing on the outside and

[31] The word bungalow is Anglo-Indian in origin and derived from the word *bangla,* meaning 'belonging to Bengal'.

inside. These new town houses had large living rooms, and several rooms assigned to specific functions.

Many Indian mercantile families in Bombay preferred a house based loosely on the traditional house of the region they originated from but adapted to the emerging urban metropolis. These homes continued to be of clay bricks or masonry construction but also used new materials and absorbed inspirations from the colonial bungalow, specifically in the use of classical ornament and classically styled furniture. Such bungalows would have a front verandah that led to a 'sitting' room modelled on the *mazghar* of the traditional house. Several other non-function specific rooms were organised around a courtyard. The kitchen and the bathrooms would be either separated from the main house or placed at the rear. Thus, the colonial bungalow type absorbed influences from local traditions and in turn influenced the traditional house type in the metropolis. There also emerged a version of the traditional house suited for middle-class residents in the metropolis that was compact in size and excluded the courtyard and even the verandah. Such a house type along with the colonial bungalow held its sway in the townscape until the modernist variants took over with changing time, particularly in the expanding suburbs.

Coexisting within the bustling metropolis are erstwhile villages that were hamlets inhabited by descendants of the original residents – agriculturists, fishermen, toddy tappers and others who lived in the original seven islands of Bombay. The Portuguese, who took over these islands, transformed them into a recognisable form of urban villages and the cottage like vernacular houses in one or two storeys were influenced by Portuguese designs (Iyer, 2014). This urban typology still survives in the city in varying degrees dodging the pressures of development.

In the mid-20th century, the modern bungalow emerged with compact size and streamlined aesthetics, tiled roofs were now replaced with flat reinforced cement concrete (RCC) roofs forming (usable) roof terraces and cantilevered balconies on upper floors. Towns and cities across the country adopted this new type of house built economically with modern materials, suited to changing lifestyles of modernising urban middle classes.

The central argument that Desai, Desai and Lang (2012) make is that the original conception of the stand-alone urban house has evolved and diversified into numerous new types due to changing cultural patterns and social meanings but are still referred to by the appellation of

'bungalow'. In urban areas, growing land prices and rising middle-class aspirations have resulted into many more adaptations of this house form.

Thus, the stand-alone house in the context of urban India is seen in a large variety of house forms that are influenced by local and cultural conditions and financial resources of people. In the main urban centres, while apartment blocks and condominiums have largely replaced bungalows as dwellings of choice for the middle and upper classes, in the emerging new urban hot spots, their aspirations are seen in constructing bungalows using modern materials such as RCC and swathing its facade in a pastiche of 'classical' elements and ornamentation.

3.2 The Filmic Bungalow/ Stand-alone House in Hindi Cinema – its many variations

The Filmic House- Bungalow in Hindi cinema has been portrayed in the form of varying types and sizes of urban dwelling. This does present a challenge in finding frames of reference that are common, and we seek to find confluences that would aid analysis.

From the relatively poor to the very rich, characters in films inhabit this over-arching house type that changes to suit differing narrative requirements. There is a trajectory of this typology appearing across films from several decades. The diversities of house forms create a rich picture of the Filmic Bungalow allowing us to explore the many issues linked with urban domesticities of a certain lifestyle, both in its private and public aspects.

Large, lavishly appointed bungalows were common forms of residences of the wealthy, upper class characters in Hindi films from quite early on as can be seen in *Andaz* (1949), *Awara* (1951) and, as we have seen in Chapter 2, *Shri 420* (1955). On the other hand, vernacular cottages[32] representing the dwellings of characters of a much lower economic status are also seen in films like *Awara* and *Shri 420*. Both these extremes stood in contrast, creating a particular mise-en-scene in the same film. Notwithstanding the sizes of such houses, architectural signifiers like grand staircases and grand pianos connoted the homes of the wealthy while timber construction, peeling plaster on walls, wooden *jaalis* (screens) etc. would connote that the house belonged to people with modest means. Films such as *Yaadon ki Baraat* (1973), *Deewar* (1975) and *Amar Akbar Anthony* (1977) are good examples where

[32] Here we distinguish between a vernacular cottage in a city and a *jhopdi* (hut) which may be shown to indicate a slum like surrounding for which there are plenty of examples in Hindi films.

the respective working-class families live in single storied vernacular cottages, before different fates befall them.

Hindi cinema, particularly popular mainstream cinema, also uses architecture as a strategy to comment on the divisions between the rich and the poor. Humble cottages or vernacular houses are the dwellings of the 'honest and good' proletariats of modest means while their counterparts, the wealthy upper-class bourgeoisie, portrayed more often than not as corrupt, arrogant or exploitative, occupy palatial bungalows or mansions. In *Awara*, the young protagonist lives with his mother in a cottage whereas the arrogant judge, his nemesis, lives in a lavish mansion that ticks off all the characteristics of the European styled colonial bungalow including a baroque winding staircase and a grand piano – two important signifiers in a house of modern and wealthy 'Westernized' characters in Hindi mainstream cinema.

In *Shri 420* (1955), the deployment of such contrasting house forms (within the same typology) gets codified (the honest school teacher lives in a humble cottage while the corrupt capitalist lives in a colonial bungalow)[33] and this continues as a trope in many later films. *Bobby* (1973) and *Disco Dancer* (1982) are good examples of the continuity of the trope of architectural class divide, although here the subaltern or working class is no longer meek but stands up to the tyranny of the upper class. In *Bobby*, a Neo-Gothic villa signifies the urbane upper class and a vernacular timber framed cottage by the sea shore is the dwelling of the rustic family of fisherfolk. In *Disco Dancer*, a poor mother's son living in a cottage grows up to become a pop star, and is later able to live in a bungalow more lavish than that of his childhood sweetheart. Not all these films can be described as domestic melodramas, nor are the Filmic Houses necessarily the principal settings of the film, but their presence and their chosen characteristics in popular Hindi cinema defines the existential qualities of the protagonists and have helped perpetuate the tropes of class divide. Besides becoming a symbol of class conflict presented from a socialist perspective, domestic architecture in these films also becomes symptomatic of good or desirable modernity and the bad modernity of undesirable influences. This will be elaborated in the analysis of specific films.

[33] This has been elaborated in chapter 2.

3.2.1 The Traditional Indian Bungalow

A popular urban house type in films from the fifties through to the seventies was the traditional Indian bungalow. The traditional bungalow in Hindi films, especially located in a city becomes a symbol of the old-world values of unity, duty, sacrifice or selfless service. Although the stark binary of city/village (as seen the films of the fifties) is no longer operative in later films, its subtle traces continue to be present. The house when deployed prominently along with the family within always carried symbolic meanings. For example, *Musafir* (1957) features a single storey house in a compound in an urban neighbourhood. Its landlord, in order to impress, praises and introduces the house to each potential tenant as a place that contains the world within it. In the course of the film, three families rent the house one after the other. Each tenant leaves behind a story that denotes a phase of life– marriage, birth of a child and death – the house remains stoic witness to these episodes in the occupants' lives. A sapling planted by the first tenant grows and bears flowers impacting the lives of later tenants, indicating continuity in the cycle of life. Families came and go while the house remains rooted.

The traditional Indian bungalow in Hindi cinema has often been indexical of middle or lower middle-class families and when deployed in family melodramas, and communicates middle class or patriarchal family values. In these films, one can observe a tussle between patriarchal orthodoxy and a nascent modernity struggling to find expression. The films in the middle decades (1960s and 1970s) that feature joint families living in traditional urban bungalows show a marked tension in the institution of the joint family, whose stability is threatened by dissatisfaction with their current status (and the state of their house) and aspirations for upward mobility, a feeling of loss of individuality, rancour over shared domains within the house and a desire for homes of their own. These films often negotiate the tensions by invoking the maxims of family values in the figure of a patriarch. In *Teen Bahuraniyan* (1968) for instance, a joint family of three brothers, their wives and children live in a bungalow presided by their father, a retired school master. The bungalow becomes a means of expressing the message of staying within the limits of one's income. In *Ghar Ghar ki Kahani* (1970), a similar lesson in thrift is conveyed by the way that the household, headed by a head clerk, is managed. The bungalow in *Bawarchi* (1972) is organized around a courtyard, and very closely represents the typology of the traditional Indian bungalow in its

material form and organization. Here too we are told the story of a joint family of several bickering brothers, presided by an ageing patriarch, a retired post master.

A regional building typology is seen in two remarkable films, both located in the *mohallas* of historic Agra. The houses in *Sara Akash* (1969) and *Garm Hawa* (1973) are not only integral to the narrative but vividly capture the traditional courtyard houses built in brick and plaster in dense neighborhoods. While *Sara Akash* is the story of a newly married couple struggling to find self-expression in an orthodox Hindu household, *Garm Hawa* captures the plight of a noble Muslim family caught up in the after effects of partition resulting in financial ruin and personal tragedy. The loss of their ancestral *haveli* and the necessity to move into a much smaller and modest house represents the trauma of exile from the homeland, within the homeland.

3.2.2 The Colonial Bungalow

The colonial bungalow, a large mansion, as a marker for wealthy upper-class characters in the storyline has already been commented upon, including its signification for class divide in films such as *Awara, Shri 420,* and *Bobby*. It distinguishes itself from the traditional urban house or a vernacular cottage by its size, architectural form as well as being detached from its immediate neighbours, being sited in sometimes vast acreage of privately-owned land.

The colonial bungalow as a lavish house of wealthy families but excluding the struggles of class divide (of the kind we saw in the earlier films), makes a strong reappearance in the era of economic liberalisation. The first significant film in this respect is *Hum Aap ke Hain Kaun* (1994) – a highly popular family extravaganza in which the vast bungalow surrounded by lush green lawn is a setting for perpetual celebration of rituals. This was followed by films like *Hum Saath Saath Hai* (1999), and *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* (2001) – all of these are melodramas about joint families under strong patriarchal control taking place in extravagant houses of limitless opulence. In these films, globally-aware, tradition loving, wealthy homeowners project their status by inhabiting aspirational (classical/colonial) architecture filled with vast collections of objets d'art. The spectacle of these rarefied spaces is at its most exaggerated in *Devdas* (2002) prompting further analysis of this facet of domestic space in Hindi cinema.

3.2.3 The Modern Bungalow

After independence, newer architecture, designed by trained architects, aware of modern construction materials and technologies, brought about a significant change in the production of stand-alone bungalows in cities and towns all over the country. This change was not immediately reflected in Hindi Cinema except in a few films.

Few Hindi films foreground the modern profession of architecture or the process of constructing a house. *Tere Ghar ke Samne* (1963) is one of the rare examples that locates the architect as the central figure in a melodrama revolving around building of two new houses in contemporary Delhi, and here we discuss this aspect of the film in some detail. The film's narrative takes the viewer through the entire cycle of designing and building a Modern Bungalow in the 1960s – from purchasing a plot in a municipal auction, to hiring an architect, to choosing a design using modern materials and technologies, to visits to the site while the house is being constructed and finally the opening ceremony of the finished house. The process is full of expression of dreams, negotiations with conflicting desires and accommodation of surrounding realities. *Tere Ghar ke Samne* features two feuding Delhi millionaires who desire to build their houses on two adjoining plots. Unknown to each other, they hire the same architect who is famous for his modernist designs and each wants their own glorious house to dwarf the other's. The architect, who is the son of one of the millionaires, and in love with the other's daughter, has to perform a balancing act in the whole process to salvage his romance. He erects curtains shielding the construction sites from one another's prying eyes. Upon completion, when the curtains lift, two bizarrely identical houses with concrete curves and cantilevered balconies are revealed to the horror of the two clients whose plans of one-upmanship are dashed. The dividing boundary wall is also designed cleverly. It dissolves in the mid-section to become a lattice screen placed over a circular platform, ceremonially raised in the geometric centre of the mirror image symmetry. A mechanism when operated lifts the screen out of the frame and the platform becomes a wedding altar, spatially uniting the divided families.

In sequences showing several site visits by the architect and his two clients, the film documents the expansion of the city in the suburbs, plotted developments sporting newly constructed modern houses designed to respond to new RCC technology that was now de rigueur. The project of modernisation of a Nehruvian nation-state provides the context for the houses. The architect in the film, in one sequence, even visits the newly constructed capitol

complex in Chandigarh, part of Nehru's larger project of "Temples of Modern India". These buildings form the site of a default pilgrimage for every budding architect even today.

The modern bungalow makes its emphatic appearance in Hindi films of the seventies and eighties. Numerous popular films feature such bungalows with RCC construction, stone cladding, cantilevered terraces, concrete grilles and staircases, false ceilings, and fashionable furniture – the décor many a times verging on kitsch in full technicolour glory. This phase coincides with a trend of hiring existing bungalows (many a times on the outskirts) for the purpose of filming. Dwyer (2002) has commented upon it in her brief essay on set design. Many films of middle cinema have stories featuring urban middle-class families where the settings are existing bungalows. Films by Hrishikesh Mukherjee such as *Chupke Chupke* (1975), *Golmaal* (1979) and *Khubsoorat* (1980) are good examples of such bungalow settings. Jai Arjun Singh (2015) notes that the filmmaker's own house provided the settings for many of his films by making appropriate changes within, although it is not clear exactly which ones. The three films mentioned above are tales of modern educated families, and yet the houses are presided by patriarchs (a matriarch in case of the last) with a penchant of setting rules for all concerned.

In more recent times, the architecture of the Filmic Bungalow has undergone change to reflect its location in the urban fabric of the turn of the century metropolis, as well as has become a showcase for changing technologies and lifestyles. While scale and ostentatiousness are not imperatives, a laid back classiness and the sophistication of its cosmopolitan, well-educated globalised inhabitants is foregrounded. This is seen in the Filmic Houses in *Dil Chahta Hai* (2001) and *Masoom* (1983). Moving away from the heart of the city the suburban landscape is also evoked. As cities themselves are more and more congested, the possibilities of creating new stand-alone houses now shift to the outskirts. In *Kaun?* (1999) a typically suburban bungalow is the site for its narrative, as shall be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

3.3 Analysing the Bungalow using the 'Model of Filmic Dwelling'

A broad survey of several films that centralise the Filmic House-Bungalow in one of its several forms has revealed a diverse set of films with differing narrative emphasis in which the house form has marked influence. This can be summarised as under:

Film	**Bungalow type**
Musafir (1957), Teen Bahuraniyaan (1968), Bawarchi (1972), Sara Akash (1969), Garm Hawa (1973)	Traditional Indian Bungalow or *Kothi*
Awara (1951), Shri 420 (1955), Yadon ki Baraat, Bobby (1973)	Vernacular Cottage
Andaz (1949), Awara (1951), Shri 420 (1955), Bobby (1973), Hum Aap ke Hain Koun (1994), Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham (2001), Devdas (2002)	Colonial Bungalow
Tere Ghar ke Samne (1963), **Dil Daulat Duniya (1972) (Key Film),** Chupke Chupke (1975), Golmaal (1979), Khubsoorat (1980), Kaun? (1999), Dil Chahta Hai (2001)	Modern Bungalow

Table 3.1 Various architectural forms of a bungalow in Hindi films

We take up the following films for a detailed analysis using our model as a loose framework: *Teen Bahuraniyaan*, *Bawarchi*, *Devdas*, *Kaun?* and *Dil Daulat Duniya*. These films are chosen not only because they represent the principal sub-types of the Stand-alone House/ Bungalow, but also because each one of them in their performative role reveal a different facet of the filmic house, adding to the diversity of the rich picture we wish to create. Each of this film is discussed within a loose framework of the interpretive model, out of this *Dil Daulat Duniya* is analysed in greater detail as a Key Film.

Deploying our Model of Filmic Dwelling, we analyse the architectural space of the bungalows in these films using the levels of Private Dwelling (The House and the Thing) which we then contextualise with the level of Public Dwelling (Urban Geography). A detailed examination of the architectural mise-en-scene in selected films is undertaken, where the bungalow is performative in the film's narrative. We attempt to unravel the materiality of the filmic house as defined by its type and form, to seek signification relating to the narrative and its bearing on the existential situations of the characters. At the most direct level, this

materiality communicates pre-determined meanings about the class and status of the families residing in them. The analysis attempts to unpack the role played by the Filmic Bungalow in the fortunes of its inhabitants both through its material form as well as its social meanings pertaining to domesticity. Our analysis also attempts to seek a larger context in which these bungalows (and their inhabitants) are located in the larger domain of their urban geography.

3.4 *Teen Bahuraaniyan* – reconciling tradition and aspirational modernity

The filmic house in *Teen Bahuraniyan* is a traditional single storey bungalow of masonry construction situated in what appears to be a suburban setting. It is home to a joint family presided over by a retired school master who exerts a strict disciplinary order upon his three sons, their wives and his grandchildren. The father has, in the interest of peace and harmony, sub-divided the house into sections for each of his son's families. The film begins in the central living space with a shot of the patriarch alongside a blackboard inscribed with aphorisms, giving his daily lesson to his grandchildren before sending them off to school. This is followed by a montage of several close-ups – beginning with three female hands wearing differently coloured glass bangles worshipping a *tulsi* plant followed by successive shots of each of those pairs of hands making and pouring tea. Next, one after the other, three doors open into the living room, from each one emerges a daughter-in-law bearing a teacup, each vying to serve the father. This choreography is repeated by the emergence of the sons from their respective doors. They join their wives in entreating the father to have his birthday meal in their room.

Figure 3.1: Stills from the film *Teen Bahuraniyan*

This sequence establishes the organisation of the house from inside and introduces the family in clearly spatial terms, where each unit of the joint family including the father has their own sub-domains accessed via symmetrically placed doors on either side of the living room. Here, the family members converge and from where they arrive or depart. The father dominates this space, keeping a close eye on domestic affairs and its finances. A lengthy song sequence a little later provides a detailed view of the rest of the house. The song features the three ladies singing happily while performing household chores. We see a backyard that features a kitchen garden, wash areas, a cow-shed and a well. The women are seen washing in the yard or drying pickles on the roof terrace, pounding grains and cooking in their respective kitchens, later welcoming back their children and husbands, serving them food and finally putting them to bed. The song sequence completes the introduction of the house which is modest and even worn down with age, largely devoid of furniture, and where people eat and sleep on floor.

The impending visit of their next-door neighbour, a popular film star, shakes up their routine and regulated lives and fills the house with an air of nervous excitement. The women are gripped with anxiety about their own existential situation in comparison to that of their celebrity neighbour. This angst is revealed in different sets of signifiers deployed by them to describe the two neighbouring houses. Their first reaction when they noticed the arrival of a new neighbour was: “A dog in the garden, cars in the compound, a watchman stationed at the gate and crowd on the street; surely the house is taken by a film star.” A tendency to associate film personalities with glamorous lifestyle blurring their real-life and screen persona in public imagination is visible here.

The women’s view of their own house and their dissatisfaction with it is revealed in the conversations they have with their husbands. The eldest daughter-in-law is anxious about the poor state of walls in her room and declares that she is going to get the plaster patched and painted to such a gloss that they would be able to see their face reflected in it. She is further anxious that there aren’t proper chairs to offer their guest to sit nor do they have a radio or a decent tea set. Above all, the lack of electric fan troubles her the most. She pleads with her husband to rectify the situation. Overhearing this conversation, the middle sister-in-law, not wanting to be left behind, expresses her own wish-list to her husband: “Not just an electric fan, I want to install an air conditioner. We will get a dressing table with a large mirror. Besides, we shall throw away the old wooden *almirah* and get a new Godrej cupboard. The

useless charpoy will also have to go, we will replace it with a double bed, and on that we will spread a thick Dunlopillow mattress. This is not all, we will also have to get a refrigerator", she concludes, in a declaration of one-upmanship. The youngest sister-in-law, while wanting all these, also demands expensive jewellery from her husband. The women's expressions are interesting indicators of contemporary aspirations of lower middle class transitioning to modern living, till rising prosperity and upward mobility made consumption of household gadgetry a norm.

Soon, the house is immersed in a frenzy of repair and renovation with each couple wanting to impress the celebrity visitor with their material possessions. The walls now wear a brand new look, while new furniture, cushions, curtains, carpets and modern gadgets are installed. The storage niches transform into fancy showcases and images of gods are replaced with fancy paintings and statuary. The eventual visit of the film star is enacted as nothing short of a drama where the house itself becomes like a stage set. Her arrival is framed by opening of diaphanous pink curtains with husbands and wives flanking each side. She is whisked into one section after the other where we along with her witness fancified spaces in contrast to their earlier simplicity. The grey dullness of the bare rooms has given way to a colourful look.

Not only has the house transformed, but under the spell of their new found obsession, the women also change. From competing with one another to serve their father they move to competing for the film star's friendship. They neglect their housework and even forget feeding their children. While their house shines like never before, the *tulsi* plant in the backyard is dying. This symbolises the neglect of duties on their part. Several crises including financial ones visit the house and those are averted by father's intervention.

The same living space where the film began becomes the site of resolution in the film. The three daughters-in-law having remorsefully accepted their mistakes flee to their respective rooms, closing the doors behind them. Before the family can assume the worst, one by one the doors open, and the ladies emerge from them in the same manner as in the opening sequence, in the same simple garb, indicating that they would prefer to revert to their simple ways.

In *Teen Bahuraniyaan* the patriarch represents the moral centre of the family and occupies the central space of the house. It is here that he collects pay checks from each of his sons, keeps an eye on the affairs of the house and hands out punishments to those who err. When the control on his sons' finances cedes to the wives, expenses rise, debts mount and things collapse. The blackboard is given an important place in this space, becoming a 'morality board', a medium to broadcast pithy messages on good conduct and virtues of thrift. He chooses the central space of the house to deliver sermons to his daughters-in-laws: "A woman who fails in her duties ruins her family and the home." He equates the house to a growing vine which one has to thrash if infested with worms. The implications are that it is the duty of the women to keep the vine nourished and evergreen.

The organisation of this filmic house, its masonry construction, the arched fenestration and recessed niches for storage, an older vintage in the type of furniture, peeling plaster, the presence of a cowshed and a well in the backyard all betray a traditional house which is still rooted in rural ethos. Its existence in Bombay is only alluded – through spoken dialogues and presence of a film star. The exterior of the house is shown flittingly towards the end of the film, and is clearly incongruent in size and architectural style with the insides. The two houses in their vastly differing mise-en-scene do not exist side by side in any realistic term or in the filmic space, but are presented as a filmic juxtaposition, as set pieces, both in terms of filmic space and its central message of futility of imitating the ways of the rich. There is also the 'world behind the closed door' of each nuclear family's domain that can stretch as required without having to obey the logic of an internal plan. Such discontinuities between the inside and the outside, and the inconsistency in internal arrangement of the house may seem like a common folly in Hindi cinema arising out of certain expediency of film making, but in this film, it serves a useful trope of an urban scenario that still harks back to village like organisation. This inconsistency in the fictional depiction of *Teen Bahuraniyaan* lends a mythical quality to it and reinforces the allegorical function of the filmic house, its role to drive home a message – in this case that of thrift and necessity of a central disciplining authority to keep the constituent parts from straying and thus maintain the harmony.

The film can be also be read as a commentary on home improvement, that it should be possible for lower middle-class families to fulfil their dreams of a better and modern home. During the flurry of renovations, the bewildered father had demanded to know how it was to be paid for. The sons' response was that the objects can be borrowed, rented or bought on

instalments. This last suggestion of theirs is in fact indicative of a legitimate way of financing the endeavour which may otherwise appear to be beyond their means. The film however takes the father's conservative position of viewing the whole exercise as bringing ruin to the household. On one hand, the father acknowledges the wisdom of allowing each son and his wife their separate domain, yet imposes curbs on their freedoms as they cannot be fully trusted to exercise them wisely. Thus, in its resolution, the film dismisses the dreams of a better home as misguided and upholds not only the virtue of thrift but also the moral authority of a disciplining father figure.

3.5 *Bawarchi* – patriarchy and reform in the traditional Indian bungalow

The Filmic House in *Bawarchi* is a two storeyed bungalow with a traditional internal layout. The establishing shot of the exterior shows a corner entrance portico flanked by timber fenestration and balconies on either side. The interior of the house is organized around an open to sky *chowk* or a courtyard, on its one corner, columned corridors give access to different rooms on both floors. A single storey out-house with tiled roof houses the kitchen and the common bathroom and forms the other corner of the chowk that also has a wash area just outside the kitchen. The film takes the viewers inside several rooms belonging to different family members but the *mazghar* (traditional living room) is never shown and we are left to wonder if it even exists in this house.

This bungalow is home to the Sharma household, a joint family headed by an ageing patriarch, a retired post-master, two married sons and their families, a bachelor son and an orphaned grand-daughter. There is no love lost between the brothers and their wives and frequent squabbles are the norm. Each of the women guard and territorialise their own rooms.

The patriarch keeps the family heirlooms in a large iron trunk under his cot, tied by heavy chains and guarded by a padlock. This is eyed by his three sons and two daughters-in-law who otherwise neglect him.

Figure 3.2: Stills from the film *Bawarchi*

Each room is the domain of its respective occupants who seem to be concerned only with their own space; the common spaces of the house are neglected. The sudden departure of the *bawarchi* (house cook) draws them out into these common spaces. A pile of unwashed dishes and a greasy floor in the chowk greets them, raising questions of who will cook and clean. There are further disputes among brothers about the right to first use of the common bathroom.

The absence of the living room as a common space is not surprising as the family sees no desire to come together. Family members intruding into one another's domain is also frowned upon, however, a desire for privacy is somewhat thwarted by the architecture of the house that in its traditional usage did not permit individualisation of territory. Each room has a door and windows opening into the common corridor affording continuity of space and movement, and, on occasion, of unwelcome gaze. Yet, everyone stops short of shutting their doors and windows, indicating that while they would like the freedom to act within their domains, it would be unthinkable to close the door on the family.

The naming of the house as *'Shanti Niwas'* (where peace resides) is ironical, and invites numerous comments in the film's narrative and also contains metaphoric meanings. In the credit sequence, a voice over narrator, introduces the house and all who live in it. He also cautions the viewers not to put too much weight on the name and opines that in fact, the house should have been named *'Yudhha Bhavan'* (House of War). As the drama unfolds in the film, as several squabbles break out in the house, the youngest son quips that the name of the house should be changed to *'Ashanti Niwas'* (where acrimony resides). The exasperated patriarch describes the house as a zoo or a fish market. Clearly, the name is chosen to draw attention to discord in the family that tears apart peace in the house.

The arrival of a new multi-talented *bawarchi* or house-cook named Raghu, with almost magical prowess, is a godsend for the family. Raghu's actions become the catalyst that brings peace and harmony to the household as he teaches the warring family members of the virtues of kindness and accommodation. The previous cook, who left the employment in frustration, had described the Sharma home as worse than a hotel and suggested yet another name for it – *'Rambharose Lodging House'*, a nod to popular name for such establishments, but also an allusion that only God can save a home such as this.

The drama in the film is centered on the central space, the chowk of the house. This is where the day to day life revolves, with household chores like making tea, serving it, bringing home groceries, cooking food, doing dishes, washing clothes, cleaning floors etc. assuming a great deal of impostance due to disputes about who should carry them out. The order of this middle-class joint family household relies on the labour of women and house servants to do these jobs, and collapses when servants leave and the women are reluctant to fill in.

The traditional expectations of women's duties are expressed by the patriarch who constantly laments that his daughters-in-law are not interested in housework. The housewives on their part lament about these very expectations and complain of being equated to servants. The new cook gains the confidence of the household by resolving their petty differences and doing the chores.

The architectural mise-en-scene of different rooms is indicative of ways of living, steeped in tradition while coming to terms with modernity and changing times. The older generation is still firmly stuck in old ways and their rooms reflect that. The rooms of the younger members of the house reflect their youthful aspirational personalities. The patriarch's room is a smaller space, dominated by a four-poster bed, besides a bookshelf and a couple of chairs. On the walls are picture frames of old faded family photographs alongside that of a national leader. The eldest son, a head clerk in a city firm and his wife occupy a large room with wooden bed, almirahs and a table used to privately enjoy an evening tipple. The middle son is a scholarly school master, and his room appropriately has book shelves, a study table and the walls adorned by Ravi Varma prints.

This contrasts with the rooms belonging to younger generation which have modern furniture. The youngest son is an aspiring music director (inspired by 'English' music). His room has several instruments, a (vinyl) record player and recording equipment, a guitar prominently hanging from a wall. His ways always draw sarcastic comments from his father. The daughter of the eldest couple is a college girl and an aspiring dancer. The walls of her room display images of dance and music and pictures of her performances. The orphan is also a college student. She has to be content with sleeping in a store room on the terrace. Photographs of her deceased parents adorn her wall.

In the warring household, the rooms of each (nuclear) unit of the family is deeply territorialized and defended, but this space also forms the place for the expression of individuality, and into possible realms that defy expectations. Even the reluctance of the daughters-in-law to participate in the mundane chores of the family can be seen as a movement away from conventional roles. When the older son uses the privacy of his room to get drunk, he exercises a mild individuality. The younger son, who aspires to become a music director even has an arrangement for boiling eggs within his room (an electric hot plate and a saucepan) further removing him from performing the role of a family member by eating together. In their own domains then, the family reflects separate and nuclear units.

The coming of the cook Raghu, and his efforts throughout the movie in which he cajoles, threatens and seduces the individuals is, in fact, a move toward the inversion of this individuality. In his eventual success, the family is transformed, the way they negotiate the spaces of the house changes as well. Raghu inspires the housewives and draws them out of their rooms to the common space of the chowk and kitchen. Even the elder girl who earlier spent time in her room sleeping, listening to radio or practicing her dance is seen stepping inside the kitchen and showing interest in learning how to cook. The brothers happily sit together to have a meal. As the family slowly comes together, the chowk and surrounding spaces transform into a *mazghar* – a true family living space.

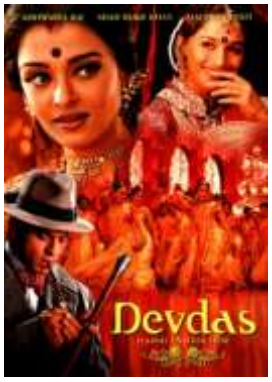
In leaving their rooms each member of the family also leaves their individuality (and aspirations) behind and is subsumed, at the behest of the Machiavellian Raghu back into a joint family, with all its traditional patriarchal values. Consider this: the grand-daughter, who until this time, is quite focused on her career as a dancer now seeks to develop skills in the kitchen. The two daughters-in-law also happily seem to revert to female role expectations as the ones who cook and clean, and cater to the men in the family. The orphaned grand daughter, who has been courting a neighboring boy while pursuing her studies, is thrust into potential wedlock by the patriarch himself.

The resolution of the film is predicated on the restoration of the status quo. In other words, patriarchy triumphs and individual members acquiescing to the pressures of patriarchy are shown to be the glue that holds the family together. The individuality and rebelliousness, however insignificant, is snuffed out by the benevolent *bawarchi* who acts as a deux ex machina to reconcile everyone by convincing them to suppress their own desires and

instincts. Typically, the resolution happens in the common spaces of the house, and each member of the family has to emerge from their own domain to make it happen. As Raghu leaves, he leaves behind a conventionally patriarchal joint family in his wake, and their individual subversion is itself subverted. *Shanti* (peace) is restored, but at the cost of all becoming one, indistinguishable from one another.

The presence of *bawarchi* helps bring unity to a dysfunctional family. The climax of the film reveals that Raghu is on a mission to reform dysfunctional families like the Sharma household and spread the message of love that he considers as inherent in any family, only sometime it gathers dust. Thus, the retrieval of this love among the family is equated to the dusting of a house.

3.6 Devdas – scenography of the spectacular



Although an adaptation of a popular Bengali novella, *Devdas* (2002) should be considered a re-make of the now canonical *Devdas* (1955), made by Bimal Roy.[34] The adaptation/ remake is created and viewed in the context of the public memory of Roy's film. The narrative is based on a paradigm of unfulfilled love and relies on the binaries of upper class/ lower class and the beloved/ courtesan to unfold this tragedy of doomed love. The film is located in turn of the century colonial rural Bengal. Even though not exactly an urban scenario, we have selected this film mainly due to the treatment of prominently featured houses that are characteristic of a certain trend in scenography in Hindi films of its time of making.

[34] 'Devdas' is a Bengali novella by Saratchandra Chattopadhyay, first published in 1917. It has been the subject of more than a dozen films in India, including five in Hindi. Bimal Roy's Devdas (1955) although not the first Hindi adaptation, played a significant part in popularising the myth of the narcissistic, self- destructive eponymous hero, which Sreejata Guha (2002) in the introduction of her English translation of the novella refers to as the "Devdas Metaphor". She describes it as "a time-honoured, enduring, tragic symbol of unfulfilled love that has captivated the film-going audiences for years."

Devdas' Family House

Paro's Maiden House

Paro's Haveli after marriage

Chandramukhi's Brothel

Brothel

Haveli

Figure 3.3: Stills from the film *Devdas* (2002)

The 2002 remake deploys a spectacle of space to visually distinguish itself from the 'original'. The spaces inhabited by the characters – Devdas, Paro and Chandramukhi – couldn't be more different and more scenic than those in Roy's film, which, while melodramatic was made in the neo-realist idiom. Four dwellings are featured in the film, each vying with the others for grandeur in its depiction.

Devdas' Family House

Devdas' house is a large neo-classical mansion with an elaborate Grecian facade featuring the Ionic order, with little regard to its classical proportions. The building is outsized on the exterior and wildly elaborates its interior space design. Its grand staircases and vast interior spaces adorned with classical statuary, elaborate floral arrangements and period furniture are meant to spell limitless wealth. Deep perspectives are formed by colonnaded corridors that seem to run endlessly to a vanishing point.

Paro's Family House

Paro's father is an employee of Devdas's father, suggesting a hierarchy of class. However their house is presented as an equally large bungalow in an arcuated Colonial style with baroque exteriors dominated by running arcades and interior spaces of double heights centring on an arcaded interior court, lit by an abundance of stained glass, filigree and decorative flooring.

Paro's Marital House

Paro's marital home is a *haveli* (very large mansion) rivalling in grandeur both the previous houses – multiple domes and arches reminiscent of an Indo-Saracenic extravaganza, painted murals reminiscent of Ajanta caves and classical statuary in extra wide corridors, every possible architectural style finds its presence in its elaboration. While such opulent houses denote the wealth and status of upper caste landed gentry, their treatment here evokes connotations of the *ajayabghar* ('museum of curiosity'). The scale of interior spaces is clearly intended to dwarf its inhabitants and overawe its visitors.

Chandramukhi's Brothel

Chandramukhi's brothel is set in a dream-like pleasure precinct inspired by the ghats of Benares, the Hindu holy city on the banks of the Ganges. The brothel on its exterior has terraced pavilions and steps along a lake, and is lit by countless lamps. Chandramukhi's own

dance pavilion stands out with a domed roof over a vast hall of carved pillars and brackets, reminiscent of the Dilwara temples, but punctuated with large chandeliers and billowing drapery.

3.6.1 A Spectacle of Space

Hindi cinema is not unfamiliar with grandiose sets of forts and palaces for the historicals or the mythologicals. These have been seen and valorised from *Aan* to *Mughal-e-Azam*. What *Devdas* does is to create an architectural extravagance of epic proportions for spaces that are essentially everyday domestic spaces, and dwellings of people at different levels of the economic and socio-hierarchical scale.[35] The houses are seen from the outside in establishing shots, but there are hardly any exterior sequences which may contextualise their locations. In this, they are clearly isolated attractions, each to be read individually and connotatively in terms of its inhabitants. The lived experience is larger than life, not mundane rituals of daily life. There is a purposeful attempt to dazzle viewers through the grandiose, and a mish-mash of architectural styles.

The camera-work in *Devdas* fully responds to the architectural space. Deliberately skewed (Dutch) angles are often used to exaggerate scale. Interior perspectives of unending corridors evoke renaissance palaces and cavernous interiors evoke the monumentality of Byzantine cathedrals in the same house. The space is presented mostly as a tableaux in medium or medium long shots. This often results in shots where two characters in the same room converse across vast distances, the overwhelming scale dwarfing their presence. Interestingly, the camerawork tracks movements and captures extravagance, but without a focus on any detail that may establish a personal relationship with the characters inhabiting the space. This lends a larger than life quality to the domestic space, its purpose well beyond dwelling, its spectacle participating in and enhancing the overwhelmingly melodramatic mode of the narrative.

[35] This analysis was a part of a conference paper by the author. The paper looked at the idea of spectacle of space as a stylistic device in the two remakes of Devdas – *Devdas* (S. L. Bhansali, 2002) and *Dev D* (A. Kashyap, 2008). After the review, the paper was selected for publication in the conference e-book as follows:
Dalvi, S. (2015). Spectacle, Space and the Tragic in the Hindi Devdas Films. In Drummond, P. (Ed.), *The Pleasures of the Spectacle: The London Film and Media Reader 3*, (pp. 77-87). Conference e-book - http://www.thelondonfilmandmediaconference.com/our-ebooks/

For instance, in the climactic sequence of *Devdas,* Paro attempts to leave her grand haveli to meet a dying Devdas who has turned up outside her gates in a wasted state. The sequence begins as Paro learns that the man lying half-dead outside the haveli is her childhood paramour. In a sequence of extreme melodrama, Paro sprints across vast architectural spaces, knocking down pieces of fragile statuary, racing through never ending corridors, down a winding staircase, her magically elongated *sari pallu* trailing behind her. Her family members raise an alarm and try to prevent her leaving the house but she outruns them. In the verandah, a scuffle takes place and a ritual salver shatters spilling red kumkum on the pristine floor. Paro extricates herself from restraining arms of a family member and continues to sprint towards the gates, leaving a trail of red foot marks on the white pathway. What follows is a cross cutting of slow-motion shots of the gate being closed shut and Paro's desperate dash to reach it in time. The sequence reaches crescendo with the gates finally shut and Paro's body crashing against its solidness and collapsing on the floor. She is not able to make it to the other side of the iron barrier and a moment later Devdas breathes his last. This movement sequence frames the fragility of Paro's body and her valiant attempt to defy established norms by engulfing her emotions in the vast scale and grandeur of her husband's *haveli* whose threshold she is not permitted to breach. The purpose of this architectural grandiosity is symbolic and allusive rather than signifying the lived experience. The unceasing spectacle of cinematic space is meant to convey a heightened sense of the tragic. The symbolism of red foot imprints, which are usually made by a bride entering her marital home, is deployed in reverse; the irony is inescapable to the viewer who is aware of the code. The tragedy of unrequited love and impossibility of a union is taken to a higher pitch by swathing it in a spatial spectacle replete with symbolism.

The houses and interior spaces in *Devdas* do not convey a specific time and place, they imply a vague sense of the past only through a lack of objects associated with contemporary life. They signify neither rural Bengal nor urban Calcutta. All the spaces are worlds unto themselves and are unconnected to the world at large. On the contrary, the use of architectural styles and the treatment of interior space (and costumes) reflect a contemporary, globalised, neo-traditional family spectacle of consumption that was then in vogue.

Hum Aap ke Hain Kaun

Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham

Figure 3.4: Architectural spectacle of houses in the recent films

What we notice in *Devdas* is the apogee of a trend set off by *Hum Aap ke Hain Kaun*, a highly popular family extravaganza made in 1994, followed by films like *Hum Sath Sath Hain* in 1999, and *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* in 2001 – all of them melodramas about joint family located in extravagant houses of limitless opulence (Figure 3.4). Several popular contemporary television soap operas of the late 1990s and early 2000s also presented narratives of globally-aware, wealthy homeowners who project their status by appropriating aspirational (classical/ colonial) architecture filled with vast collections of objets d'art. A false sense of artistic connoisseurship ends up in decorating homes as museums of curiosities without aesthetic appreciation. Ranjini Mazumdar describes such post-liberalisation trend in Hindi cinema as "scenic interiorisation through design with neo-traditionalist nostalgia for family values." The filmmaker in *Devdas* is clearly influenced by, and tries to outdo, both the films and soap operas. In that sense, cinematic spaces in *Devdas* make it an adaptation reflective of its own time, even if the story is situated in colonial Bengal.

The adaptation fetishises lavishly mounted sets, irrespective of their function within the narrative. A monumental scale is used for domestic spaces. Every home is oversize, every object within conveys lavishness, the binary of upper/lower classes, which is the root of the central conflict of the film, is mis-signified by the architectural setting. The excessive stylistics, suggests Creekmur (2007), have an overpowering effect on the narrative: "This abundance [...] constantly threatens to overwhelm what remains at heart a simple, if

psychologically complex, story." When narrative is subordinated to architectural space, according to Wollen (2002), it gives way to a spectacle whose purpose is to impress and visually dazzle. Such a rendering makes the architecture a 'star' rather than simply a 'character'.

In Hindi cinema, famous actors or super stars are expected to portray their star persona rather than getting under the skin of the characters. In *Devdas*, the grandiose architecture establishes its place as a 'star' akin the other stars in the film. Invoking star appeal then relieves the architecture of the need to perform its narrative function.

One interesting outcome of this 'star appeal' in the film is subversion of the *grihini/ tawaif* (housewife/ courtesan) binary, by taking liberty with the source text and infusing yet another element of fantasy in the imagination of their respective spaces. First, the *grihini* Paro visits the *tawaif* Chandramukhi in her brothel, a clear spatial transgression for a woman of her status (we have seen how crossing the threshold is not permitted). Second, the *tawaif* is invited by the *grihini* for a religious ceremony where, in the vast hall of the haveli, the two women dance in tandem, in front of a large gathering of family and common folk – another seemingly impossible transgression. The architectural mise-en-scene of this dance sequence has a remarkable resemblance with the ones in the brothel – soaring space, decorative flooring, multiple chandeliers and diaphanous drapes.

Thus, the display of grandeur sets out to enhance the emotion of tragedy, but is subsumed by architectural excess, undermining the narrative ambition in most part, yet this penchant for spectacle serves to thwart a stereotype in some part.

3.7 *Kaun?* – heimlich/ unheimlich: space inversion in the suburban bungalow

The Filmic Bungalow in *Kaun?* is a modernist suburban bungalow on the outskirts of Bombay. It is the location for this thriller that takes place over a single stormy evening during which two people get killed and the house plays its part in it. The film entirely takes place inside the house and never leaves it throughout.

A young (un-named) woman is alone in the house and her movement sequence in the beginning of the film sets up the mysterious, even horrific tone of the film in spatial terms. The woman has just heard a television announcement warning people to be wary of letting strangers in their homes as there is a murderer on the loose. Scared, she proceeds to secure the main door of the house. She then hears suspicious sounds from upstairs and begins to gingerly climb the winding staircase to investigate. She is seized with the idea that there is someone in the house and is scared about the prospect of an encounter as she enters her bedroom. Mysterious point of view shots at skewed angles frame her body in architectural frames, giving an impression that she is being watched. She senses danger lurking everywhere – in the bathroom, behind the curtains, under the bed – the usual places where danger lurks in domestic horror fictions. She finally settles down on a rocking chair and falls asleep.

As she falls asleep, a floor level fast paced point of view shot, sweeps up the stairs, the mezzanine landing, into the bedroom and finally scurries under the bed. The woman is startled with fear, and walks out of the room into the landing. A low angle shot from below shows her dangling on the railing, the reverse shot shows scores of bodies having filled up the living room below, all of them standing still and staring at the woman upstairs. Gasping for breath she turns away only to see corpses on the landing, and starts screaming. The bodies disappear in the next shot and she runs back to her room.

When, she gathers courage to step out, crouching low, she climbs down the stairs. Deafening sounds of thunder and lightning fill the air. Several close-ups of sinister looking metal statuary including that of a soldier holding a spear flash on screen. She walks to the main door and peeps through the viewing lens. Finding that there is no one, she turns in relief when suddenly two hands break out from the door and begin to strangulate her. At this moment, the shot cuts to her waking with a jolt in the upstairs chair, signalling to the viewers that all this was a nightmare.

Figure 3.5: Stills from the film *Kaun?*

She then retrieves her kitten from under the bed and proceeds to climb the spiral staircase to check the attic. For a moment, she moves off-screen while the shot stays on the space of the attic with heavy rains lashing on the terrace beyond. We see the attic filled with unwanted

furniture, canvases lying around, cardboard cartons, rolled up carpets and plastic cans. The woman returns to the screen space and begins her descent back to the living room. After playing with the kitten for a while on the sofa, she goes inside the kitchen and pulls out a loaf of bread from the refrigerator. A high angled skewed shot shows her pulling out a large knife from a prominently placed holder as she begins slicing the bread.

This sequence sets up key spaces and objects that have pay-offs in later stages of the film. It reveals that the bungalow is organised on three levels – the lower floor consists of the large living room, a prominently placed main door, a kitchen. The mezzanine level reached by a winding staircase consists of a seating space on the landing and a large bedroom. A spiral staircase leads to the roof attic beyond whose sliding doors is a terrace. The bungalow is fully furnished with all manner of contemporary furniture arranged tastefully and appears on the face of it as normal as any house can be.

The narrative space of the film is entirely confined to this bungalow. It is a setting for a cat and mouse game between a businessman who claims to have arrived for a meeting and the woman who insists that he has been given the wrong address. For most part, the viewer is led to believe that the man is the hunter (the killer on the loose) and the woman is the prey. Then the plot introduces one more player in the game, a suspicious looking man who claims to be from the police, setting up an alternative candidate for suspected killer. When the suspense is revealed in the end, we know that neither of the men were killers and in fact fell prey to the woman herself who is a demented hunter.

In the set-up of the film, the filmmaker creates a deception for the viewer of the vulnerability of the woman, all alone in a bungalow while a storm rages outside, a situation rife for an intrusion from outside for which she must be fearful. When the door-bell rings and she asks who it is, the question raises fear. The answer to *Kaun?* (Who?) in the film turns out to be the woman herself. Her house is her main instrument to lure and parry, to carry on her murderous acts. She invites in potential victims from her doorstep, plays with them, and in slow steps brings them closer to their deaths.

From the time the businessman appears at the doorstep of the bungalow to his ultimate (and inevitable) demise, several layers and levels of the house are passed through, gradually and step by step, leading finally to the last. Initially, he is only allowed conversations across the

closed door and its viewing lens. He repeatedly rings the bell and begs to be let in but the woman stubbornly refuses. Then he begins to appear at the windows. He is passed a plate of food from the kitchen window and then also allowed to have a peek at the television from the living room window. Eventually, the woman opens the door to him telling him that she suspects that there is someone upstairs. He is then allowed to venture to the upper floor bedroom to check for possible intruders.

In the climactic sequence, the confused businessman convinced that the other man is the killer is drawn to the attic. While in this uppermost level, he trips on one of the several rolled up carpets we saw earlier and discovers a corpse inside. By now he is completely gripped by fear and confusion. Just then, the young woman appears behind him with the kitchen knife and he knows he is staring at his death. He was gradually lured into the interior of the house, right to the top where he gets killed, like an insect in an inverted Venus Fly Trap.

During the climactic scuffle on the terrace among the three characters, the woman is completely taken over by madness and is seen dancing on the parapet, the corpse of the businessman lying on the floor and the corpse of the other man on the ground where it was flung. The next morning, the woman descends the staircase washed and changed. She wipes the floor of blood. She is next in the kitchen cleaning the knife and the spear with a song on her lips when the door-bell rings. She peeps through the lens and asks "Kaun?" with madness in her eyes. She has clearly lured her next victim to the house, a deathly trap laid by her.

Kaun? is one of the sub-genre of 'home intrusion' films so popular both in Hollywood and in Hindi Cinema. *Ittefaq* (1969) and *Faraar* (1975) are examples from Hindi cinema, where the home (or bungalow) is no longer the castle or the place of refuge but becomes totally vulnerable as it no longer forms a defensive space to the world outside. This is where there is an existential breakdown of expectations. In such films, at a behavioural level there is an infringement on the homeowner's personal space, privacy and marked territory. Traditional connotations of domesticity are reversed, as the interior space, and many objects therein become a signifier for the unhomely, of an entity unknown. The lived experience of the homeowner in this situation is one of being completely untethered from all that once could be taken for granted. Every effort therefore goes in the direction of restoring the correct order of things – eviction of the intruder and regaining full control of the house once again.

In *Kaun?*, of course, there is a twist in the tale – the secret that comes to light. The homeowner is herself the perpetrator, and the home is like a spider web that the homeowner weaves to lure the hapless victim inside. Being the homeowner, the woman has been in complete control of the spaces all along, spaces she uses and chooses at will to bring down a horrible fate upon the person she has, by earning his sympathy, drawn in. Even if one entertains the possibility (the deception and cause of film's suspense) that the businessman is really the antagonist who means harm to the homeowner, he is at a disadvantage against her. She knows all about allowing persons into her house, wanted or unwanted. Once inside, rooms confuse, staircases divert, and the terrace itself become a fatal weapon.

The Filmic Bungalow in this film is a modernist double storeyed construction. Quite a model home in contemporary times for the rising middle class, but in this case the connotations of domesticity never really coalesce, and the familiar becomes *unheimlich.* In his essay "The Uncanny" ("*Das Unheimliche*") Sigmund Freud proposes the word *unheimlich* which he defines as the uncanny. Its derived from the word *heimlich* which alludes to the familiar and the agreeable but also refers to that which is concealed or cannot be seen (Jonte-Pace, 2001). "Among its different shades of meaning, the word 'heimlich' exhibits one which is identical with its opposite, 'unheimlich'. What is heimlich thus comes to be unheimlich […] everything is unheimlich that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light." (p. 224–25). Thus, when the spaces become untethered or disturbing such spaces are referred to as *unheimlich*. In the case of *Kaun?* the familiar is made unfamiliar by the presence of the resident within, her lived experience does not conform to the spaces she occupies, and our expectations are constantly belied. The home is made unhomely.

The Filmic Bungalow in this film is occupied by a single individual female, who seems comfortable living alone in her large house (until the intruder strikes) and has the run of the place. She is in control of all its room and the objects within, which she can call upon to use as the need arises. Even when, so-called male figures of authority, like a police officer enters the house, he is led by the lady into an intrigue that ends with his death. At the end of the film the woman is supreme. The killings in the film are not the only ones, as we are brought to understand. She has done this before (and will do it again) and the house has been her most effective weapon.

3.8 KEY FILM

Dil Daulat Duniya – the dilemma of owning a house and making a home

The filmic house in *Dil Daulat Duniya* is named 'Kalidas Mansion', located in the posh Malabar Hill in Bombay; from inside, it is a large modernist bungalow with some classical features such as a grand staircase. This is the story about a varied group of squatters who come to occupy this house while the original owner is away. In doing so, they try to fashion themselves as a family, taking on various roles, even as they are strangers to each other. The spaces within the house are therefore apportioned appropriately, like they would if a joint family resided there and influence their fate. The film also provides a commentary on the housing market in Bombay.

3.8.1 Kalidas Mansion and Kalidas Chawl

The film opens with a man looking like a tramp[36] with a dog in tow, pausing in front of a large house in a posh neighbourhood of Bombay. A close-up of the sign on the gatepost reads 'Kalidas Mansion'. He however skirts the main gate and continues to walk towards the fence. There he flips open a swivelling panel, lets himself into the premises and then slips inside the house through a basement ventilator. Once inside this vast house, he exclaims how everything is exactly the same as he had left it six months back. He then activates a mechanism that sounds an alarm if the main door of the house is opened. The scene ends with the intruder proceeding upstairs on a grand staircase while singing a tune –

[36] The man is dressed in a Chaplinesque manner (resembling the style of Charlie Chaplin) to invoke an image of a tramp, not unlike the protagonist of Sri 420. Both characters in these two films separated by about two decades are shown arriving in the city as homeless tramps.

"Kankar chun kar mahal banaya,
log kahe ghar mera.
Na ghar tera, na ghar mera,
chidiya rainbasera."[37]

This is Udharchand, a homeless man who has found it convenient to make himself home in this house every year when the actual owner, the city millionaire Seth Kalidas, moves to the cooler climes of the Mussourie hills during the summer months.

The next sequence begins with a close up of a sign board saying 'Kalidas Chawl', when the camera zooms out, it reveals a ramshackle chawl building. This scene introduces two young men, educated but jobless, about to be ejected from this chawl by the agent of Seth Kalidas for defaulting on their rent and electricity bill. The agents betray the real motivation behind the forced eviction – Seth's plan to demolish the chawl and construct a thirty-storey building in its place. The film thus establishes the wealthy and ruthless character of Seth Kalidas in absentia, solely through the properties owned by him in the city, the grandest of which, his palatial home, is seasonally occupied by Udharchand in his absence.

Meanwhile in Kalidas Mansion the squatter soon gathers fellow travellers – people who have been rendered homeless – to come and stay with him. The first lot to benefit from his benevolence includes the two young men recently evicted from the chawl, one a jobless bachelor and the other with his family of wife, sister and an infant. The strange ritual established earlier of entering and exiting the house by sidestepping the main door is now followed by the others. The runaway daughter of the Seth also joins the group under the guise of being a poor destitute. Later, the actual owner Seth Kalidas himself follows suit (through strange circumstances) in the guise of a servant and, and his estranged wife joins the household as a cook, completing this motley household.

[37] The palace is made stone by stone, yet people think it's their house. It is neither theirs, nor someone else's, it is simply a bird's nest.

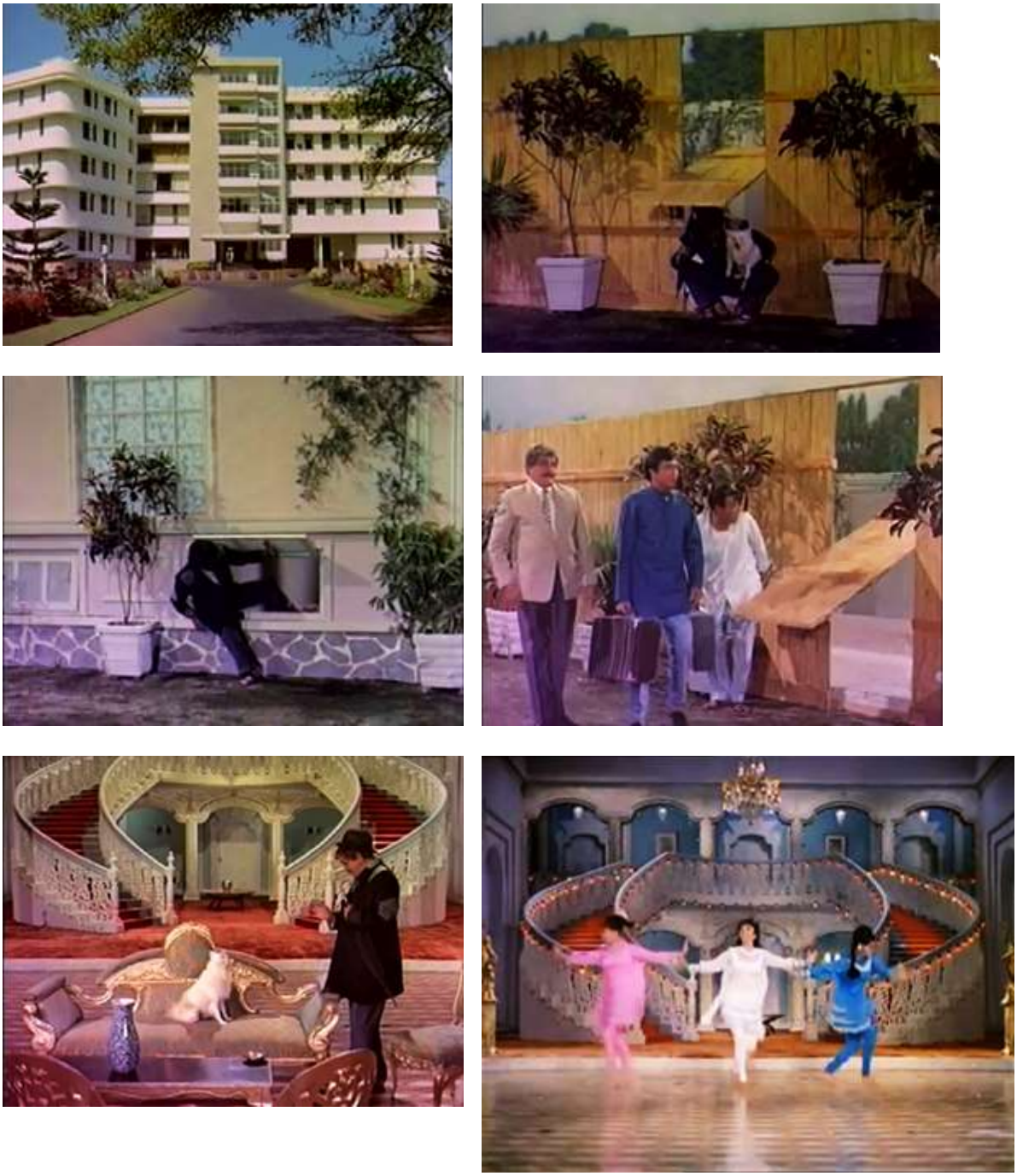


Figure 3.6: Stills from the film *Dil Daulat Duniya* - I







Figure 3.7 : Stills from the film *Dil Daulat Duniya* - II

3.8.2 The Living Room

The living room in the Kalidas Mansion is a cavernous space of vast, palatial proportions. Classical treatment dominates the interior of this space. It is the central space of the house, from which all other spaces are arrayed. It is presented like a stage set, and frontally depicted most of the time. The characters enter and exit this space without continuity to off-screen space.

A grand staircase is the centre-piece of this space; it leads to the upper floor with a seemingly abundant supply of bedrooms. Rather than acting as a movement space, the staircase is deployed for its very presence, for its signification of wealth and spectacle. The spectacle is best observed in the Diwali scene in which lit with numerous colourful electric bulbs, the staircase becomes a backdrop for a dance by the three young ladies in the 'household' while the rest of the members take their seats as if in the audience. The living space's staginess is completed as the film concludes, becoming the venue for the wedding scene between the millionaire's daughter and the bachelor.

3.8.3 The Bedrooms

While Udharchand, as the self appointed head of this 'family' occupies the master bedroom, the three younger members each get to occupy a bedroom of their own, large in size, lavishly appointed, and ornamented in the fashion popular in the 1970s. The rooms are painted in pastel shades, meet the ceiling with moulded corbelling, and have sliding doors opening out on balconies. In the bedrooms, large double beds with ornamental headboards dominate, and there are dressing tables and mirrors, framed paintings and standing lamps, all of which signify the aspirational fantasies of the middle classes still steeped in a socialist economy.

These three bedrooms are best captured in a song sequence in which each occupant enacts their romantic fantasies. It begins by the young sister of the teacher bathing in a lavish bathroom. Here it is presented as an attraction for the film going audience, an erotic trope of a glamorous female character wrapped provocatively in soap bubbles in a bathtub while singing a song. Soon, the bachelor and the young heiress (now masquerading as a homeless waif) join the song from their respective rooms. Interestingly, the filmic space is presented with split-screen resulting in curious juxtapositions of these bedroom spaces. In another song,

the bachelor and the young heiress sing a duet again from their adjoining bedrooms. Even when the two of them are out in their side by side balconies, they carry on oblivious of each other's actual presence in favour of the suggested proximity. In *Dil Daulat Duniya,* the several songs, while interrupting the narrative of the film, allow for a possibility of slow engagement with the spaces. Unlike the establishing shots that introduce the exterior, the songs provide a longer and thus a lingering experience of the interior space in which they are enacted.

3.8.4 The Kitchen

The kitchen in this house is a fairly modern space and well-equipped. If living room is a theatrical set-piece, the kitchen is the space in which the motley crowd comes together like a real family to eat dinner at the large dining table. Udharchand sits at the head of the table like the head of the family, and takes a stock of daily happenings as well as kitchen supplies, assigns tasks and duties to everyone and sets common rules by which the household will run.

There are some similarities between both Udharchand and the patriarch in *Teen Bahuraniyaan*, and the central location of both spaces (the living room in the latter and the kitchen in the former), dominating over their respective families. In both, their axial position defines their status with the rest of the family arrayed on both sides. What is interesting is how this axial location makes the rest fall into place without argument, even though none of them are related to Udharchand in any way.

3.8.5 Master Bedroom and Servant's Room

As mentioned earlier, Udharchand, occupies the master bedroom while Seth Kalidas, the real owner of the bungalow get relegated to the servant's room. The film sets up irony by creating a switch between the real owner of the house and the squatter. This irony is further emphasised by the spatial swap: the master bedroom is on the upper floor while the servant's room is in the basement.

The two men couldn't have been more different, their dissimilarities are foregrounded by the house and their role reversal. The squatter Udharchand presides over the household like a whimsical, kind hearted father figure, something that the Seth is not. Kalidas thinks logically,

does cold business calculations, and is heartless. This is why his own wife and daughter have left him. Money matters more than anything to him and he holds the poor in contempt. He is eventually restored to his family only when he joins this motley household pretending to be a pauper called Kalua. To do so, he has to contend with occupying the servant's room, curb his imperious ways and learn to defer to Udharchand as the head of the 'family'. In doing so, he has to learn humility. He is made to discover that the ideals of love (and not money) binds a family. Not knowing their real identities, Udharchand initially objects to the cook's presence in Kalua's room. However, showing his liberal side, he summons them to his bedroom and approves of their relationship saying everyone has a right to love, even in old age. Kalidas is taught to love his own wife in his own house by a wise imposter.

3.8.6 *Owner or Trustee?*

In *Dil Daulat Duniya*, the central question is: who does a house belong to, the one who has legal ownership or the one who is able to make it a home and keep a diverse family united? This raises further questions about the concept of ownership itself and what it means to own a house. In the film, the squatter Udharchand assumes the role of the head of the household and runs a tight ship. His chief diktat to every newcomer is not to touch anything precious. Clearly, he sees himself as a trustee and has perfected a state of stoic detachment, like living in a pond without getting his wings wet. He lives in Seth Kalidas's vast mansion which he often refers to as a palace, wears his clothes, sleeps in his luxurious bed, eats from the bounties of his larder, without any of it getting to his head. When the time comes to vacate the house as time approaches of the real owner's impeding return, he can discard the palace as easily as the clothes and return to his state of being a tramp. In the final scene, after all others have left, Kalidas and wife still dressed as servants are seen bidding farewell to Udharchand just outside the fence, the makeshift entrance of the house. Kalidas sees no need to reveal his true identity and expresses a hope of meeting Udharchand again after six months. He not only keeps the illusion intact, but accepts and even hopes that his house will get populated with another family that Udharchand will put together.

The Filmic Bungalow in *Dil Daulat Duniya* typifies the episodic approach to space so common in mainstream Hindi cinema. Various spaces in the house become discrete set pieces, often bearing neither continuity nor logical unity. Rather than show the spaces in relation with one another, cross cutting and split screens are deployed as filmic devices.

There is neither a logic of internal organisation nor a consistency in architectural style of different spatial units, many of them superfluous to the main narrative (a swimming pool for instance inserted almost as an afterthought to exploit the presence of a glamourous actress). The house is presented as a collage of spaces, we do not experience it through movement sequences. There is no relation between the exterior and the interior either. In a solitary shot at the beginning, an exterior of a multi-storey apartment block is passed off as the mansion in question. The only thing that links this building to what is presented from inside is the nameplate announcing the name 'Kalidas Mansion'.

3.8.7 Urban Geography: Bombay's Housing Scenario

The shot however, helps locating the building in an affluent area of Bombay close to a large city park where the imposter takes his dog for a walk and encounters other characters of the film who join his family. Other exterior spaces such as a swimming pool, garden or a neighbouring bungalow are also discontinuous with the house and also de-contextualized from any urban space. In a marked contract, in the credit sequence, Udharchad's movement in the urban space takes place in a logical sequence via shots of Victoria Terminus, the Gateway of India, Marine Drive, Hanging Garden and Malabar Hill, and establishes the 'city' as Bombay.

The city provides a context to the narrative in another significant way. The film makes frequent references to the housing scenario in the Bombay of the 1970s. Seth Kalidas, the owner of Kalidas Mansion has made his fortune in real estate and owns several chawls. On the pretext of non-payment of rent, tenants are evicted but the real agenda is to make way for multi-storey commercial centres and apartment blocks. Plans are discussed to go vertical and capture the sky to maximise profits on a limited supply of land. Reference is made to cement shortages of the time and prevailing black market. Easy solution of mixing more sand to cement is quickly suggested by the Seth. More tellingly, he suggests to switch from the rental model to ownership one. By selling the hundreds of flats thus created to unsuspecting buyers, the risks of owning sub-standard construction can be transferred. The corruption around real estate businesses were nascent issues during the time the film was made, only to assume much grave proportions later in the annals of the city. We have seen how real estate can lead to the corruption of integrity in *Shree 420*. This theme would later also be developed more fully in *Jaane bhi do Yaaron* (1983).

The lottery scheme of Rs.1 for a home-factory, cooked up by the young hero is not dissimilar from the one in *Shree 420* where the hero sells a dream of a house for Rs. 100. In the older film, the scheme was a con perpetrated on behest of the greedy capitalist while in this latter film, the scheme is supposed to be a panacea for the poor. It faces hurdles because the greedy capitalist of this film, Seth Kalidas (in the guise of Kalua) thwarts every attempt on the part of the young hero to acquire necessary land for the fruition of the scheme. In a public meeting, the hero is seen passionately railing against capitalists for snatching the dreams of the poor. However, upon learning the true identity of his lady love as the daughter and heiress of the same capitalist, no conflict ensues. The 'happy ending' in the film creates an illusion of change of heart of a ruthless capitalist rendering any rebellion unnecessary in the first place. Thus, the urban geography in the film contains many possibilities of conflict in relation to the house in question, but they remain unrealised and eventually result in a status quo.

On the other hand, an interesting dialectic is set up within the house itself, between the legal owner of the house and the squatter and this challenges the very notion of a house as a private territory of a family bonded by kinship.

3.9 Reading the Filmic House-Bungalow as a Performative Filmic Dwelling

Looking at the stand-alone house/bungalow in Hindi cinema and analysing the selected films indicate a diversity of house forms within this typology having several performative functions within the narratives. Considered together, lived space of the Filmic Bungalow performs in multiple ways and communicates several meanings regarding domesticity as an active participant in the narrative.

For example, the respective houses in *Musafir* and *Dil Daulat Duniya* raise the issue of relationship with dwellers in a more fundamental way, where the house is presented as a constant entity but the inhabitants are transitory, taking on meanings such as travellers, trustees or owners, with or without legitimacy, and in the process bestow differing meanings on the houses themselves. In *Bawarchi*, the house and its disorder become a cause for falling apart of a bickering family whereas in *Tere Ghar ke Samne*, construction of two houses become compelling mediums for feuding family heads to relinquish their pride and embrace change. In *Devdas* various houses are presented as spectacles and function to dazzle the

viewers and heighten the emotion of the tragic, whereas in *Kaun?*, the house becomes one with the character, participates in the uncanny and become an essential device to trap victims. In *Sara Akash*, the house serves as a space of confinement and suppression of individual desires whereas in *Teen Bahuraniyan*, the house becomes a cause of existential angst and in its transformation a site of wish fulfilment but with unforeseen consequences.

The analysis of individual films using the 'model of filmic dwelling' throws several readings about private and public dwelling linked with these filmic houses and they are summarised in the following sections. Our analysis also brings out explicit and implicit social meanings of domesticity such as the notion of house as an inner and private domain. In all these films, the house in its mode of private dwelling, its domains and architectural elements, and its extension to public dwelling participates in the film narrative in more specific ways as we elaborate further. In the process, the house also becomes a concrete site of perpetuating values of patriarchy and resistance to the same, as we shall see.

3.9.1 The Private Dwelling

At the most central level of 'the house' in our model of filmic dwelling the filmic bungalow is best appreciated for its interior space in terms of its expression and lived experience. Any relationship with the outdoors is triggered mostly when people from the outside walk in. The exteriors of the bungalows mainly function as establishing shots and then are quickly dispensed with. The bulk of the conflicts of the film are positioned within (and sometimes because of) the architectural space and connections to the outside are severed once the doors to the house are closed. This severance is doubly reinforced in films where the house has a greater symbolic function.

3.9.11 Filmic House: family domain and sub-domains of individuals

In the Filmic Bungalow, despite the nature of being a single household building, the presence of the joint family makes it the space of collective private dwelling. The internal organization can be understood as a network of domains or sub-domains within the house. There exists in most cases, a central domain commonly known as living room, where different inhabitants come together as a family, where they are seen arriving or departing, and where the bulk of domestic action takes place. In that sense this space has publicness within the closed circle of

the family and where observance of codes and rituals of family life are to be carried out. The living room is thus concretization of the values and aspirations of the family as a collective; these get frozen in iconic tableaux scenes (including song sequences), framed frontally for the benefit of the audience. This is observable in almost all the films discussed and analysed.

Another space with similar connotations is the dining room, more often than not, shown coterminous with the living room in a filmic bungalow. We observe that the scenes at usually large and prominent dining table are less about the daily rituals of eating food and more about the performance of family values, subtle or overt patriarchy, or class privilege. On one hand, the ordinary acts of eating meals are side-stepped in Hindi cinema. But when featured, mothers, daughters-in-laws or family servants serving food or waiting the table while others eat is a common image in most Hindi films. Besides this, in the films such as *Dil Daulat Duniya* or *Khubsoorat*, we observe that the dining table is the site of enforcing rules and discipline by figures of authority. Even when living rooms or dining rooms are absent in their formal sense, their place is usually taken by spaces such as a chowk – a centralizing domain in a courtyard house, having similar implications, for example in *Bawarchi* and *Sara Akash*.

In contrast to the living room, are the sub-domains or the rooms occupied by individuals or nuclear sub-groups as their personal spaces that are commonly called bedrooms, but of course are much more than mere sites of sleeping. These rooms, as spaces of conjugal relations, are almost never developed. Sensuality, if any, is instead transferred to bathrooms. Again, ordinary daily acts of characters bathing or washing up are typically side-stepped. In such a scenario, the way to read the bedroom spaces (in a joint family house) is as sub-domains where nurturing of the individuals' existential position in the world is possible.

The bedroom in the bungalow is where the individual is free to make choices of a more personal kind and where the life of each individual has its particular course. Bedrooms thus comprise of spaces where withdrawal is possible, which is necessary to develop an identity for an individual. In our interpretation of the Filmic Bungalow, it is the bedroom that functions as the private dwelling where the individual finds a place to gather and express those memories which make up his personal world. The bedroom is the most private place in a house of collective dwelling, which an inhabitant can territorialise, or where they can seek solitude as well as a place to develop. The bedroom in the bungalow, therefore, is a concretization of an individual's existential space vis-à-vis living room for a family.

In the films discussed and analyzed we can see several examples to support this reading. In *Bawarchi*, the personal spaces of individual characters have become both – sites of self-development as in the case of the daughter whose life is focused around dance, and small acts of rebellion as seen in the eldest son's surreptitious catering to his drinking habit, or the youngest son boiling eggs in his room to assert his independence. Similar observations are made in *Khubsoorat* where the individuals dream about nurturing their desires suppressed in a disciplinarian regime. The need to make their individual spaces 'keep up with the Joneses' seems to take up the larger part of the narrative of *Teen Bahuraniyan*, where each daughter-in-law wants her room done up in a specific way, to trump the other two and in the process defy the restraining authority of the father. In *Dil Daulat Duniya*, each bedroom becomes the dwelling of an individual or a nuclear family, and while none seem to affect any personalization on their individual spaces, they seem to appropriate the existing spaces enthusiastically as if it has always been their own. In a sense these homeless strangers are enacting and living up to their fantasies of having a 'room of their own', but these space in turn play a part in their self-development and interpersonal relations – some fall in love, some come to terms with their situation, some learn the value of humility.

The location of domains and rooms in the house is also significant in these films in communicating the family dynamics and inherent hierarchy therein. The ubiquitous central location of living room or a courtyard in a bungalow by default implies their centralizing influence in the house. In the event of this domain losing its dominance either due to neglect or due to the control ceding to individual rooms, the central order of the house is shown as collapsing. Also, the location of one's bedroom in the bungalow (on a higher or a lower floor) assumed importance and becomes a matter of dispute in some films. Servants are often relegated to basements or outhouses and orphans to store rooms in the attic. The roof terrace is another interesting domain, with its uninhibited connection to the sky carries signification of freedom, or a refuge from an oppressive or exploitative family as in case of *Bawarchi* and *Sara Akash*. In *Khubsoorat* it becomes a site of rebellion and expression of free will.

3.9.12 Things or objects and their significance

The Things or objects within the filmic bungalow such as furniture, furnishings and implements at the basic level, complement the spaces to communicate the status of the

families or show contrast between houses. The mise-en-scene of houses display a diverse range of treatments considering the diversity of stand-alone houses in Hindi cinema.

Conspicuous consumption on display in houses make them look like museums of curiosity or a fetish for design sophistication can turn them into a catalogue of interior decoration ideas. Either way, a spectacle of the interior space in different forms is a feature of filmic houses of the wealthy in Hindi cinema, even if it verges on kitsch or doesn't establish any tactile relationship with the dwellers. On the other hand, the meagerness of possessions is emphasized in the houses of the characters with lesser means. Even absence of objects communicates meanings, and expressions of desiring them can trigger and drive the narrative.

In some cases, the objects receive a heightened attention when camerawork intentionally focuses on them to communicate functional or symbolic meanings. For example, object such as a chalk board in the living room is a means to broadcast moral messages for the father in *Teen Bahuraniyan,* it is also invested with symbolic functions in the narrative. In the same film, metaphors such as an evergreen vine or symbols such as a thriving tulsi plant are deployed to communicate a well-functioning house, a sacred inner domain whose nurturing is the duty of its womenfolk who must not be swayed by outside influences.

3.9.2 The Public Dwelling: bungalow and its place in the world

The filmic bungalow in most cases is presented as an internal world of the family with very little connection with the outside world. Thus, at the level of 'the urban geography', the connection with the outside world, the possible locational siting of the bungalow itself is more of an absent presence. The establishing shots, cursory as they are do not locate these houses in any specific terms within the city. In the films where the Filmic Bungalow plays a central performative role, we find that the characters' negotiation with the physical space immediately outside the house – street, neighbourhood, commute to work etc. is largely absent. More often than not, their interaction with the city as a social space is minimal. Their urban existence is more often only invoked (through dialogue) rather than being physically detailed out. This lack of connection is more strongly felt in the in the case of the women characters who are rarely seen stepping out of the house.

Few scenes ever take place at threshold spaces that show transition between inside and outside. The opportunities for connecting the bungalow with the surrounds are hardly utilised, thereby thwarting a sense of public dwelling. We have little sense of urban geography, the space of the Filmic Bungalow is therefore almost always 'interiorized'. This breach with the outside world is further exacerbated with the presentation of the exteriors of the buildings. As we have already seen in the film analysis, the house from the outside may not bear a recognisable spatial continuity with the inside and in some cases, unrelated exterior shots are passed off as the house in question.

This reflects in the narratives of the film and the life experience of its characters, who are governed in many ways by the material limits of the house. In a film such *Kaun*, the interiorization is a narrative imperative, in others, it has a limiting effect in defining and framing the narrative environment of the film. The lack of connect with the public realm tends to flatten character development. We see only the domestic side of the inhabitants pigeonholed in their home space. These limitations are then countered by some overt stereotypes, at least in the more mainstream movies (in the form of the patriarch, the dutiful daughter-in-law, the servant and so on), which are easily recognised by the cinema going audience. While this situation does seem to change somewhat in more recent films, the Filmic Bungalow stands out in its isolation as compared to other typologies like the Chawl or the Apartment as we shall see in the next two chapters.

3.9.*3 Beyond the Performative – ways of looking at the Filmic Bungalow*

3.9.31 The Filmic Bungalow as theatre/ proscenium

In mainstream Hindi cinema, the Filmic House-Bungalow is not merely a container for quotidian acts of domesticity. It often becomes a framed proscenium for aspirational wish fulfilment. The analogy of a theatre is direct in *Bawarchi*. Its credit sequence opens with a shot of a heavily curtained proscenium stage accompanied by an expository voice-over, a disembodied narrator who announces to the viewers that they are about to watch a 'drama', its location is 'anywhere' in India of the 'present' time. As the credits end, the stage curtains open to reveal the setting of this 'drama'— the two-storeyed Shanti Niwas. Thus, the house is not only presented as a stage for the theatre of domesticity, its place and time is also

generalized, making the story a generic one in which the house represents a general idea and acts symbolically to communicate it.

The interior architecture of the living room in filmic bungalows comes closest to being a site for theatre and spectacle. As we have seen in *Shree 420, Dil Daulat Duniya*, *Devdas* and also in countless other films, this space is designed as showpiece. This is accomplished by the mise-en-scene of the space, framed full frontally and symmetrically like a proscenium, the stage space dominated by a single or double flight grand staircase as the pièce de résistance. Song and dance sequences are the most favoured tropes in performance of this theatre where the action happens in the centre while a sizable number of assembled people passively watch from the periphery. A piano in most cases aides the performance and the staircase may provide a fitting backdrop. In many cases, such a staircase becomes a stage itself for dramatic entry of a character, their languorous descent captured by a low angled shot. The Diwali sequence in *Dil Daulat Duniya* or numerous song and dance spectacles in *Devdas* are illustrative of this formulaic presentation of voluminous living room in a palatial bungalow; however, more modest houses are not immune to this tendency of theatrical rendering. The humbler living room in *Teen Bahuraniya* also stages a song sequence which brings the entire clan together and again in the final shot, the clan is framed frontally in the pictorial space with the staircase in the background.

3.9.32 The Filmic Bungalow as a metaphor/ symbol/ allegory/ irony

We can decipher several metaphorical, symbolic or allegorical functions of the filmic house when the narrative is meant to carry higher order meanings.

In *Musafir*, for instance, the landlord always praises the house to the potential renters as a place that contains the world in it. The house, just like the world is a *sarai* (inn) where travellers come to stay till their time runs out. The house as a metaphor for a theatre or a stage is already discussed. In some films, the naming of the house has narrative significance and is deployed either as a metaphor or as an irony, like naming of the house as ‘Shanti Niwas’ in *Bawarchi*. In *Kaun?* The house is a metaphor for a web, instrumental in snaring victims, or a Venus Fly Trap that lures, captures and eventually devours victims.

The building of the modern houses in *Tere Ghar ke Samne* can be read as analogous with nation building that requires the very same qualities. The dividing boundary wall is a visual metaphor of division between warring sections, but in its design is also embedded a possibility of reconciliation – should the warring parties make that choice. This visual metaphor could be variously interpreted as alluding to divisions between India's linguistic states, differences between different communities or disputes with neighbouring countries considering that the trauma of partition was still alive in memory.

Invocation of nation in one form or the other is one of characteristics of post-independence Hindi cinema's aesthetic form, allowing the narratives to be read as allegories. We have commented on the Filmic Bungalow in many cases presented as a world unto itself, having very few external reference points. Lack of specificity of place and time make them generic, and the family assumes the stable entity around which the narrative is anchored, acquiring symbolic qualities. The joint family in such films is connotative of the nation and the house provides a concrete space for its representation, its architectural mise-en-scene is then charged with symbolic or allegorical meanings. Among the films discussed or analysed, we can read quite a few in this vein.

In *Teen Bahuraniyan* and *Bawarchi* the joint family is a metaphor for the nation and the internal organisation of the house as sub-domains of either each son's family or individual is connotative of its constituent parts – different sections of the society or different states in the country. The individual aspirations of the parts must be subsumed to the superior goal of unity and harmony of the whole. Patricia Uberoi (2006) points out how for more than a century, public opinion in India has been obsessed with the spectre of the imminent break-up of the India joint family system through the processes of urbanisation, modern ideas of ndividialism and that it plays out in popular cinema. Thus, the figure of father in *Teen Bahuraniya*, occupying the central domain of the living room represents the central authority to which individual parts must cede authority. In *Bawarchi*, the ineffectual father figure spells a weak centre and a dysfunctional family resulting in a disorderly house which could be read as a disorderly nation-state. The arrival of the house cook represents the reforming arm of the state that strives to make model citizens out of its denizens. The bawarchi's oft repeated motto is: "everyone does one's own work, but there is a greater happiness in doing others'

work". The acts of household chores connote the necessary duties that one must willingly and selflessly participate for the wellbeing of the nation.

3.9.33 The Filmic House as a space for the status quo

The Filmic Bungalow distinguishes itself by the creation of several sub-domains within the larger domain of the house. It is within these spaces, that individuality is expressed and nurtured. This is important, because in all these films, the common areas are dominated by the patriarch of the family, and severely coded in terms of the behavior that is permissible there and the manner in which the domesticity is enacted. It is in this common space where patriarchy rules, where gender roles are most clearly identified in encoded rituals. This common space is also the site of governance.

One of the covenants between the audience and the filmmakers in mainstream Hindi Cinema is the resolution of the filmic conflict into 'a happy ending'[38]. In family conflicts, that are the themes most associated with the films in this chapter, resolution means reconciliation. When the film comes to a conclusion, all the warring family members convene in the common spaces, and pledge themselves to each other and remain happy ever after. This is the default status-quo position, of family gatherings and song and dance sequences. Uberoi (2006) has noted the tendency in popular Hindi cinema – a preference for 'neat solutions' but ultimately unsatisfactory ones, those that punish transgressions or eclipse individual freedom and desire.

This implies that the only resolution to conflict is when the patriarchal values are agreed to and upheld. This also implies that individuality is subsumed for the greater good of the family, and the coded life is supreme. Even in the case of *Bawarchi*, the central conceit is a stranger who enters the household as a cook and proceeds to aid each family member in their pursuit of self-development, but is actually subverting their individuality and defusing their rebellious streaks by cajoling/seducing each member to finally adhere to patriarchal codes. This position is problematical, but the status-quoist nature of Hindi cinema means that patriarchy triumphs over individuality each time. Similar resolutions are seen *Teen*

[38] With, of course, the exception of the genre of 'tragedy', where the audience pays to weep into their many handkerchiefs throughout the movie empathizing with the tribulations wrought upon the protagonists, mostly female. This is a recognized form of catharsis and many films, like the several Devdas movies have become wildy popular because of their downbeat theme. But for most part, the 'happy ending' is de riguer. This trope has undergone several forms of transformation since the millennium, but still persists in great measure.

Bahuraniyan and *Dil Daulat Duniya* where rebellious streak of the younger generation is co-opted in the family. The lived experience of the architectural space in the Filmic House-Bungalow is therefore heavily coded, when it comes to its inhabitation by a family grouping.

3.10 Coda

The direct significance of the choice of the bungalow as a dwelling type by the film makers is to communicate the class and status of the characters as a form of instant recognition. Each variant of the filmic bungalow – the traditional house, the colonial mansion or the modern bungalow gets associated with particular types of characters in the milieu of their social standing.

The filmic bungalow in most cases is an interiorised world with minimal connection to the urban geography. The mismatch between the exterior and interior of the bungalow or the logic defying lack of continuity in the internal organisation of spaces may point to several limitations of filmmaking. These may include expediencies such as a laissez faire attitude or technical inattentiveness towards issues of continuity or even a lack of budget for erecting appropriate sets and having to make do with a combination of unrelated existing buildings. Lack of continuity can be seen even in big budget films and this feature has never bothered the film-going public. However, when viewed by the evidence of filmic space alone, one can surmise an attitude towards space making that uses the idea of 'juxtaposition' rather than 'continuity'. The house is therefore a generic theatre of a domestic drama, a generic space to tell stories of domesticity rather than of any specific entity. To this end, the space in total is a patchwork of several spaces presented in an episodic manner, lending an abstract quality to the house whose real purpose is to communicate higher order ideas such as family values, unity or harmony.

The stand-alone building or the single-family home as an overarching typology is presented as both as a theatre of spectacle as well as a wish-fulfilling metaphor in the mainstream imagination. The filmic house – its interior space, its décor and the things within aid this association at the very basic level and also communicate differing attitudes towards their narrative value. From expressions of desire for material possessions to the need for improving

their households, especially in lower middle-class houses, we notice a change in the contemporary spectacle of consumption whether in the form of limitless opulence of the colonial bungalow (in wealthy family extravaganzas) or in the form of quirky ensembles in modern bungalow.

In a sense then, the bungalow in Hindi cinema has, for decades, always presented a view of 'how the other half lives'. This is telling, for it makes us aware of the audience of Hindi cinema as being largely inclusive, which means that the majority of cinema audiences, right from the decades before independence, when Hindi cinema (especially talkie cinema) started to proliferate, would come from the middle and lower classes. Cinema in India (and in the rest of the world) was never elite entertainment, but popular entertainment that espoused the values and the aspirations of the masses at large. Even the filmmakers, until they became wildly popular, came from these same socio-economic strata and brought with them the conservative values of their own backgrounds. How the rich lived, and where they lived was both extrapolated and imagined, and tied up intimately with their own existential desires, not least the desire to call a larger space one's home.

It is in this context that we can appreciate the representation of the filmic bungalow as a predominantly interior space, a space that not all can see, that in the watching of a Hindi film, one is privileged to access, visually if not physically. If Bombay is seen as the default city, as has been mentioned before, then the filmgoing public has always had access to viewing the buildings of the rich and famous from the outside. Right from the time of the wealthy merchants whose mansions abutted the streets. This is true even today as can be seen in the houses of Bollywood film stars and the skyscraper bungalow Antilla. But what lies within, in all its glory and seediness, is the reason why these films are flocked to.

Within the bedecked four walls, away from the gaze of the common rabble, stories unfold, which in the end are not unlike their own lives. The bungalow, materially different in scale, making and occupancy, is still a form of filmic dwelling, that despite its various metaphorical and allegorical readings forms the stage of a very human existence. The colonial bungalow and the modern bungalow both accommodate visibly modern characters; yet conservative family values continue their hold, exposing faults lines between what is perceived as good modernity and bad modernity. For the viewer that is something both existential and relatable, something to aspire to and perhaps even to judge.

Chapter 4:

The Filmic House-Chawl

4.0 Introduction

In the development of Hindi cinema, the chawl[39] holds a special place. It is connotative of middle-class struggle, a place from which most of those involved in the Bombay film industry came. The depictions of the chawl in films hits close to home at two levels – the first is both nostalgic as well as direct in terms of the lived experience of the film makers, while the second is spatial, for it is in the chawls and the tenements therein that we see the closest interaction of the dweller with the dwelling, the spaces being only marginally larger than the personal spaces of the inhabitants. "It is difficult to view a chawl as an empty built form in isolation, like a bungalow or an apartment building", says Neera Adarkar in her introductory essay in *The Chawls of Mumbai: Galleries of Life* (2011), "because a chawl cannot be stripped bare of its occupants." (p.15). The lived experience seen here is most direct and even formed by the spaces inhabited.

The chawl as a residential typology initially evolved in colonial Bombay to house a large number of migrant workers in a dense urban situation. Chawls were later built in other industrialising cities such as Ahmedabad and Calcutta. In its representation in several Hindi films, the chawl as a typology is deployed to signify the way the lower middle class or working-class live, delineating spatially the nature of characters in these films. In *Shri 420*, for example, this trope is observed as a dwelling for the working class in whose vicinity is situated the humble cottage of the female protagonist, and stands in contrast with the ostentatious bungalow of the wealthy antagonist.

[39] The Chawl as a term possibly comes from the Marathi word *'Chaal'* which means 'to walk'. This is possibly derived from the corridors of this architectural typology that form long walkways to access individual tenements. In that sense, the chawl is a typically Bombay phenomenon, as is discussed in the manner in which these buildings came up to house new migrants into the city.

This chapter, creates a rich picture of the Filmic House-Chawl and examines its spatial and narrative role by mobilising the architectural and cinematic views using a few significant films that centre stage the chawl. Amrit Gangar (2011) has surveyed several Hindi films that feature the chawl and has discussed its filmic representation as an amalgamation of real and studio built chawls to evoke a unified account of lived experience.[40] He considers these films as an archive and a "museum of memories – physical and mental" for viewers today. Gangar describes some of the important chawl films in broad strokes within the scope of his essay. While accepting the value of Gangar's observations on how the chawls get narrativized in terms of their typology and living culture, we take the analysis of the Filmic House-Chawl further and deeper to examine its typology, the inherent spatiality of its tenements and the agency it provides (or restricts) for its inhabitants as lived space. Here, we not only extend the survey of films but strive to appreciate the unique nature of chawl in terms of the notions of home as a private and inner space and the agency it affords to its inhabitants. We examine the various adaptations to the spaces within that accommodate various configurations of tenants – single, couples, nuclear and joint families, all within the constricted space of the tenement and the impact such adaptations have on the way they live.

A brief description of the development of the typology itself in its historic and geographic location in the city of Bombay is pertinent here.

4.1 Bombay's Chawls – the first home for new migrants

Bombay grew predominantly as a city of migrants. Chawls came up in colonial Bombay towards the end of the 19th century to house a large number of migrant workers as the city transformed into a mercantile and industrial powerhouse. A typical chawl consisted of a row of single or two room tenements accommodated on two to five identical floors. The access corridor was located either externally or between two rows of tenements on every floor and was in turn connected to a common staircase and a common set of latrines and bathrooms. The tenement, also known as *kholi* was initially meant for only the migrant male who, leaving behind his wife and family in villages in the Konkan, the Deccan or even North India,

[40] Amrit Gangar in his essay, *Chalchitra/Chawlchitra: the Representation of Mumbai's Chawls in Hindi Films*, in Neera Adarkar (Ed.), *The Chawls of Mumbai: Galleries of Life* (2011), discusses a few Hindi films that prominently feature a chawl, such as *Asli Naqli* (1962), *Bluff Master* (1963), *Baharon ke Sapne* (1967), *Piya ka Ghar* (1972), *Mohan Joshi Haazir Ho* (1984), *Katha* (1983), *Vaastav* (1999), *Pran Jaye par Shan na Jaye* (2003), *Taxi No. 9211* (2006).

inhabited them in the most economical way possible – sometimes as many as ten to twenty-five men occupied a single tenement – largely to sleep and keep their meagre belongings (Adarkar, 2011). Away from their real families, the migrants found familial support amongst each other.

As the textile mills prospered in Bombay and migrants became settled, they called for their families from the villages to come live with them. The same limited space of the kholi now began to be inhabited by entire families, making the chawls unique examples of collective living. The same spaces that once served as group accommodation for several single men later transformed into homes for multi-member families who had to internalise several strategies of negotiating personal lives within a limited amount of habitable space and sharing common toilets. Menon and Adarkar (2004) have noted how some of the women residents began running meal services for workers who still lived as single men, while quite a few found jobs in already existing messes. An eco-system began to thrive with community networks as a base.

More and more chawls came up in the inner-city areas and on the mill lands of south-central Bombay. Since land was expensive, and returns on rentals invariably low, builders filled their sites with chawls and squeezed into them as many tenements or kholis as was possible. This resulted in overcrowding and poor quality, as noted by Menon and Adarkar (2004), due to the builders economising on materials and construction and on the provision of sanitation. Water supply was scarce and taps often ran dry.

From their inception in the late 19th century to their proliferation in the first half of 20th century, the socio-economic patterns of chawl dwellers changed. With improved economic conditions and the availability of modern education for their children, many families witnessed upward mobility while continuing to live in the same kholi. Each family would make several improvements to their tenements and populate them with material possessions of the time. A characteristic sense of community compensated for lack of space, privacy and comforts.

4.2 Chawls in Hindi Cinema – from social architecture to urban legend

Since chawls were essentially rental accommodations, many films in their plots highlight or dramatize encounters between the landlords and tenants. In *Biwi aur Makan* (1965), five young men, newly minted graduates in search of jobs, live in a rented *kholi* in 'Rambharose Hotel' – a chawl that functions as a lodge, but are evicted by the landlord on the pretext of immoral activities. *Rambharose* (in Ram we trust) used to be a popular name for such lodges in the city. In the film this is used to convey the plight of unemployed young tenants mostly at the mercy of their landlords, as we have seen in *Dil Daulat Duniya* (1973) in the previous chapter.

The travails of the tenants at the hands of greedy and wicked landlords (of the chawls) are indicative of the class struggle between the landed and the proletariat, something that works favourably, as in the case of *Biradari* (1966) or ends disastrously as in the case of *Mohan Joshi Hazir Ho* (Saeed Mirza, 1984). In *Biradari*, the greedy daughter of the landlady is inclined to sell their chawl to a wealthy developer at the risk of rendering the tenants homeless but love and genial camaraderie of the chawl dwellers make her see the folly of her actions. The latter film takes place in an old and decrepit Mumbai chawl whose repairs are held up in legal tangles and the politics of real estate. It portrays the tragic failure of the ageing protagonist to save the building, his own vulnerability mirroring that of the precarious condition of the chawl, both collapsing together in the final scene.

Over the years, the chawl became a part of the image and legend of Bombay. Hindi cinema reflected the perception of chawls as more than a mere form of dwelling or mass housing. They constituted communities, both with their solidarities (usually exhibited during times of adversity and struggle) and their cantankerous bickering. Chawl life was romanticised and acquired its own mythos, where the chawl provides an architectural grain that is quintessential Bombay even when it may not have a place in the narrative. For instance, chawls provide the backdrop for popular song sequences, as in the Janmashtami festival in *Bluff Master* or set in the backdrop of Ganesh festival as in the remake of *Don* (2006).

Filmic chawls came to signify the lived spaces of honest, (hard) working-class people braving the tough city life in a spirit of camaraderie forming poor but happy fraternities. This fraternal life of chawl dwellers became a primary subject of a few notable films. In *Asli Naqli* (1962),

this trope becomes the main narrative point where the protagonist has to choose between an *asli* or genuine home in a chawl or his own bungalow which to him appears *naqli* or fake. The social architecture of a chawl is centre-stage in *Katha* (1983) and *Piya ka Ghar* (1972). The premise of the former is based on the peaceful inner world of a chawl getting disrupted by the arrival of an outsider; whereas in the latter, central premise is constructed around spatial anxieties faced by a young bride in a crowded and cramped Bombay chawl. For Gangar (2011), the chawl in *Katha* best represents what he terms as 'chawlness' or *'chawl-chalgat'*[41] — a space that imagines everyone as a collective extended family, "where everyone is a relative".[42]

In later films, the representation of chawls moved away from being associated only with the innocent subaltern, and portrayed their residents' vulnerability to the underworld and a propensity to (willingly or otherwise) get sucked into the world of crime. This was a move away from the usual stereotype where the criminal class was always located in a villain's den. These new age gangster films located them in the domestic setting of chawls (besides slums), allowing a more layered characterisation of everymen with shades of grey. The most noteworthy examples of this type of films are *Satya* (1998), and *Vaastav* (1999).[43]

4.2.1 The location of the kholi in the Filmic House-Chawl

The Filmic House-Chawl needs to be observed beyond the portrayal of its social architecture. This means looking at films where the narrative is focussed on a single tenement or *kholi* in a chawl, its space having a significant bearing on the lives of the resident characters. Such films provide an opportunity to examine the relationship of space with individuals more intimately. The chawl as a whole may not dominate the film's narrative but only provide a context of the condition of chawl living, or a certain urban milieu having an impact on the characters.

A significant film in this respect is *Dastak* (1970), in which a young couple rent a tenement in a chawl in the red-light area of Central Mumbai, the space of the tenement becoming

[41] Gangar (2011) coins the term *chawl-chalgat* to describe the behaviour of chawl dwellers that results from the living space. p.91.

[42] As said by the protagonist Rajaram in *Katha.*

[43] Later, quasi biographical films based on real life gangsters – *Daddy* (2017) and *Hasina* (2018) also portrayed working class chawl-dwelling characters' slide into the world of criminality.

oppressive for them. The chawl typology is also deployed to tell tales beyond those of middle-class family life. *Kali Salwar* (2002) portrays a chawl in a different narrative context, the tale of a sex worker who rents a kholi in it and struggles to survive. *Dhobighat: Mumbai Diaries* (2010) has one of its main characters move into a kholi in a chawl in the inner-city area to find inspiration for his art.

An overview of chawl kholis will again bring *Piya ka Ghar* into discussion since besides presenting the social architecture of a chawl, it also closely follows the life of a joint family inside a tiny kholi. Prasad (1998) makes a mention of it as dealing with the problem of private space in a humorous fashion. He also describes *Dastak* as an example where the space of conjugal relationship is dealt with in a complex narrative. He refers to both these films as a sub-type of Middle-Class Cinema[44] that tackles the issue of privacy in middle-class existence. While Prasad mentions *Piya ka Ghar* only very briefly, he discusses *Dastak* more in detail, his perspective being the ideology of privacy and individual agency.

In each of these films, the kholi as a domestic space and its spatial character become closely associated with its individual inhabitants and presents possibilities of analysing the filmic house at the level of an intimate space.

4.2.2 The Materiality of Filmic Chawls

These films are also illustrative of differing architectural treatments that emerged within the generic chawl typology which remained more or less unchanged during the passing decades of its development in Bombay city. Gangar (2011) considers them as records of this unique type of residential architecture, giving a structural and social feel of its characteristics. The Filmic Chawls in *Katha* and *Kali Salwar* are examples of a *lakdi chawl*, built in timber frame construction, whose architecture is characterised by a timber staircase, sloping roofs and wooden galleries. The chawl in *Dastak* is a small masonry building with a neo-classical façade whereas *Piya ka Ghar*, features a hybrid construction of an imposing masonry block with wooden galleries or corridors. The chawl in *Satya* where the eponymous character rents

[44] The appellation of 'Middle Class Cinema' refers to films that revolve around middle-class subjects and find appeal to a middle-class audience, whose generic specificity derives from the effects of ordinariness, familiarity or spectator identification and the real world.

a kholi is what (in Bambaiya, the local Bombay patois of Hindustani) is popularly referred to as a 'simit (or cement) chawl', an unarticulated block of concrete construction.

Film	**Chawl Architecture**
Katha, Kali Salwar, Dhobighat: Mumbai Diaries, Daddy, Hasina	Lakdi Chawl, built in timber frame
Dastak	Masonry Chawl, with neo-classical facade
Piya ka Ghar	Masonry Chawl, with wooden corridors
Satya	Cement Chawl with double loaded corridor

Table 4.1: Architectural treatments in filmic representations of chawls

Not only are these films illustrative of varying architectural treatment of the city chawls and thus becoming an archive on celluloid of the city's housing history but are also instructive of the symbolic import of the materiality of physical construction of buildings in communicating several meanings that the film-going audience has internalised as a combination of their real world and filmic experiences. For instance, timber construction or wooden jalis or railings come to signify a low-key status of the building, particularly suited to show dilapidation and state of disrepair that further indicates the lower economic status of the inhabitants. Similarly, a cement chawl with its run down and bare appearance signifies a low-key status of the inhabitants. On the contrary, masonry construction and classical detailing on the exterior suggest a transition of the building type and indicate an upward social class among the chawl dwellers.

4.3 Analysing the Filmic Chawl using the 'Model of Filmic Dwelling'

Having taken a broad overview of several films that have representations of chawls, we look at five films specifically: *Piya ka Ghar, Katha, Dastak, Kali Salwar and Dhobighat: Mumbai Dairies.* These films are selected because the manner in which they centralise a chawl (or its tenement), its architectural space having narrative significance. *Piya ka Ghar* is chosen as the key film, meriting more detailed analysis because the chawl and space of kholi therein forms a structural totality that corresponds to the lived experience.

Kaiwan Mehta (2011) in his study of inner-city inhabitation of the dwelling typologies in Bombay mentions that the production-construction of the chawl is a different process than its

adaptation which pertains to inquiring how people dwell. The analysis of individual films using our 'Model of Filmic Dwelling' and its lived space as a mode of private dwelling by centralising the house its architectural mise-en-scene and the things within, and the larger context of the urban geography is discussed as a mode of public dwelling.

The issue of private dwelling in *Piya ka Ghar* is further elaborated by delving deeper into the interlinked issues of available space, private space and human behaviour. Filmic representations are creative interpretations of reality, and have the potential to add a layer of cultural meaning that would otherwise not be available were the researchers merely analysing theory or observing public behaviour (Dudley, 2010). Domestic spaces portrayed in cinema have a great potential to bring to fore an otherwise private domain. To appreciate the intimate aspects of habitation concerned with human spatial behaviour, privacy and territoriality we are also informed by Environment-Behaviour Studies[45] that examine transactions between individuals and their physical settings in which their behaviour and experiences are shaped by the environment (Gifford, 2007).

4.4 *Katha* – the inner world of community living

A timber framed '*lakdi*' chawl in Bombay is the setting of *Katha* (Story) in which three floors flanked by running corridors are arrayed around a chowk or a courtyard. Individual kholis (tenements) open out onto the corridors which in turn overlook the courtyard. The courtyard is thus both a place for social cohesion as well as a site for surveillance. Common staircases with wooden balusters reach all the floors and are sites of encounter and chance meeting. Common water taps and toilets are places of potential irritation and conflict.
In essence, *Katha* takes place in an almost idealised example of the typology, home to several lower middle-class families who almost happily co-exist. The inner world of this chawl gets shaken up with arrival of Rajaram's friend Bashu. The film captures this world and its lived

[45] A body of theory relating to human-environment transactions, known variously as Environmental Psychology, Architectural Psychology, Environmental and Behaviour Research or Environmental-Behaviour Studies (EBS) – theories and research concerning human spatial behaviour.

experience through the structure of the chawl itself and the influence its component parts exert, either overtly or covertly.
Two sequences establish the architecture of this chawl and its characteristic life situations.

The first sequence is where the film begins. It follows Rajaram, an upright clerk in a city firm, arriving home from work. The sequence begins with a shot of children playing a game of cricket in the chowk and an elderly matriarch throwing rubbish down from an upstairs corridor. Rajaram's arrival in the chawl is immediately spotted by her and in an ensuing exchange, he shares the news of his promotion, which quickly spreads. We follow his movements as he makes his way up a staircase and onto a corridor where he accepts compliments from neighbours on the landing. While the camera is facing Rajaram walking in the corridor, a ball is hit from the chowk, flying past him with a whooshing noise, entering the open door, and finding its target in an earthen pot which shatters with a loud noise. A montage of close-ups shows the shattered pot, a lad with a cricket bat, and the lady of the house angrily staring at the wreckage. The incident brings the lady out in the corridor in a huff leading to a fight with the mother of the child. Before reaching his own door, Rajaram stops by at a neighbour's house to help the invalid with some tasks and calls upon the matriarch who emerges from behind the cloth curtain of her door to feed him sweets and collect a parcel of medicines. Rajaram's movement sequence reveals several details of social interactions, camaraderie as well as acrimony, engendered by the architectural setting of the chawl.

In another early sequence in the film, dawn breaks out over the chawl. The sounds of birds chirping are intermingled with sounds of water starting to trickle from taps. Lights come on from behind doors and windows of the tenements as the inhabitants wake up to perform the essential task of filling up water while the limited municipal supply lasts. We see several close-ups of all kinds of taps with a variety of vessels underneath waiting to be filled up. There is a flurry of activity – women fill water in their own kitchen *moris* while men with buckets in hand rush down the stairs to line up at communal taps located in the chowk. A few elders have already gathered there to brush their teeth. All this, while some rush to the common toilets also located in the chowk with tin pots filled with water, trying to beat the rest in the urgencies of answering nature's call. This sequence elicits humour, it also reveals the realities of life in a chawl and the daily challenges of meeting the most basic needs.

In both sequences, the camerawork faithfully reveals the architectural assembly in whole and in parts. Rajaram's movement sequence reveals the social qualities of a chawl life. The tenements are arrayed along corridors, paths of common movement, their insides shielded by curtains over doors and windows. Here, nothing is hidden and personal life is public knowledge. A main door which is kept closed during the day time immediately draws attention of the neighbours and obvious conclusions are made about the goings on inside. The Filmic House taken as a whole has a distinct sense of publicness in its mode of private dwelling. This publicness is played out in the common corridors but more so in the central chowk, a common place for all, for collective activities and actions, but also for performing the most private act of defecating.

Figure 4.1 : Stills from the film *Katha*

The chawl in *Katha* is its own universe; its space is centred on the chowk. The entrance to the chawl is from a corner of the chowk, the world beyond it is unconnected. The arrival of Bashu through this entrance is observed from the corridors and evokes an instant reaction – *"dekho dekho koi bahar ka aadmi aaya hai!"* (Look, look, there is an outsider here!) Clearly, Bashu represents the unknown, an exotic entity from the 'outside' that arouses everyone's curiosity and fascination, stirring up still waters. The expository song sequence *'Koun aaya,*

koun aaya' has the entire chawl coming out into the galleries, exchanging remarks, children sliding from hand rails and eventually everyone bursting into a collective dance in the chowk. In the climax of the film, the same chowk becomes the venue for Rajaram and Sandhya's wedding, averting the crisis triggered by Bashu's flight.

Most families portrayed in the film have modest households, including Rajaram and Sandhya his neighbour with whom he is silently in love. Several objects communicate the humble status of the families – mismatched curtains, primus stoves, vessels for storing water and the ubiquitous Dalda tin for visiting the toilet. In Rajaram's tenement, a few objects have specific narrative value. Framed photographs of his parents who reside in their native village are like a living presence in the house. Rajaram even talks to their images. Here, and in *Piya ka Ghar*, framed photographs essentialise the stories of migration to the city, the very condition that brings about the typology in the first place. On Rajaram's walls there are also photo frames of great leaders and a grandfather clock that has stopped working. These objects convey his old-world values, like the non-working clock they evoke nostalgia for a time that is fast being replaced by the winds of change. The arrival of the impostor Bashu heralds one such change that takes the chawl by storm. His charms hide his disingenuity and many fall victim to it, as he makes himself at home in Rajaram's house and occupies the space with an abandon that Rajaram never allowed himself. This appropriation of his space is symptomatic of other forms of usurpation, the worst being Sandhya's affections.

One tenement in the chawl stands out from the rest. It belongs to a couple whose son is abroad. In this house, we see folding partitions, a folding dining table and even a folding teapoy – the man describes his house as a 'folding house'. The house flaunts several objects of 'high-living' like a television, a telephone, a refrigerator full of goodies including cans of Coke, even issues of Time magazine. The objects have 'imported' stamped all over them and indicates the exalted status of the family in the pre-liberalisation era. The family has clearly moved ahead in status but is unwilling to move out of the chawl. *"Ek baar jo chawl mein raha woh chawl chhod kar nahi ja sakta, joint family si ho jati hai*." (Once you get a taste of chawl life, it is difficult to let go of it, it is like a joint family.)

The chawl housing this 'joint family' is inward looking. We are never made aware of the space immediately outside it. Nor do we see its architecture from outside. We tend to see the chawl as a world unto itself. It remains a closed space, shared and guarded by the families. The arrival of the outsider is such a momentous event, it is marked by a song sequence as

mentioned earlier. Throughout the film, the chawl remains un-named and its location in Bombay is only evidenced by the activities of Bashu in the larger city outside or in scenes of Rajaram's workplace. Bashu conducts his various shenanigans outside the chawl, here we see office spaces, restaurants and the beach, locations iconic to the city of Bombay. Sandhya's sexual transgression also takes place outside the chawl in the urban space. Her public dwelling in the city is fraught with forbidden pleasures and have consequences. The crisis set up by Bashu's exit can only be resolved by containing the situation within the proverbial four walls of the house.

Thus in *Katha*, the chawl performs as a stable universe which has no outside reference. All values are intrinsic coming from within, an alien element coming from outside shakes up this status quo, including that of benign sexuality in an ordered world. The status quo is eventually restored by the exit of the alien and the girl's marriage with the nativised hero. The narrative can therefore be seen as a dialectic between inside and outside, the chawl is the concrete space, a setting for its unfolding by way of demarcating the inner and outer worlds. The resolution of the film is achieved by honouring the sanctity of the inner domain by way of containment of female and her legitimate sexuality within the chawl universe.

4.5 *Dastak* – Voyeurism, insecurity and discord

The Filmic Chawl in *Dastak* is a two-room tenement in a chawl named Yahya Manzil in the inner city area near Bombay Central Station. Its neoclassical façade dates it back to the early twentieth century, when the inner city of Bombay was being inhabited and densified by migrants. The inner workings of the chawl building itself has little role in the narrative, however, its outward dimension and its location in a busy commercial street or *mohalla* having the reputation of being a 'red-light' area is the cause of central conflict in the film.

The tenement is rented by a recently married couple – Hamid works as a low paid clerk in the municipal corporation while his wife Salma hails from a noble family in her village and is an

accomplished classical singer. They are happy to have found an affordable place to rent, unaware that the previous occupant was a popular tawaif (courtesan) and the ordeals in store for them because of that. They are further elated to discover that the previous tenant has left behind a bed and few other things that they can make use of.

Their arrival in the chawl is noted with sly interest by the *mohalla*, particularly the presence of a big tanpura that stands out among their sparse belongings catches the attention of across the street *panwalla* who shares a customer base with the local courtesans. Once inside their home, the sounds of Salma at her tanpura and her breaking into a thumri evoke knowing reactions from the street below – the *panwalla* and his customers. Curious onlookers appear at opposite windows attracted by the sounds. Soon, Hamid and Salma are troubled by a series of knocks (*dastak*) on their front door as clients of the previous occupant start turning up there. The easy walk-up from the common staircase and the shared corridor provide almost no filter to their *kholi*. Insinuations of prostitution are made of the young wife despite of couple's protestations.

The wife is all alone during the day when the husband is at work. For fear of their respectability, the husband has forbidden her from venturing out or visiting anyone in the *mohalla*. To beat boredom, she enacts her fantasies. In a key scene in the film, she play acts, smokes a cigarette, pretends to have a visitor and conducts mock conversations. Voyeurs from opposite windows crane their necks but only have a partial view. They can see the woman sitting on the bed chatting and playing cards while two tea cups are lying around. Convenient inferences are made that exacerbate the situation for the wife. Every knock on their door brings trepidation regarding their respectability and many windows are rife for the external voyeuristic gaze. Prasad (1998) views this film as raising the question of women's agency, desires and self expression. We surmise that the space has a stifling effect on the wife whose agency and sexuality is caught between the dichotomy of housewife/ tawaif.

Figure 4.2: Stills from the film *Dastak*

In this *kholi,* many windows seem to be present to provide a view from the outside in (rather than inside out). Voyeurs gaze at every act of the wife and hear every strain of her singing with perverse expectations. The home space is not allowed privacy. The sounds and sights from within freely permeate outside. The mise-en-scene in the film barely gets populated with the paraphernalia of domesticity, Prasad (1998) remarks that this functions to foreground a lack of conjugal relationship. One dominant object in the inner room is the bed, a legacy of the previous occupant. It is given a centrality in the pictorial space of the film, bringing with it continuing suggestions of former site of prostitution, preventing it from becoming a site of conjugal intimacy. The space, its bare and grimy walls, the bed are captured in close-ups and present a bleak picture as far as private dwelling as a peaceful refuge is concerned.

The bed is not the only object left behind by the previous occupant, there is a sackful of other objects, notably a birdcage and a couple of framed photographs. Amused by this bounty, the husband hangs the frames on the walls and later brings home a new birdcage to amuse his wife. When Salma points out the cruelty of confining a bird in a cage, Hamid replies that it is for its own safety from the outside world. The birdcage is tellingly shaped like a house. For Salma, the house is no different from a cage whose confines she is forbidden to leave for the fear of being devoured by forces of disrepute. In a song sequence, there is a montage of spaces that capture her psychological state of captivity. In one moment, she is lying on floor, her semi-naked body contrasts with the chequered flooring, like a prey stuck in a web; in another moment she is running on the sea shore; a yet another moment shows her trapped in a maze of concentric walls from which she finds no escape and collapses.

While the cage symbolises the wife's situation of being captive in the protective confines of the house, a warning against transgression, the framed photograph turns out to be even more sinister. In the final scenes, the couple realise with shock that the portrait was of the tawaif's prominent client who has now shown up at their door. Their resistance to his eventual ingress in the inner room was doomed for failure as his symbolic presence was already allowed by them and even elevated by them in the first place. Salma's picking up the tanpura for his pleasure indicates her surrender to her fate.

In *Dastak,* there are other filmic devices such as sign-boards – for example, a close-up of electric sign in the house, the skull and cross bones sign that reads "Danger 240 V", and a

road repair sign outside the building that reads “WORK IN PROGRESS” – they forebodingly indicate the perilous nature of the home space as well as Yahya Manzil’s bidden task of transforming a housewife into a prostitute.

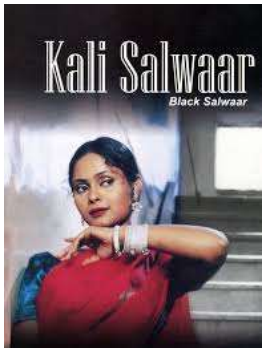
The home space in *Dastak* is the principal character in the film, it is tainted by association and it is open to prying eyes and intruding bodies, it is marked out by external expectations as a potential site for sexual transaction. The husband is unable to fathom his wife’s sexuality and feels threatened. There is a scene where she is making tea in the kitchen while he menacingly charges in and demands to know from her who she really is. He assaults her while the primus stove burns, the stove here evokes dark associations with bride burning. In the climactic scene of Salma’s settling down to sing for the visitor, Hamid’s rage once again takes on a murderous tone. He comes to his senses when Salma breaks the instrument on the floor and banishes the visitor. They realise that the only way to survive in this house is by boldly resisting to external demands and staking claim of their own domesticity.

In the opening credits of the film, we see a montage of shots of Bombay city, clearly marking the geographical location of the filmic house, beginning with the top shot of Victoria Terminus station and ending with Bombay Central station in whose vicinity is located the real world red light area of the city. When the couple need to select a code word as a signal to the wife to open the door for Hamid every evening, they instinctively choose the name of the station, again imprinting the location and ironically its association. The Filmic House, the two-room tenement has peculiar relationship with its urban geography. The immediate neighbourhood, the *mohulla* turns out to be hostile to the couple’s existence. When night comes, they flee its tyranny and find safety in the space of the city at large, its outdoors like Marine Drive provide them much needed escape and freedom from the stifling home space. The usually understood category of safe haven and hostile world are inverted in the film.

In *Dastak*, space is infused with memory and taint, retaining traces of previous occupation or inhabitation. Given that moving into a rental accommodation is a typical urban situation, this film raises questions of who does such a space belong to and how does one make it home. Central to the film is a sense of loss of home and whether one can recover it in an antagonistic space of this chawl tenement. All this is a ‘Work in Progress’.

Dastak also alludes to the challenges of finding an affordable home in the city of Bombay and travails of working-class migrants to the city. The narrative further complicates the issue by alluding to the denial of homes in the city at large to Muslims. This is shown in Hamid's frustrated efforts in finding alternative accommodation to escape the tyranny of Yahya Manzil. Hamid loathes the idea of going back to the slum with his wife. For the wife who has migrated to the city due to marriage, the new city home that has sucked out her subjectivity represents a sense of 'loss of home'. The resolution in this film's narrative happens when the couple take charge of their destiny and decide to recover their 'home' in the very space that has so far oppressed them.

4.6 *Kali Salwar — "dedh kamre ka kabootarkhana"*



The filmic house in *Kali Salwar* is a tenement in a rundown *'lakdi'* chawl in the inner city areas close to the mill district of Bombay. It is rented by Sultana, a small time sex worker who has migrated to the city with dreams of better work prospect. She describes it as *"dedh kamre ka kabootarkhana"* (A pigeonhole of one and a half rooms) to Anwari, a fellow sex worker, its space closely defines her existential situation of surviving in the new and strange environment that she finds herself in.

She walks the streets or hangs out seductively in the chawl corridor but struggles to find customers. During the day she spends time doing household chores. Sometimes she wanders in the neighbourhood or watches children play in the chawl corridor. When night comes, she prepares herself for work. Her companion and pimp, a failed photographer, is out of the house most of the time. We can view the *kholi* mostly from the perspective of Sultana's lived experience.

Figure 4.3: Stills from the film *Kali Salwar*

The space of her tenement is as sparse as her belongings and yet, quite remarkable in its portrayal. First, there is the usual domestic paraphernalia such as a few kitchen utensils, vessels to store water, a *nahani* as a washing place, a cupboard and two iron trunks, clothes hanging from pegs, a small mirror hung on a wall beside a tiny cabinet containing religious icons. The meagreness of her existence is quite apparent in the mise-en-scene. Yet, it acquires an extra-ordinary quality by use of colours. Uneven wall surfaces are rendered in bright pink and blue with occasional jambs rendered in ochre, they fill the screen space with fields of colour. And then these walls become magical with painted trees, one is laden with mangoes and the other with blooming flowers. The swirling branches and stylised leaves in the paintings reflect Sultana's own vivacious self. Panels of flower laden vases on either side of the doorway complete the paradisiacal imagery of a garden. An inviting mattress is laid on the floor at the feet of the tree of life, an oasis is shaped amidst barrenness. Sultana adorns herself in front of the mirror to get ready for the night, her adornment is matched in that tiny space that holds out hopes for rewards. In this domestic space, the binary of housewife/ prostitute breaks down. House understood as a private dwelling of householder, is also a space of commercial transaction with publicness attached to it.

In her many moments of solitude, Sultana is seen opening an iron trunk, taking out her possessions, caressing them and putting them back—a prayer mat and a copy of the Quran

wrapped in muslin, an inlaid wooden box containing bottles of perfume, fine clothes and an antique ewer – things from the better days. A poignant moment occurs when she is gazing at a set of photographs which we can only see from behind. The outlines hint at family photos and another one of a small girl – these are perhaps memories of past life of a sex worker. The trunk is a container of memories of a lost past and the realities of a bleak present. She has already sold many of her possessions to meet the basic needs of food and rent. Mired in poverty, even three yards of cloth needed to stitch a customary black dress for observance of Moharram eludes her. The trunk provides her with a white tunic and a veil which could be dyed in black but a salwar, the lower garment is still missing.

The urban geography of the mill lands becomes more than a backdrop in *Kali Salwar*, it situates Sultana and other characters and is presented in its bare realities from their perspective. We see, in the wanderings of Sultana, alone or with Anwari, the views of mill lands and surrounding inner-city areas – its informal bazaars or its hustle and bustle. The space of the city, of the mill village, godowns and trucks, sacks being hauled dodging overflowing drains, the squalor is captured in bare reality and daily grind is presented as is.

The film opens with Sultana looking out from her chawl window to a landscape of mill chimneys beyond train tracks. She gazes at the city of dreams which is unfortunately crumbling down in this part of the city due to shutting down of many mills and the workers rendered jobless.

Sultana and Anwari spend many a moments on the roof terrace of the chawl, overlooking the neighbouring chawls, tightly packed and the horizon filled with tall chimneys that fell silent. When Sultana asks her whether she was from the city itself, Anwari remarks that no one belongs to this city. There are scars of migration in everyone's life, the sense of displacement is most palpable for those who have to toil the hardest. Anwari tells Sultana about the city and the difficult times. She sings *"Ai dil hai mushkil jeena yahan…*". The film places both women in such despondent time that takes a toll on their lives with very little work coming their way. Their precarious situation and poverty is mirrored in the decrepit condition of surrounding chawls. The train tracks are visible in the close distance and their conversations take place in the background sounds of moving trains. The link of trains and migrations is a recurring motif. Sultana has arrived from Muzzafarpur in a train and now dreams for a ticket to take her back.

The film captures the human story of a sex worker by placing her within the urban milieu of crumbling inner city where she as the other marginalised are struggling to survive. This is unlike the usual Hindi cinema trope of a courtesan as a sensuous ethereal object in a glamorous *kotha* that exists beyond the humdrum of urbanity, as, say in the depiction of Chandramukhi's home in Bhansali's *Devdas*. This humanisation is best seen in the domestic setting, just like a housewife, same as the other sex workers she bonds with in their homes, sharing the same struggles. Kagalwala (2017) remarks about the film in her article, "it universalises her situation, appropriately positioning her displacement as a bigger dilemma than the shame of her profession, unshackling Sultana from the needless narrative burden of having to redeem herself from a sex worker to woman, for a fitting end."

In an early scene, when Sultana and Anwari are both out in the street looking for work, in the background are the ramshackle chawls with several women framed by windows lighted up in the night. One by one, we see the door curtains closing off at a distance and the windows getting filled with more than one body. The domestic setting of inner city chawls contain this side a story too. However precarious their condition may be, they hang onto a hope of surviving. When Sultana sells her silver bangles, she and her man can either buy train tickets to take them back to village or eat a decent meal. She opts for the latter.

Sultana's need for a black salwar was mitigated by a cunning customer by exchanging her ear ornament with another sex worker. In the final scene on the day of Mohurram, the two women are placed in Sultana's room, the metal container for holy ablution becomes a centre of ritual pouring of water from an ewer and washing of body parts; simultaneously also of their womanly bonding and silent acknowledgement of their shared plight.

4.7 *Dhobighat* – spatial and temporal intersections

Dhobighat (Mumbai Diaries) follows the stories of the complex spatial and temporal intersecting of lives of four protagonists in the backdrop of Mumbai. While the film is a commentary on the urban situation, each of the protagonist's dwellings defines their character, while in some cases the characters define their dwellings.

For our immediate purpose, we restrict our examination to the chawl tenement in the inner city that becomes a temporal link between Arun, an artist and Yasmin, a housewife. The kholi in question is on the uppermost floor of a moderately sized lakdi chawl, it overlooks two busy streets in a densely packed neighbourhood, buzzing with shops, people and traffic. Arun rents this place upon expiry of lease on his suburban flat and finds, left behind, three video tapes recorded by the previous occupant Yasmin. He then becomes fixated on these tapes which contain Yasmin's very intimate musings on both her personal life, and her life in the city. In the course of the narrative we observe the same space as occupied by two completely different individuals, from very different classes and cultural backgrounds. This is seen in the manner in which the spaces are furnished, the rooms are coloured and the objects within that reflect the status of the two occupants.

Arun could be described as a privileged, upper class, urban nomad. In the course of the film, he inhabits three different spaces, changing his rentals twice. He is also self effacing, prefers not to mingle and keep to himself. His own space therefore becomes an extension of his personal space and his innate desire to remain private – best represented in the kholi which integrates his working, socializing, and cooking spaces in one. The same physical container, the kholi, bear distinctly different aspect as Arun's room than what we see in Yasmin's videos. This is an architectural space that can be seen as a concretization of an existential space describing the relation between man and his environment that makes him belong to a

social and cultural identity. The interior space is uplifted to conform to today's modest, yet high living, educated artist's personality. The previously garishly painted walls are now all white, as is the floor. There are framed paintings on the walls, piles of books and other bric-a-brac. The furniture is comfortable, but a mix of modern and retro-chic. The dining table has an ornate wooden base, with a marble top. The chairs are bentwood. His easel is located to get the best of the window that offers maximum sunlight.

Figure 4.4: Stills from the film *Dhobighat*

The windows overlook a busy and noisy street filled with the activities of shops and transport into the late hours of the night. They also provide views of the city's skyline, which he seeks as inspiration for his art. He is seen standing at a window gazing at life as it unfolds on the streets below, but also as it happens through the windows of the neighbouring buildings. While there is a voyeuristic aspect to his outward gaze, there is also curiosity of an artist. Arun is a man from outside this social milieu, trying to make sense of the domain that he finds himself in. He belongs, yet does not belong, to the social and cultural identity of his geographic location. His gaze is interestingly reversed, as he is himself the subject of a voyeuristic gaze, this through the zoom lens of Zai, the third character in the diaries, who is on an exploratory project to photograph the life in Mumbai. In an interesting scene, she is perched in the opposite construction site, her lens directed at Arun's window while Arun's attention is fixed on Yasmin's video.

Yasmin, the previous tenant of the kholi, is seen through a gaze of her own making, the camera is a gift to her from her husband, who shows her how to operate it. The audience only sees her in the video diaries she has made for her brother, who lives in the small town that she comes from. She films her world as she lives it, providing a subjective and objective take on Mumbai and her own location within it, her filmed gaze is overlaid with commentary about the city and her own circumstances which don't end well.

The film begins with a shot that Yasmin has filmed in a taxi moving through a rain soaked Marine Drive, in which she talks with the driver, her voice filled with the burden of living in the city, where she mentions that she has been in Mumbai for five years now. The location of this well known geographical landmark (seen in numerous Hindi films before) takes on a fresh resonance, no longer remaining an inert background, but participating in the very emotions of the film. As Vidler mentions about a different film, "the surroundings no longer surround, but enter the experience as presence." (2000, p. 102).

Yasmin explores several sites in the city, yet most of her video-logs are made at home, in the kholi itself, and show her house as a 'private space' which brings us inside and represents Yasmin's need for being situated. In this former avatar, the tenement defines the aspirational presence of a lower income, newly married couple. Her space is, of course, shared with her husband, who never appears in the videos except in the beginning. To a large extent, it is his absence that is foregrounded, as he grows more and more distant to Yasmin.

Her story (unlike Arun's) is about herself and locates her at a more intimate level with the space she is attempting to make her home in the city which is strange yet fascinating, her videos show her difficulties with reconciling herself with increasing loneliness and isolation. Like Arun, she too gazes out into the windows of the neighbours but here there is poignancy in juxtaposing her own isolation with that of the families in the tenements she looks into.

4.8 KEY FILM

Piya ka Ghar — spatial anxieties and existential adaptations

In *Katha*, we explored the notions of the social world of a chawl as a communal space which is also predominantly insular, and whether it could remain untouched by outer (and corrupting) influences. While films explore the communal and familial aspect of a chawl and indicate a relationship with the urban scenario, it is in *Piya ka Ghar* that we are able to also see the limits and the possibilities of a group of people living together as a family in a single tenement, behavioural issues related to its cramped space and the adaptations and adjustments that are called for to retain a sense of self, both at the deeply personal space level as well as in the existential sense.[46]

The Filmic House in the film *Piya ka Ghar* is a large chawl called 'Bharat Mahal' in central Bombay, where a number of working-class families have been living for decades. The film focuses on the life of Sharma household living here in a tiny tenement. Narrative tension is induced in the plot when Ram's bride accustomed to a spacious house in her native village arrives here after their wedding and faces acute spatial anxieties.

The contrast between the two habitats is set up in the opening sequences via the visits of a match-making priest who has been on a mission to fix the wedding between Malati and Ram. His movement sequences introduce and establish the two houses, the one in the village and the other in Bombay.

[46] Parts of this film analysis were published as a journal paper as following:
Smita Dalvi. (2019). Cinema, Architecture and Domesticity: The Filmic House in Basu Chatterjee's 'Piya ka Ghar'. *Creative Space, 7*(1), 57-66. Available at https://cs.chitkara.edu.in/index.php/cs/article/view/162

4.8.1 The establishment of architectural space through movement sequences

The film opens with the priest approaching the village house through an open, wooded landscape. While he is welcomed and being seated on the wide verandah, we get a sense of a spacious house nestled in open ground. The next shot introduces the young maiden who not wanting to be caught eavesdropping, makes a run for the inner courtyard, where she is axially framed by successive door frames receding in perspective, indicating multiple layers of rooms in between. Meanwhile, the priest sings praises of the groom's family and describes their house in Bombay. *"Panch manzila makaan me hai ladke ka ghar. Raja Maharajaon ke jaise mahal hote hain, Bambaiwalon ki chawl hoti hai…".* (The groom lives in a five-storey building. Just as the kings have their palaces, Bombayites have chawls.) This is clearly a pun on the name of the chawl which is unashamedly seized by the priest to liken it to a palace. The sequence ends with a cut to the close-up of the name board placed on the top of the chawl to emphasise the pun and the impending irony.

In the next sequence, as the camera zooms out, credits begin to roll, and the priest is seen approaching the chawl whose presence is unmistakable as it fills the screen with its size. This is an imposing, sprawling block in masonry construction with wooden galleries running its length, punctuated by several staircases.

The credits continue rolling through a movement sequence – beginning with the priest entering the chawl, climbing a staircase, moving along several corridors in a ramshackle state, and culminating at the main door of the groom's house. We see the priest having to wade through the thick of daily life spilling out in to the corridors, the very spaces that Neera Adarkar (2011) describes as "galleries of life". We see women and children clustered at their front doors while a vegetable vendor brings in his wares, a horde of children in school uniforms hurry down the staircase and a group of women leave, perhaps for work. The elderly read newspapers perched on chairs and some women hang laundry. Some children play cards while a child plays on a swing suspended from his main door. There is also a shot of waste water being thrown from the gallery above – typical chawl behaviour, and a montage of shots of onlookers leaning on the railings and shots of a street spectacle.

Figure 4.5: Stills from the film *Piya ka Ghar* - I

In this movement sequence through the labyrinthine galleries of Bharat Mahal, time collapses as the priest moves – with every turn, a different gallery appears and the time zone shifts from early morning activities to afternoon ones and finally of evening. Clearly, it is not a mere act of someone entering a building and reaching a tenement he has come to visit. It is a choreography possible only in filmic space which concretises the lived reality of chawl life.

The movement sequence of the priest through Bharat Mahal is a piece of synoptic visual story-telling portraying the quintessential qualities of a chawl. The viewer is immersed in the

warren like aspect of a chawl – each kholi is hardly a door and a window in width, arrayed along the gallery, onto which each family brings a part of their domestic life. Various forms of storage, seats, chairs or cots line the gallery, there being a tacit understanding of markers of semi-private territory within the portion of this otherwise common corridor. This is further evidenced by the main doors which are almost always kept open, only a cloth curtain shielding the privacy of the inner space if required. This sequence also performs a didactic role, describing the unique urban situation of working class chawls housing the families of migrant workers.

These initial sequences in the film not only provide an elaborate introduction to the Filmic House, spatial contrasts but also mimics a rural migrant's journey to the big city, they set up the key narrative point of the film – the future bride's arrival to the chawl and her reaction to a new, unfamiliar living situation.

4.8.2 The Chawl Tenement – the kholi

A small tenement in Bharat Mahal accommodates six members of the Sharma household headed by a retired mill worker and his wife, his married son and daughter-in-law, middle son Ram, and the youngest, a school going lad. In the evenings, the space of the kholi welcomes friends and neighbours from the chawl, who join the family for a game of cards or rehearsal for a play. In this kholi, domains are carved with help of wooden partitions – an outer family room, a sleeping space for the elder son and his wife and a kitchen space at the rear. The space of the tenement comes alive with numerous details and paraphernalia of daily life. The architectural mise-en-scene captures the remarkable lived space of a lower middle-class joint family living in this small chawl tenement. The Sharma family members are at ease with this limited space and resourceful in negotiating with it to live life in full measure, while also accommodating neighbours and friends. When all of them travel to the village for Ram's wedding, their reaction to the spacious rural accommodation is instructive, as it communicates the disparity between the two habitats and how they themselves view it. The young boy Hari sees possible cricket fields everywhere including inside the house. "The rooms here are so big, one can play cricket in them", he exclaims. The father is awestruck with the vastness of the house. "If I had such a house in Bombay, I would live in one room, sleep in another, eat in the next one and then gargle in a different one", he says to his friend.

Figure 4.6: Stills from the film *Piya Ka Ghar* - II

For the incoming bride, the chawl's situation in Bombay is in direct contrast to her lived experience. She has lived all her life in larger spaces. Malati's existential situation as a new bride is elaborated through her various encounters with the new space. Her arrival to the chawl in a bridal procession is also a movement sequence that mirrors that of the priest earlier in the film. It introduces her to the "five storey palace" that is Bharat Mahal while she traverses the labyrinthian galleries to eventually arrive at the tenement, her husband's home.

4.8.3 The Kitchen

Malati's mother-in-law welcomes her inside their kholi and introduces it as, "our small house". She then ushers her into the kitchen – "from now on this is your room", she says while shutting the door behind her. Once alone, Malati surveys 'her' room as the camera pans from one end to the other revealing the space of *mori* (nahani) with several water storage containers, a tiny cooking counter, storage racks with pots, pans and jars, a typical lower middle-class kitchen in Bombay. A small metal dining table is pushed in a corner to make space for a cot which looks out of place and overbearing in the small space. There are two windows, one of which opens directly into the common side corridor and the other faces the adjoining chawl. It is here that Malati waits for her husband to arrive, with trepidation, brought forth by her coyness and exacerbated by her strange surroundings.

4.8.4 The Bedroom

Ram and Malati's wedding night in their make-shift bedroom turns out to be a tragi-comic disaster. The groom's various attempts at intimacy are met with resistance by the bride whose sense of her private space is repeatedly infringed upon in a number of ways.

First, Malati is disturbed by the amount of light streaming in from outside and is afraid of being seen. She can overhear the conversation between the elder couple sleeping on the other side of the partition and becomes afraid of being heard. The couple is disturbed by knocks on the door because a family member wants to drink water and later by ladies of the house and neighbours who want to fill water. The invading women gather near the *mori* chatting animatedly about their luck in getting bonus municipal water (released as there was a fire nearby) completely oblivious of the plight of the couple and unconscious of any guilt in disturbing their privacy. Several such disturbances through the wedding night make it a disaster for the couple. Malati's spatial anxiety makes consummation of marriage an

impossibility for some time to come. In the end, completely flustered, Malati banishes Ram from the kitchen, sending him out to sleep in the gallery outside.

The implications of this action are poignantly captured in an overhead tracking shot. The shot begins from the outside gallery where Ram has been sent off to sleep, then moves to the right, crosses over the front door where we see the father fast asleep on the cot while the mother and the youngest lad are sleeping on the floor. The camera crosses over the partition wall to show the elder couple snuggled in their bed which almost entirely fills up the space. The shot continues to the right, crossing over the next partition to reveal the figure of Malati sleeping on a single mattress positioned in the centre of the kitchen space. The camera then cuts to a close-up of an old and faded family photograph in the outer room – the picture of a large joint family in what looks like a village house, the shot continues to scan other photo frames on the wall and then zooms in and lingers on the last photograph showing younger Mr. and Mrs. Sharma with their three young sons. The scene ends with two successive close-ups of Malati at one end and Ram at the other, both brooding and unable to sleep.

When Ram takes Malati for an outing in the city, they talk about their situation at home and fantasise: *"Ek chhota sa kamra jo rasoi-ghar nahi hai, jahan koi faltu roshni nahi aayegi aur na koi aawaz, aur na koi hamari baat-chit sun payega."* (Wish there was a room that was not a kitchen, where outside light or sounds wouldn't disturb, where no one can overhear us). In response, Malati wonders, *"Hai aisa koi kamra Bambai me?"* (Really, is there such a room in Bombay?) Ram tries to find an answer that lands them in a cheesy rent by hours hotel room, and it turns out to be an antithesis of their makeshift bedroom at home. Its grey and bare walls except one blatantly suggestive calendar, un-domestic barrenness except a bed blatantly suggestive of its purpose and they both realise that is not the room they were dreaming of. In a scene where they both are silently sitting on the sea-shore in the gathering darkness, a close up appears of Malati's finger drawing a picture of a house on the sand. Will she find one, is the question the film asks.

4.8.5 Spatial Limits of the Kholi — *a behavioural perspective*

Our central analysis deals with the issue of 'dwelling' in a chawl in Bombay, in a city where space is the commodity most scarce. When, in very limited space, several persons are compelled to live together for a large part of their lives, they have to contend with several behavioural issues. Filmic imaginations have potential to add a layer of cultural meaning to the study of how human behaviour is shaped by the environment (Giroux, 2011; Dudley, 2010). As mentioned before, in films we can observe and analyse private behaviour to provide clues about unique domesticity of chawls.

Insights are gathered by deploying concepts from environment-behaviour studies such as personal space, territoriality, privacy, and crowding. Each of these issues makes its presence felt in the filmic house of *Piya ka Ghar*, allowing for the interpretation of spatial behaviour caused by such proximal living, we discuss each one in detail.

Malati's behaviour is a result of her extreme anxiety induced by spatial deprivation and lack of privacy. Her sense of personal space[47] is tuned to her native rural habitat of plenitude of space. She is suddenly transposed in a tiny chawl tenement crowded by many people and cluttered by paraphernalia of daily life. The scarcity of space means there is an extreme utilisation of it where there are hardly any personal space markers during the waking hours, When thrown into the extreme close proximity of many relative strangers, she experiences stress, causing her personal space bubble to expand further. This affects her social interactions with the family and their friends as she is unable to find a comfortable social distance with them in the house. This is particularly seen by her reaction in the sequence when a male neighbour enters the house wearing only vest and undershorts.

On the other hand, when the chawl dwellers travel to the village home for the wedding and encounter vast amount of space in their accommodation, they go berserk. All of them tuned to negligible personal space in their cramped homes, find themselves unable to contain

[47] The primary contact of a human being with his/her environment is phenomenological, through the body/space interface, the space most proximal to them- the 'bubble' that they constantly move in. This space, more perceptual than physical, is known as 'Personal Space'. Almost all human behavioural interaction takes place through this personal space bubble. Personal space is a flexible concept based on an individual's perceptions of their immediate environment at any given moment and is mediated by their cultural conditioning. It may expand when a person is stressed or threatened or contract when one is comfortable (Hall, 1966).

themselves, their individual and collective behaviour becoming a cause for censure from the brides elder relative.

Personal space for an introverted person would be significantly larger than that for an extroverted or outgoing person (Holahan, 1982, pp. 301-302). This is clearly visible in the contrasting behaviour of Malati and Shobha, the elder son's wife who is an extrovert and is much more at ease with the house. Shobha moves about the house freely while Malati's movements are restricted. For the rest of the family, the entire kholi is, at different times, a commonly occupied space. Malati's rather large personal space bubble keeps getting invaded by the presence of so many people, family and friends. She takes time to learn how to wade her way through the tangle of bodies ever-present in the front room.

Malati finds her personal space invaded to such an extent that it prevents her from achieving intimacy with her husband due to her constant fears of being seen, observed or overheard. Her behaviour is influenced by her perception of space and space alone. The overhead tracking shot is a remarkable cinematic device that poignantly shows the conjugal frustration of the newly married couple sleeping separately at two extreme ends of the house. It also shows the parents sleeping in the front space shared with their adolescent son. The shot is a silent commentary on chawls where private space for conjugal relations becomes a non-existent concept.

In the narrative space Malati is shown staking out a territory for herself in the kitchen, retreating to the inner-most possible space. A feeling of threat to her personal space and a need to reclaim it manifests in Malati's appropriation of the kitchen during the night. Through the course of the film, we observe a tendency in Malati to stake out her territory[48] in the Filmic House. C. M. Deasy (1985) points out that territorial behaviour in human beings "…merges with feelings for personal space and status." (p.26). Malati's territoriality is functional in the sense that it allows her a way to come to terms with her environment. Territorialised spaces are spaces of possession, but also of negotiation and renewal, as can be

[48] Charles J Holahan (1982, p.256) defines territoriality as "a pattern of behaviour associated with the ownership or occupation if a place or geographical area by an individual or a group and may involve personalization and defence against any intrusions." In human interpersonal interactions, territoriality is not only a matter of appropriation of physical space and its defence, but is also related to the perception of personal space.

seen in the film. During the day, the kitchen is obviously a shared space to bond with other family members and into which the husband is also admitted to catch a few private moments. Interestingly, the film also captures some sweet moments stolen in the kitchen by the parents whose need for conjugal privacy is otherwise understated. The kitchen becomes a space of renewal of conjugal relationship when Malati eventually reconciles with the house and the young couple resume sleeping together there.

In *Piya ka Ghar*, the proximity to other bodies in a limited space is often the cause of elevated stress in Malati, who reacts to this with repeated efforts at seeking privacy[49] and private moments, seeking to exercise a selective control to compensate for the continued presence of others in her crowded environment. Malati's effort at seeking privacy manifests itself in a variety of ways. Nancy Marshall (1970) has identified six orientations of Privacy: solitude, seclusion, intimacy, anonymity, reserve and not-neighbouring. We can identify many of them in relation to Malati's spatial situation in the house and her corresponding behaviour.

Even within the relative intimacy of one's family, one desires solitude sometimes. In the film, Malati's first real negotiation with the space of the kholi happens when she finds herself alone for the first time. She is elated to enjoy a few moments of solitude. She spends this time interacting with the spaces and objects on her own terms. A song sequence captures this as she lingers in different parts of the house and interacts with the space and objects within with a new-found sense of freedom. The space that she had always seen crowded with people is, all of a sudden, all hers and she imagines herself to be the queen of the house. Through her movements and interaction with different possessions – chairs, trunks, her clothes, mirror and bed, a different experience of the space is evoked.

Intimacy is an imperative need, to be alone with someone with whom one is very close. Malati's anxiety in achieving intimacy with her husband results due to the couple's inability

[49] Irwin Altman (1977) defines privacy as 'the selective control or access to the self or to one's group'. The excess of unwarranted environmental stimuli – that may be visual, acoustic or olfactory –may result in a person's selective control of access to other persons to bring down the high load of stimuli. For Altman, such a selective control is a defining feature of privacy. For the continued maintenance of a person's self-worth and individuality, it is essential that privacy be taken care of and sustained. Privacy is closely linked with both personal space and territoriality.

to seclude themselves within the house from internal and external stimuli, including bright lights and external noise and the presence of windows opening into a corridor. “How can anybody sleep when there is so much noise and illumination”, she asks her husband. This manifests in her behaviour of withdrawing herself spurning the overtures of her husband. Privacy may be achieved when one is anonymous, in the presence of strangers. It is ironical, as sometimes, in order to be alone, a person may seek a public space. This is what occurs when variously, all the three married couples residing in the house seek the anonymity of city outdoors to spend private moments with each other.

An attitude of reserve explains Malati’s withdrawn behaviour when the family is boisterously engaged in playing games of cards or carrom. Reserve relates to enhancing one’s personal worth by creating a certain aura of private-ness about oneself. A certain publicness and neighbourliness are defining feature of a chawl’s sociality to which Ram was always accustomed to, but the same neighbours become a source of annoyance for him when he had managed to be alone in the house with his bride. In the early days of her life with the new family Malati clearly exhibits a preference for not being involved with her neighbours. This is particularly noted in a scene when she comes out of the kitchen to re-join a carrom game, but quickly withdraws back upon seeing the two friends of the father. She slowly learns to discard her reserve leading to her assimilation in the family.

The resolution of the film takes place when Malati reconciles with the reality of her marital home. Since home space is the culprit in this narrative, preventing conjugal bliss, the resolution is also logically spatial. This happens when Malati accepts her new urban situation and agrees to become a fellow traveller in negotiating with it. She finds reconciliation with the house by adjusting her own personal space in tune with it. Her coming to terms with her spatial situation is captured in the concluding sequence of the film, which is an echo of the previous overhead tracking shot, only this time, the gallery outside the kholi is empty, while on the far end, on the kitchen floor, the young couple is seen sleeping together blissfully. In her reconciliation, learning to merge her personal space with the social, she becomes at home in the *Piya ka Ghar* – the home of the beloved.

As has been inferred, the film narrativises architectural space to the point of being an antagonist, in the absence of any external threat or even individuals with dubious intent.

Thus, the most appropriate analysis to yield meaning comes through the appreciation of lived space and its impact on human behaviour as we have seen.

4.9 Reading the Filmic Chawl as a Performative 'Filmic Dwelling'

The discussion on representation of chawls in Hindi cinema and further analysis of five films indicate an interesting mix of material forms of this typology that has several performative functions in the narratives. Considered together, lived space in cinema performs in multiple ways and communicates meanings regarding domesticity.

In the films discussed and analysed, we see the chawl as an active participant in the narrative, performing several distinct roles. For example, in *Katha* which is presented by the filmmaker as an allegory of 'hare and tortoise', seen from the perspective of the filmic house can be considered as a dialectic between insider and outsider, where the chawl is the concrete space of 'inside', its inward looking architectural form complementing the demarcation the inner and outer worlds. In *Piya ka Ghar*, the outward facing aspect of architecture of its chawl indicates an integrated relation with the outside, here the building as well as the interior space of a kholi perform principal roles.

The space of the kholi by itself in filmic chawls is characteristic of chawl living and is deployed variously by filmmakers. The narrative in *Piya ka Ghar* maintains a tight focus on indoor space. There are few external plot points to introduce conflict (as is usually the case in Hindi cinema). The film succeeds in introducing tension, its sole source is the space of the kholi and how it is perceived differently by Malati in contrast to her husband and the rest of the family. The claustrophobic space of the house is, so to speak, the main antagonist. In *Dastak*, the space of the kholi is an oppressor, a carrier of unsavoury associations, tormenting the housewife. Its architecture opens up many occasions of intrusion and voyeurism. In *Kali Salwar*, the kholi doubles as a place of sex work, breaking down the binaries of private and public, whereas in *Dhobighat*, the kholi presented in two avatars becomes a spatial link between two very different individuals. In all these instances, the space of the filmic house defines or describes existential situations of the characters very closely.

The analysis of individual films using the 'model of filmic dwelling' throws several readings about private and public dwelling linked with these filmic chawls and they are summarised in the following sections. The analysis also throws light on explicit and implicit social meanings

of domesticity in chawls where notions of house as an inner and a private domain are constantly under review. In all these films, the house in its mode of private dwelling, its domains and architectural elements, and its extension to public dwelling participates in the film narrative in more specific ways as is elaborated further.

4.9.1 Private Dwelling: the filmic chawl as a neighbourhood

In the selected Hindi films, we see several contemporary types of Bombay chawls. In the lived space and within the narrative schema of these films, we observe sociality enacted in differing manners. At the most central level of 'The House' in our model of Filmic Dwelling, we can interpret that the Filmic Chawl is operative at two levels: the building as a whole and its individual units – the tenements or the kholis. The building is seen to act as an immediate environment to individual units in a socialised and productive manner. It forms an intermediate level, that of a 'Neighbourhood', between a tenement and the city at large and mediates the existential space of the dwellers. The chawls in *Katha* and *Piya ka Ghar* represent a tight-knit community of shared living, a small city in microcosm as seen in a single building that still holds village like values of familiarity. The place-ness of the chawl is evoked in this 'neighbourhood' by the productive spaces of movement and pause – in corridors, staircase and landings where greetings are exchanged, stories are constructed through "gossip and gaze" (Gangar, p.94). These corridors or the galleries evoke a publicness within a private domain belonging to a collective.

4.9.11 Adaptations in lived space

The publicness of the common areas, including the toilets require the chawl inhabitants to modulate their daily routines in a corresponding manner. The movement sequence in *Piya ka Ghar,* in a synoptic manner conveys how the galleries function differently at different times of the day and become places to sleep during the night. To prevent bickering among neighbours, arising out of shared territories they must devise and adhere to the commonly agreed upon markers of semi-private and fully public zones. The contentious issue of shared toilets is mostly side stepped in the chawl films, except *Katha* which makes a mention of it.

At the level of the kholi too, similar situation arises. Internal organisation of a chawl is premised on fitting as many tenements as possible in a given area, resulting in a cramped accommodation, requiring the families to innovate strategies of adapting their life around the given space. The 'folding house' in *Katha* brings home the necessity of adaptations and ingenuity in a humorous manner. In *Kali Salwar* we see a remarkable adaptation in the treatment where walls transform an area of the ramshackle kholi into a magical place, elevating it above a mundane domestic space to a space where customers are invited to enact their sexual fantasies.

The Filmic House that the Sharma household in *Piya ka Ghar* occupies, is a typical chawl tenement, and is illustrative of negotiations by the occupants to lead their daily lives as fully as possible in a limited space. Spatial strategies, such as carving domains within a single room tenement, characterise the unique urban domesticity in a chawl. Here, a deployment of public, semi-private and private domains is achieved by use of partitions, curtains, object markers and a tacit understanding between family members. Alternatively, spaces operate differently at different times of day and night, unlike the fixed functions of individual spaces in apartments. This leaves very little scope in personalising a space, let alone a piece of furniture. The example of kitchen space serving as a bedroom has been discussed in detail, but the film has many other details suggesting this. For example, the cot in the outer space is where the father sleeps during the night but is used as seating or napping during the day, similarly the partitioned space of the elder couple is a space for common use and the youngest boy naps there too. Not only is the space of kholi impossible to personalise by individuals, but for effecting a modicum of privacy, members of the household need to take turns to exit the space altogether. Even then, there is no surety of being left alone by neighbours and visitors who must be welcomed at all hours as per the chawl protocol.

The concept of function specific domains is absent in these chawls. This is true even in case where the kholi is occupied by a nuclear family or only an individual. For a large family this poses its own challenge, requiring tacit understandings among the inhabitants. The small tenement with its extreme utilisation of space may become a source of anxiety for a newcomer but for the others too it poses difficulties. Many spatial strategies come into being to alleviate inconveniences to various extents. The process of adaptation is a lived experience which is narrativized by the films and demonstrated in the performative nature of the Filmic Chawl.

4.9.12 Notions of Inside/Outside, Private/Public in a Filmic Chawl

The notional concept of inside/outside in relation to a domestic space assumes a fluid shape in chawls where every family brings a part of their life into the common space of outer galleries. Windows in the tenement also open into these common spaces, making them transparent to all who gaze within. The door as a liminal space between inside and outside, is usually open in a chawl allowing seamless movements. The cloth curtained main door and windows are not only a means to connect to outside and bring in some amount of air but also let in intruding eyes and bodies, they may be benign, annoying or outright hostile in accordance with the narrative.

The ambiguity between inside and outside in a chawl space is evoked in *Piya ka Ghar* in a shot of a child playing on a swing suspended from the door lintel. The camera is positioned in the corridor to capture the pendulum like movement of the swing– outside one moment and disappearing inside the next, outside again and so on repeatedly. Such ambiguity of inner and outer or private and public space in a chawl is explained by Menon and Adarkar (2004) as a consequence of proximity and overcrowding. It followed from the pattern of building and settlement. Ramshackle, jerry-built chawls were often packed closely into spaces between streets. Since land was expensive, and returns on rentals invariably low, builders filled their sites with chawls and squeezed into them as many tenements as possible. One can surmise that the open-door customs evolved out of the necessity of domestic life spilling over out of the main doors into the galleries, thus, always bringing a part of private life in a public domain.

Life in a chawl presents a distinct domesticity when viewed as lived narrative space in a film. In the situation of acute spatial deprivation and forced proximity, the pressure on personal space is variously negotiated and spatially compensated for by the inhabitants. The domestic as a private domain can be exercised in a very limited sense by strategizing space and learning to ignore extraneous environmental stimuli while conducting intimate acts. Clearly, the difficulty of conjugal expression within the confines of their home becomes an issue, and the youngest couple in *Piya ka Ghar* faces it most acutely. The acceptance of their spatial situation and the learnt behaviour of ignoring stresses of proximity is a compromise they

learn to make, even though it takes a toll on the women. Ultimately, it is a sense of community that compensates for the lack of space, privacy and material comforts.

4.9.13 Things and Objects as Signifiers

The minutiae of everyday life in its material form as seen in the mise-en-scene of chawl films is distinctly different from that of the bungalow or apartment films. Several objects communicate the humble status of the families – mismatched curtains, primus stoves, storage racks, vessels for storing water and the ubiquitous Dalda tin for visiting the common toilet. The film makers also exploit the cramped situation in a chawl to populate their visual frames with a plethora of objects overflowing from their otherwise assigned places, for example, sarees and clothes slung on partitions and vessels lying around in the kitchen. In short, the cluttering of the spaces invokes a lived quality quite different from the upper-class orderliness (where nothing is ever out of place) of a bungalow or clinical sparseness of an apartment.

In *Piya ka Ghar*, several objects in the mise-en-scene connote meanings both about the nature of chawl life as well as a transition in the status of the family from migrant working class (blue collar) to nativised lower middle class (white collar). The series of framed photographs in capture the story of the father's life, from the time when he once belonged to a large extended family in his native place to his arrival in Bombay as a young man and then starting his own nuclear family. For the bride, the carrom board helps forge bonds with her new family. Playing carrom signifies her slow, subconscious assimilation into urban life characterised by indoor leisure games when outdoor activities are not readily available. The objects in her designated room – kitchen paraphernalia, the many water storage containers, even the small folding dining table signify her essential lack of privacy. Having these things in her 'bedroom' implies that the room could become a common space for the family at any moment in time, day or night, as it often does. These do not allow her to tether herself to the space, she always finds herself secondary to the imperatives of common living. The cot, the one object that denotes bedroom, a space for solitude, slumber and conjugal relations, was temporarily arranged for the wedding night and was totally out of place, given the surroundings. Its suggestiveness compounded by the creaking noises emanating from it, resonated poignantly for the couple due to the tragic end of the night.

Many objects are marked out specially to draw attention to them and communicate specific meanings. Old photographs, framed or otherwise almost always are deployed to contain memories of migration to the city and eking out a life while living in a chawl – as we observe in *Katha* and *Kali Salwar* too. Non-working grandfather clock in *Katha* signifies old world values of a chawl dweller which are outdated in a changing world. Objects left behind by previous tenants not only draw attention to the difficulties of renting a house in Bombay but within the narrative scheme signify traces of memories that have either sinister symbolism as in the case of the bed and photo-frames in *Dastak* or have a power to connect complete strangers via a part of their lives as in the case of video tapes in *Dhobighat*.

4.9.2 Public Dwelling: the Loss of Earth and Sky in the Urban Habitat

The Hindi cinema narratives set in Bombay's chawls express a strong connection with its urban context. While they explore the communal and familial aspect of a chawl building, they indicate differing relationships with the level of the urban or public dwelling. For example, in *Piya ka Ghar*, the chawl has a productive extension to the city and its institutions, whereas in *Katha*, the city is viewed as a corrupting influence that disturbs the status quo of the well-ordered and self-sufficient world of the chawl.

The chawl films capture the stories of migration to the city by making a reference to the rural landscape from which the protagonists arrived. Such references are not so much about city/village binary but serve the purpose of highlighting the contrasting nature of rural and urban landscape – a background against which the chawl architecture is to be appreciated. *Piya ka Ghar* and *Dastak* establish associations with the rural landscapes from where the brides Malati and Salma have arrived, before finding themselves living in Bombay's chawls. *Dhobighat* makes a reference to it by way of video logs of Yasmin and *Kali Salwar* by way of conversations between sex workers. The films allude to the openness of their native landscape in contrast to the dense urban space as a reminder of their displacement.

The issue of migration is mostly framed as a male issue; however, these films show that it needs to be viewed from female perspective as well. We have seen in our examples that female migration to the city takes place for marriage or for work, and for these women it poses a different existential question than men as they need to adapt to forms of domestic

space that are strange to them, particularly the lack of privacy and personal space becomes an issue. At the same time, the films show that the urban space also becomes a site of attractions to them, giving them an anonymous breathing space that perhaps eluded them in their villages, making their transition to new habitation somewhat bearable.

Lefas (2009), referring to Martin Heidegger's well-known essay 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking', considers earth and sky among the components forming human beings' association in so far as they 'dwell' in the world. The change from the earth hugging house in villages to 'stacked' multi-storey housing results in a loss of association with the ground. In case of tightly packed chawls in Bombay's inner-city areas, where windows overlook other buildings, there is a resulting loss of association with the sky too. In *Piya ka Ghar*, when Malati runs to the kitchen window whenever she hears the sound of an aeroplane, she has to crane her neck upwards to glimpse a small patch of sky. These shots encapsulate the compromises of a metropolitan life which offers many attractions while robbing the inhabitants of a patch of earth or sky.

The necessity to associate with the geography at the natural level is fulfilled by the ubiquitous city feature of the Bombay sea-shore and is deployed when the characters need to breathe the air of freedom or to brood. Each of the married couples in *Piya ka Ghar* (including the parents) go to the sea-shore to seek private moments with each other, while the couple in *Dastak* flees to it to feel safe and free – attributes their homes lacked. Yasmin in *Dhobi Ghat* remarks about it in her video log. While recording Marine Drive, she says, folks go there not just to eat street snacks but more so 'to eat air' which is so rare in the city. This is the sky which eludes them in their chawl habitat, they seek it in the urban space establishing with it a vital link.

The films portray dwelling in chawls firmly intertwined with public dwelling in the city. Urban infrastructure like public transport and public spaces provide an escape to the characters. The great outdoors and the anonymity of crowds allow them to draw a circle of privacy around them unlike their bedrooms, here they can articulate their dreams and aspirations more freely.

The urban geography associated with the house in question is the landscape of mill lands in Bombay. The mill lands were also locally known as the *Girangaon*, meaning a village of mills, to which the migrants arrived from rural areas and found a support system among their kinsfolk of native villages. As mentioned in the introduction, the filmic chawls housing working class characters evoked village like innocence and camaraderie. The *Girangaon* landscape becomes more than a backdrop in *Kali Salwar*, it situates Sultana and other characters. Viewed either from her chawl rooftop or through her movements in the neighbourhood, this landscape is captured in its declining state in the context of the great textile mill strike resulting in shutting down of the mills, rendering hundreds of workers jobless. The film captures a loss of innocence and an almost hopeless reality of this changed situation. More contemporary crime thrillers that feature chawls thus portray its life in a dark shade.

4.9.3 Beyond the Performative: Ways of Looking at Filmic Chawl

4.9.31 Unravelling the Mythology of the House Type

Life in a chawl presents a distinct domesticity when viewed as lived narrative space in Hindi films. On one hand, our analysis of filmic chawls confirms the characteristics of social architecture of this communal house type, of "chawl-ness" and indicates specific ways that chawls forged community and fellowship. On the other hand, the analysis of lived space also brings to fore several nuances that indicate limitations of this social architecture that get suppressed in eulogising the mythology of the house type.

One issue is the situation of acute spatial deprivation and forced proximity, the pressure on personal space having to be negotiated and spatially compensated for by the inhabitants all the time. We have shown how dense living conditions and extreme utilisation of space cause stress and impacts the human behaviour. Ambiguity between private and public spaces inside the chawl and within the kholi makes exercising of individual privacy very difficult, this is particularly problematic for women and also older couples whose needs for sexual intimacy are secondary to the younger lot. A sense of community may compensate for the lack of space, privacy and material comforts but this bargain comes with a price, the film narratives

problematise these issues, but the 'happy ending' scenario resolves them as a status quo, the lived space remains unchanged, only the characters come to terms with it.

We observe families witnessing upward mobility in these films but still continue living in the same tenement. The filmic houses in the chosen films attest to the changing socio-economic patterns of the chawl dwellers, especially with younger generation finding white-collar jobs in the city. The Sharma family in *Piya ka Ghar* and to a much greater degree, the family in *Katha* with the son living abroad are cases in point. Each family has made several improvements or adjustments to their *kholi* and populated them with material possessions of the time, but have not left the chawl.

There are several reasons for this continued inhabitation in chawls – for one, the unwillingness on the part of chawl dwellers to let go of the chawl life and its sense of community despite all its inconveniences. Koppikar (2011) quotes an interviewee who moved out of a chawl: *"I look back at my chawl years with a great sense of nostalgia* [...] *there was unmistakable warmth and a deep sense of longing that I sorely missed after I moved out."* One family in *Katha* has clearly moved far ahead in status but unwilling to move out of the chawl. The elderly man quips, *"Ek baar jo chawl me raha woh chawl chhod kar nahi ja sakta, joint family si ho jati hai,"* (once you live in a chawl, it is impossible to leave it as it is like a joint family).

However, the chawl as a space for an extended family is problematised by these films when confronted with the issue of individual agency within such a domestic space. The participation in this 'extended family' is a role that the inhabitants are cast into, and do not come to it as a matter of choice. Thus, one person can abuse this 'system' while another may be abused by it as we observe in *Katha*. The film is on the surface about virtues of familial interrelationships in a chawl but underlying to it is the issue of every individual's private life under severe scrutiny because the way the architecture of a chawl is organised as also enforcement of norms and traditions of an inner world that guards against winds of change.

Another reason for continued inhabitation in chawls is non-affordability of owning larger modern apartments in Bombay. *Piya ka Ghar* tacitly acknowledges this situation where the brothers have tried to move out of their cramped chawl accommodation but were thwarted and even cheated by the unscrupulous real estate situation in the city. There are expressions of desire, even dreaming, for a better home and also disappointments at their unattainability

in a city such as Bombay. Sultana in *Kali Salwar* expresses sentiments of discontent with her meagre chawl existence but knows that it is all she can afford to rent. In *Dastak*, the housing situation finds a greater elaboration when the husband frustrated by lack of privacy and unwanted intrusions in their kholi tries to find alternatives. He visits several construction sites where apartment blocks are being built but finds himself defeated due to his meagre budget and his Muslim identity.

The struggle to find a better home in a metropolis like Bombay is underlying the narratives of all the chawl films we have discussed. Inability to do so is then overcome with brave sentiments such as the one expressed by Ram's elder brother – "This is Bombay, here people's hearts are bigger than their rooms." True as it is in the context of the film, because clearly, the family members and chawl friends showed genuine large heartedness to accommodate the new bride, the 'happy ending' must contend with compromises made, by all concerned due to lack of alternatives. The chawl provided new migrants with their first affordable habitat in the city, however, for so many of them it continued to be a home forever, by choice sometime, but mostly by compulsion of their economic situation. The filmic chawls have captured this predicament.

4.10 Coda

For most part, the filmmakers have chosen chawls as a dwelling type to communicate not just the status of the characters as working class but also to specifically exploit its highly distinctive architecture and resultant sociality to tell stories of communal living. The analysis indicates that the films display subtle differences in the architectural grain within generic chawl architecture that add nuance to this communication. For instance, the deployment of a *lakdi* chawl (timber frame construction) has a connotation of dwellers lower down in social scale than those of masonry construction with articulated facades – the materiality of filmic dwellings having distinct associational triggers for the viewers. Further, the ramshackle physical state of a chawl can be communicated quite easily by a couple of wooden posts propped up by additional supports or a patch of peeling plaster on a wall, even further emphasising decay or dilapidation in the physical state of the habitat. In the narrative scheme this becomes useful to communicate a crumbling social order.

In the narrativized architecture of filmic chawls we observe working-class chawls akin to neighbourhoods ensure the distinction between inside and outside or private and public space is sometimes worn to the point of obliteration, bringing into conflict 'family' ethos and 'individual' expressions. Here the family means the chawl community itself and individuality is understood at two levels, family units and within that, individual persons. These conflicts problematise personal space, the lack of privacy or anonymity, even surveillance. Communal living in a chawl, its density and scarcity of space leads to a complex web of private and public dwelling which the filmic narratives have exploited to drive their plots.

The stories of communal living in chawls celebrated on celluloid in Hindi cinema have contributed to a mythical aura of chawl living, specifically in Bombay. In some recent films, while the architecture of chawls remains the same, its social meanings have shifted considerably due to the changing urban context in which they persist. In the present times, the pressures of redevelopment in the erstwhile *Girangaon* (mill village area) of the city are causing a rapid disappearance of this house type. We may therefore find the filmic renderings even more valuable as an archive of not just its architectural presence but a distinctive life and urbanity that it engendered in its time.

This lived experience chronicled in Hindi cinema will continue to enlighten us about an aspect of history of urban habitat that provided a means of affordable housing. However inadequate it might have been (and this is also represented in these filmic chronicles) it provided its own compensations in its social architecture that acknowledged the humanity that dwelled within. With the slow but inevitable demise of this house type, we find that the city has been unable to replicate the humane qualities in what passes of as affordable housing today.[50]

[50] *Vertical City*, a documentary film made by Avijit Mukul Kishor has captured a lack of humanity and sociality in the state sponsored housing schemes in Mumbai erected for the slum dwellers.

Chapter 5:

The Filmic House- Apartment Block

5.0 Introduction

Living in apartment or block of flats became a generalised feature of emerging middle-class identity in metropolis like Bombay by the end of the thirties or forties and subsequently proliferated to such an extent that it became the dominant architectural grain of the city in its planned imagination. While this is documented by urban historians, many Hindi films from the fifties onwards also attest to this urbanity specially in the scenes of chase or song sequences taking place with the metropolis as a background.

Ironically, while making a filmography for the present study, it was observed that very few Hindi films have actually centralised their narratives around this domestic typology and it would be interesting to speculate on this lack of preference. The films that do feature this typology are, however, a rich source for analysing the changing ways of communal as well as privatised living in the city, especially with the city itself witnessing exponential growth. Filmic representations of apartment living features tales of modern or modernising middle class characters in contemporary times, an analysis of its lived space will generate a discourse around its changing socialities with changing architectural form.

5.1 Apartment Living in Bombay – a function of technological and sociological transformation

The apartment block as a residential typology emerged in industrialised colonial cities such as Bombay and Calcutta in early 20th century in the light of modernist influences in architecture and planning while fulfilling the needs of urban growth. These buildings employed modern construction materials and techniques and were endowed with amenities of modern lifestyles, most notably en-suite sanitation spaces like baths and toilets.

Some of the earliest references to apartment blocks are found in the Gazetteer of Bombay edited by S.M. Edwardes (1909, p.199) where he refers to them as 'flats' that emerged under the pressures on land prices as a new form of dwelling for the affluent Indian middle classes. Such dwellings in their early form represented a verticalization, so to speak of the traditional Indian house in response to the economic pressure. Edwardes further distinguishes such flats from the dwellings that he calls "flats on the English model" built to house much of the European population. Besides sanitation facilities, these flats had a different organisation of the interior spaces with function specific spaces such as living room, dining room, kitchens and bedrooms.

Nikhil Rao in *House, but No Garden: Apartment Living in Bombay's Suburbs, 1898-1964* (2013) infers that by the decade of the thirties, these two types coalesced into what he calls the 'Bombay flat', a multi-room dwelling unit with sanitary facilities within a multi-storey, multi-family block. Such blocks of flats were increasingly becoming the dwelling of choice for the emerging lower middle and middle class, white collar demography for whom larger dwellings such as bungalows were unaffordable and who were seeking an alternative to the chawls (p.100-103). The new construction technology of reinforced cement concrete, developments in sewerage system, indoor plumbing and flushing drove the popularity of this form of housing that signalled a move towards modern living by an emerging middle class. It also signalled an acceptance of the en-suite toilet. Rao sums this up as "both technological and social transformations were involved in producing the flat" (p.118), where urinating and defecating under the very roof where one slept, ate and prayed had to become acceptable to upper caste migrants. Thus, the apartment buildings were an economic compromise between the cottage/ bungalow type house and a chawl tenement. Also, the en-suite toilet represented a negotiation between caste compunctions and modern sanitary principles of hygiene.

Apartment living was distinctly more urbane than living in a cottage in a networked urban village or a ground hugging bungalow in a compound. The first apartment blocks that made their appearance in the island city and in the suburbs like Dadar-Matunga were a result of reclamation and town planning schemes of Bombay City Improvement Trust and were no more than four or five storeys high, where more than one apartment on every floor were accessed by a staircase. Some retained in their design chawl like features such as common corridors and internal chowks, particularly in those that were large in size. These were built by individual landlords in order to be rented out to tenants (Iyer, 2014).

Over the decades, as the city grew, the demands on scarce land meant an increasing proliferation of multi-storey apartment blocks which were easy to service by the authorities and more affordable due to their compactness to a burgeoning population. The passing of the Bombay Rent Restriction Act, 1939, and the Bombay Rents, Hotel Rates and Lodging House Rates **(**Control**)** Act**,** 1944 meant reduced investments in the buildings for tenancy such as chawls. This led to the emergence of the co-operative sector in urban housing that was facilitated by a contracting firm (Iyer, 2014).

The co-operative society movement got a major boost after independence as a result of state support in low interest loans and land acquisition. In the climate of housing scarcity, where rent control and other factors disincentivised new rental constructions, the co-operative housing society quickly became the principal form of new housing construction. (Rao, 2013). The co-operative societies were initially formed on the basis of some common identities such as specific communities coming together in small groups to build and occupy an apartment building. Later, however, entrepreneurs who came to be known as builder-developers commercialised the co-op societies started offering flats to anyone seeking housing and could afford it.

From the sixties onwards, the apartment block became the most common form of organised urban housing in Bombay coinciding with growth of the suburbs. Eventually, an apartment block emerged as a quite different form of a collective compared to the communal type of living in a chawl. It would have a cosmopolitan character as flat buyers could come from anywhere. Yet, it was premised on privacy and relative anonymity for the dwellers who were mainly nuclear families. The apartment block as a whole would share many common services in organised co-operation and yet individual families were left free to lead their private lives behind closed front doors. Growing urbanisation and better economic prospects made suburban housing societies attractive to nuclear families.

In the contemporary times, the boom in real estate prices in Bombay and the redevelopment of pockets of inner city and mill lands made vertical growth the dominant feature in the city. Several high-rises have shot up in the sky both in the luxury segment and in middle class sector. The social implications of high-rise living will unfold as time passes. Meanwhile, filmic narratives have a potential to anticipate the implications, as shall be seen.

5.2 The Apartment Block in Hindi Cinema – reflecting the evolving built form

Even though very few films have centralised apartment living, we can chart the evolution of its development in the filmic representations and while doing so, explore their narrative significance. One can chart a chronology of built form and apartment plan indicating changing norms of the city's real estate and urban scenario based on their rendering in films as described below:

Film	Year	Apartment Architecture
Teen Batti Char Rasta	1953	A low-rise apartment block, large units stacked vertically with common staircase
Jagte Raho	1956	A mega block, large number of rental units, common corridors and internal chowks akin to a chawl
Benaam Mili	1974 1975	Co-operative housing societies with medium rise blocks, multiple flats accessed from common passage, usable roof terraces
Anubhav	1971	City high-rise, single flat on a floor with differentiated spaces
Bhoot Pihu	2003 2018	Suburban high-rise, BHK type split level (duplex) apartments
Trapped	2016	Extreme high-rise, gated, BHK type apartments, redevelopment buildings in the heart of the city

Table 5.1: Evolving built forms in Apartment Block architecture seen in the filmic representations

Some of the earliest films to feature an apartment block were *Teen Batti Char Rasta* (1953) and *Jagte Raho* (1956), they both capture the early forms of its development. The low-rise apartment block in *Teen Batti Char Rasta* captures the earliest form of the building type showing verticalization of traditional Indian house where a number of units are stacked in a vertical block connected by a staircase. The film features a modern joint family living in a large apartment centred on a voluminous living room (like the one found in a bungalow film) to which are connected several inner bedrooms belonging to old parents, their six sons and their wives who come from different linguistic communities. There is a hint of service corridor to the kitchen and servants' areas on the side which are shown separately. Thus, in its layout and size of the central space the apartment resembles a bungalow, but the unit is contextualised in a modern block of flats to signify the modern concepts of diversity and inclusion.

Jagte Raho on the other hand features a massive apartment block in Calcutta, in which hundreds of rental units are arranged along common corridors around atrium spaces, its multiple storeys linked by main staircases and service staircases. Clearly it indicates a

transition from a chawl like layout but containing modern apartments of varying sizes fitted with amenities like sanitation and kitchen, the inhabitants of these units belong to various social classes. Through the wanderings of a villager who mistakenly enters it, and then pursued by the inhabitants, the film explores and exploits its architecture in full measure.

Figure 5.1: Evolving built form in apartment block architecture as seen in the films – *Teen Batti Char Rasta, Mili, Bhoot, Trapped*

Two films from the seventies – *Benaam* (1974) and *Mili* (1975) encapsulate collective living in a co-operative housing society in Bombay where the upwardly mobile middle-class inhabitants live a modern lifestyle afforded by the apartment accommodations and still retain some semblance of the collegiality of a chawl like living. Both films feature multi-storey apartment blocks in middle-class, cosmopolitan housing societies fitted with such amenities as children's play parks and parking areas for car-owning inhabitants. The buildings are quite typical of early seventies functional modernism in RCC construction and features such as building entrances, lifts, common rooftop terraces etc.

Mili depicts a love story between the very ebullient but terminally ill eponymous protagonist and Shekhar, a recluse and haughty man who comes to occupy the uppermost terrace flat. Mili's own apartment, which she shares with her father and aunt, opens into a living room

spacious enough for a gathering of neighbours. A wide internal passage leads to a well-appointed kitchen on one side and two bedrooms on the other. There is a hint that the passage turns and continues beyond, presumably to the bathrooms. The way the bedrooms are presented indicates not so much the influence of personal space but one of familial togetherness, where others, including neighbours are admitted unselfconsciously at all times (not unlike a chawl). The bedroom shared by Mili and her aunt even has a window opening into the internal passage of the flat. There is a balcony facing outward and another one looking into an internal chowk.

Benaam depicts trials of a nuclear family, repeatedly threatened by a mystery caller who also invades their domestic space. In the film, their apartment conforms to a layout type prevalent up to the early seventies – a flat with a hallway or an entry passage leading to other rooms, rather than the main door directly opening in a living room (this feature was lost in later apartment designs to save space). Here, the passage from the main door to the living room is more like an internal corridor, the child's bedroom and presumably a kitchen (which is never shown) are accessed from it. In an early scene, the moving camera exagerates its length and a tunnel like appearance, creating a suspenseful set-up for later when menace comes calling, intruding the flat in many ways via this passage. The mise-en-scene of the flat clearly shows the handiwork of an interior designer/decorator – with wall panelling, a designer dining table, sliding doors and most tellingly, wall-to-wall laminated wardrobes and storage cabinets in lieu of steel cupboards – all of which are indicators of the changing trends of apartment living in the seventies. The treatment and decoration of the two bedrooms – master bedroom and child's room is clearly different to set them apart, indicating spaces designed for personalised use.

The space of middle-class domesticity and its impact on women is captured in quite a few films where stories about modern married couples are set in apartment settings; most notably in the marriage trilogy[51] of *Anubhav* (1971), *Aavishkar* (1974) and *Grihpravesh* (1979) and later in Bhoot (2003). These films, the last one in horror genre, all highlight the critical issues of anonymity and loneliness of the privatised domain of an apartment that has implications for the young educated housewives.

[51] The three films directed by Basu Bhattacharya are commonly known as his marriage trilogy, the films dealt with the issues of alienation and growing distance between a husband and a wife, bringing their marriage to a brink. The films received a degree of critical acclaim.

Anubhav takes place in a city high-rise inside a spacious upper middle-class flat that once again segregates the functions inside and is furnished with corresponding contemporary furniture. *Aavishkar* displays a functional low budget but tastefully decorated flat while *Grihapravesh* portrays a tiny and cramped apartment in a state of disrepair in what appears to be an old style apartment block. All three films are centred on the interior space of the flat and the apartment block itself has a limited presence, or is not even shown as in the case of the latter two films.

Bhoot takes place in a duplex apartment constructed with clean orthogonal cubist lines on the top floor of a suburban high-rise in Bombay. This is indicative of the BHK (Bedroom-Hall-Kitchen) typology that consolidated itself from the late eighties in Bombay, albeit organised on a split level. The flat once rented, is filled in quick succession with uber chic ready-made furniture and various bric-a-brac of home décor. The internal stairs to the upper level feature prominently in the mise-en-scene and contributes to the evocation of uncanny. Similarly, a recent film *Pihu* (2018) also takes place in a duplex apartment in a suburban high-rise, it explores the horrible scenario of a two-year-old child left alone inside.

The perils of extreme high-rise living are depicted in *Trapped* (2016). It takes place in a newly constructed building where a young man is accidentally locked inside an apartment on the 35th floor in an otherwise empty building. In the film, the skyscraper is located in the erstwhile mill lands of Bombay. The flat is a typically compact 2 BHK unit that has come to characterise the apartment block design since the turn of the millennium, post-globalised, real-estate driven housing market in Bombay – with tiny room sizes and no passages.

Thus, in cinematic representations, we see the trends of evolving apartment living in Bombay. Apart from the relative difference in their size, flats in apartment blocks are laid out based on the segregation of functions and emerging ideas of public and private very differently from single or two-room tenements in a chawl. The chosen films centre-stage the Filmic House-Apartment, and bring an otherwise private domain into the public sphere. The exploration of filmic spaces as lived experience allows us to make several interpretative readings on this question of how people dwell.

Yet another way apartment block plays a part in film narratives is by way of indicating the city's housing scenario. Corruption and malpractices of the real estate business in Bombay is captured in films like *Trishul* (1978) and *Jane Bhi Yaron* (1983). In these films, the scenes of

underhand dealings are shown to be taking place with looming high-rises under construction in the background. Here, the blocks of flats are perceived as commodities far removed from their intended purpose of becoming homes of people. In other films, we see tales of search for a home – young couples wanting to settle down or married couples looking for better homes. The credit sequence in *Grihapravesh* shows an emerging city scape of housing blocks rising up in the sky and in the course of the film we see the couple visiting several construction sites but always thwarted in their efforts. *Gharaonda* (1977) poignantly captures the impossibility of finding an affordable home in Bombay. A setting of concrete pillars, slabs and staircases under construction provides a unique setting for a romantic song sequence between young hopefuls dreaming of setting up a nest but as it turns out, those matchbox homes are beyond their means. Trapped once again captures the plight of young people wanting to settle down but thwarted by the real estate market, a recent film *Love Per Square Foot* (2018) has this as its central theme.

5.3 Analysing the Filmic Apartment Block Using the 'Model of Filmic Dwelling'

An apartment block is as much a building in space as it is a collection of spaces within a building. Its urban location becomes even more relevant as the high-rise grows taller; its material presence becoming undeniable. At the same time the view from the inside out, or from the inside to the sky create relationships with the characters impacting their existential situations that are worth analysing.

Having taken a broad overview of several films that have representations of apartment block, we look at six films specifically: *Jagte Raho, Mili, Anubhav, Grihapravesh, Bhoot* and *Trapped.* These films are selected because the manner in which they centralise an apartment block (or its individual apartments), its architectural space having narrative significance. *Trapped* is chosen as the key film, meriting more elaborate analysis because in this film, the performative function of this residential typology is most prominent.

The analysis of individual films using our 'Model of Filmic Dwelling' allows us to locate the Filmic House and its lived space as a mode of private dwelling by centralising the house, its architectural mise-en-scene and the things within, while the larger context of the urban geography is discussed as a mode of public dwelling. Several readings are generated from the

pool of films featuring this typology, are collated and interpretations are made about its performative and symbolic roles, private and public dwelling, notions of home as inner and private domain etc. In addition, issues of modernity in the domestic sphere and effects of verticalization on the enaction of socialities are discussed in relation to apartment living in the city.

5.4 *Jagte Raho* – the apartment block as a metaphor for the city

The Filmic House in *Jagte Raho* is a large multi-storey apartment block with hundreds of apartments (apparent from the prominently featured house numbers) organised around wide corridors, atriums and stairways. The film elaborately depicts this complex as a warren of apartment units – from two room to multi-room units, with an indication of service staircases accessing kitchen and bathrooms at the back. There is a remarkable consistency in the exterior and the interior spaces which maintains a logical order of space organization. The exterior shots convey its hugeness, while the shots inside, particularly of the corridors whose length is punctuated by rusticated pilasters, cross beams and main doors, are presented in perspectives of endless depth. This form of dwelling differs significantly from chawl dwelling; where the notion of privacy is looser and more tentative, where collegiality and social concern are embedded into ways of living.

In this film, the hapless villager, who enters the block for a drink of water, gets mistaken for a thief and is set upon by the residents. In a night-long chase, he gets caught up in the maze of the corridors and staircases. There is a central atrium which is never fully shown but the chase keeps coming back to it. The villager hurtles through the corridors and hides in various flats one after the other. Here, he becomes a mute witness to several corruptions played out inside this urban block, and also to incidents of domestic strife or debauchery.

Figure 5.2: Stills from the film *Jagte Raho*

The sense of what happens behind closed doors is juxtaposed in contrast with what happens in the common spaces. The corridors, of course are accessed by all, irrespective of status within the apartment block. These spaces become the public realm in the smaller universe of the apartment block. But this same realm, also a space that belongs to all or to none is rife for rabble rousing, giving rise to the mob, who finding a way of venting their blood lust chase after the fugitive villager with ferocity and dark intent. The chase drives the villager deeper

and higher in the building, ending up on the terrace (another common space) where, after being cornered like a rat in a trap, the villager retaliates with anger and frustration.

The apartment block in *Jagte Raho* is akin to the city, which has so many homes, that the inhabitants are virtual strangers. The large common spaces within the building, like corridors, stairwells and terraces are akin to city streets, where danger and opportunity lurk. The atrium of this mega block is never fully revealed, signifying the heartlessness of an uncaring city. The covenant of privacy much adhered to in apartment block living, leads to the varied forms of behaviour inside individual flats behind closed doors. Behind the closed door, the mise-en-scene of the interiors of apartment units changes according to the status of the family and are each populated with details of domesticity characterising the residents and their class. Two spaces in which the villager attempts to hide are instructive from the perspective of domesticity:

The first is the home of Shashankbabu, a gambler who tries to steal from his sleeping wife. The bedroom of this lower middle-class household becomes a battleground of spouses while in the backdrop are seen portraits of saints, social reformers and national leaders. Curiously, there are also sign boards depicting pithy aphorisms of domestic bliss – "A husband is a supreme teacher" and "A wife is a goddess incarnate". The second home is that of a hedonistic aristocrat, perpetually under the influence of liquor. The large living room is lavishly furnished and decorated with tall vases, erotic figurines and nude paintings. A piano and a gramophone complete the picture of pure indulgence. This is the world of vices that sits oddly with his homely and virtuous wife who retreats to an inner sanctuary signified by a large picture frame of her spiritual guru. The mise-en-scene of both these apartments deploy irony and metaphors to highlight domestic strife, dichotomy of profane and sacred, couched in moralistic tones.

Jagte Raho is the first Hindi film to explore the consequences of 'high-rise' living, where privacy behind closed doors also implies anonymity in the common spaces. The alienation of the urban dweller is in a sense better seen in the lives of the inhabitants rather than the villager, who is actually the viewer personified. In this film which takes place entirely in a mega apartment block, the urban geography is invoked by the filmic house itself where it becomes a metaphor for the big bad city, a bewildering and hostile place for a rural migrant.

The film, like many others in fifties, creates a binary of city-village where the former is depicted as corrupt, and here in this film represented by the apartment block itself, while the latter as virtuous, poor and innocent. When the pursued villager, a mute witness to several corruptions of the city life within the building, finds his voice atop the terrace water tank, he proclaims his innocence. A low angle shot heroically frames him while he breaks into a speech of how as a son of a poor farmer who comes to the city in search for work can make it here only by being co-opted into a thieving ideology. The prologue of the film showed the city as unwelcoming place for the newly arrived villager, the epilogue shows the villager finally being offered a drink of water at a temple nestled in a verdant grove which invokes village like setting and hospitability. Thus, the film comments on the city-village binary situating a mega apartment block at the centre of its narrative.

5.5 *Mili* – collegiality in a co-operative housing society

"Yeh itni badi badi buildingein, na jaane yahan kitne log rehte hain." (Such big buildings, who knows how many people live here), says the father's voice-over at the beginning of the film *Mili*, while a tilt shot from top to bottom reveals a multi-storey RCC building. It then zooms out to show group of similar buildings and a bunch of kids playing cricket in an open ground in the middle. This introductory shot establishes the setting of the film to be a co-operative housing society. The protagonist Mili lives in one of its buildings. The movement sequence of Mili, a popular young woman, returning home from college and making her way to her flat is indicative of the social life of such a housing complex. She is besieged by the children and other ladies in the compound. As she enters her building, she is greeted by the liftman before she proceeds to ride the elevator upstairs. Upon reaching her floor, she passes by a couple of closed doors before ringing the doorbell of her house.

In *Mili*, the movement sequence of the protagonist at the beginning of the film informs us about the setting- a typical co-operative housing society of mid-seventies Bombay, with the depictions of its generous compound, play park, carpark, lift, lift-attendant, common passage on floors, culminating in the main door leading to the living room of her flat. This film shows us apartment living in transition. A chawl like collegiality is visible, as neighbours often come together in each other's living rooms. Common passages and the staircases remain active most of the time with the comings and goings of the inhabitants. It is here that children sing loudly to cause annoyance to the reticent new neighbour Shekhar, when he forbids them the use of terrace. It is here that the neighbours gather in the final scene to bid adieu to by now wheelchair bound Mili and Shekhar as they leave for a trip abroad after their wedding.

In the film, the terrace and its many uses are indicative of high rise living in Bombay, in a city where open spaces are rare to come by, because of the sheer number of built objects in the urban space. The tops of these multi story buildings, the flat roofed terraces then become the spaces of common dwelling, used by the children of the building, and the ladies for various forms of communal activity, like singing and dance practice. Spaces like these are the common spaces of the communities where multi-storey living happens and the Filmic House acknowledges its presence in the lived experience of its inhabitants.

In the film we get a glimpse of several other apartments besides that of the protagonist, throwing light on the mode of private dwelling in apartments. Each one has a distinctive appearance and individual decorative features. Although the physical structure of the flats is the same (as dictated by the logic of mass production for middle class urban dwellers), each family expresses themselves differently within it to suit both economic status and their taste.

Figure 5.3: Stills from the film *Mili*

The mise-en-scene in Mili's flat reflects the family's status. The large living room which is often a venue for entertaining close neighbours and friends has a curious mixture of upholstered and leather covered sofa-sets, teapoys and side tables with lamps. A carpeted floor, wall paper, a book-shelf, a wall unit with bric-a-brac and picture frames and presence of a telephone, whereas the kitchen is equipped with modern gadgets; all convey an educated upwardly mobile class status. In contrast, her upper floor neighbour Shekhar's flat, where he lives with a live-in servant, is filled with well co-ordinated luxurious and fashionable furniture and wall panelling that show every sign of his upper-class background. Two pieces of equipment that stand out in this flat are a ham radio and a telescope. These possessions mark him out as someone from an economic league higher than his neighbours. These are also indexical of his reclusive nature, where he prefers to connect with the distant worlds, whether through the radio or through the telescope, in preference to his immediate neighbours. This is his home as a corner of his own world.

As mentioned before, people come and go into each other's flats unselfconsciously, and this is the learned sub-culture reminiscent of a chawl life which the inhabitants may have come from, only difference being that the ingress here is mediated by ringing of door-bells. When temperamentally reclusive Shekhar comes to inhabit the terrace flat, he finds himself in uncomfortable proximity with this gregarious behaviour and is hesitant and guarded when neighbours come to call upon him. He becomes more sociable and welcoming of neighbours as his friendship develops with Mili.

The film focusses on the collective living in an apartment block whose publicness mediates the private dwelling of flat owners has very few narrative points that connect it with the city or its urban geography. The characters either depart or arrive from college, office or airport but very little of their life outside is divulged. One significant connection to the outside is that with the sky. The film opens (in a flashforward) and closes with the same event -- shots of a plane taking off with Mili and Shekhar departing for honeymoon after their wedding. During the course of the film, we learn of Mili's attraction for planes as she rushes to the balcony to watch one. Shekhar too is a stargazer. There is a desire for the sky among both and the balcony and terrace respectively make that connection possible.

The apartment block in a co-op housing society in *Mili* is an ever present architectural space and an integral character in the film, reflecting the characters, defining their existential situations and shaping their behaviour in relation to its social space.

5.6 *Anubhav* and *Grihapravesh* – spatial agency and reclaiming home

There is a common theme running through this trilogy of films made by Basu Bhattacharya – that of weariness setting in inside a marriage. We will take up two of these films for discussion, *Anubhav(1971)* and *Grihapravesh* (1979) for their tight focus on the domestic space that participates as a crucial character in the unfolding of the stories. Both films oscillate between two worlds – the apartments where the couples live and the workplaces of career driven workaholic husbands.

Manasi and Amar in *Grihapravesh* live in a modest apartment of older construction which has clearly seen better days. The home and the world dichotomy is clearly observed in the quiet domesticity where the man defines his place in the world in terms of his position at the workplace and wife's existence is framed inside and in association with the home she keeps. Her entire day is spent in cooking and serving meals, doing household chores, washing and ironing, seeing off the husband and her eight year old son in the morning and welcoming them back in the evening and fussing over them. The urban geography in the film is explored largely with respect to the man's public dwelling in the institutions and public spaces of the city, which is also the case in *Anubhav*.

The prologue of the film shows them waking up as newlyweds to the strains of a melodious duet wafting from the opposing apartment, they steal indulgent peeks of the crooning couple from their window. Perched on an old bed pushed in a corner of a tiny room, they reminisce about romance, marriage and honeymoon, which Amar explains to his wife can be conducted

right at home rather than going to faraway places. Here, Amar articulates his dreams about saving money and buying a house which will be leagues apart from their rental home which in his opinion neither has a proper entrance nor a good arrangement of rooms.

While the credits roll, a montage of shots indicates the passing of years, showing visits to construction sites, of settling into respective routines at work and at home, birth of a child and so on. While newer buildings sprout in the city skyline, when the credits stop rolling, their small family is still living in the same apartment. The construction sites form another aspect of urban geography encapsulating search for a better home that the film deals with. Although the screen space never shows the apartment building or its communal life, glimpses of life in other apartments are provided as viewed by Manasi through her window. Earlier, it was of a young couple in love and later it shows a perpetually quarrelling older couple. The window here frames slices of life, of phases in a marriage with passing years having symbolic import for Manasi and through her for the viewers.

The idea of saving money to buy their own home takes possession of Manasi who spares no efforts in thrift. The apartment is devoid of any modern improvements and the walls are in serious need of a new coat of paint. She chases the dream of an ideal house while letting the existing house slide into a state of neglect. Her own physical state mirrors this neglect as she immerses herself in the routine of household chores. The onset of such ennui in marital life is the rife condition for the blossoming of romance at the office, setting off a crisis in the film.

When Amar breaks this news to Manasi, his past words of wisdom hang heavy – “a time may come in a marriage when sleeping on the same bed, two people drift apart”. The bed on which they articulated their dreams once, now becomes the location for Amar to declare to his wife that he no longer loves her. Manasi realises that while she was chasing an elusive dream – that of an ideal house, she is on precipice of losing the very basis of a home.

Figure 5.4: Stills from the films *Grihapravesh* (top) **and *Anubhav*** (bottom)

In *Anubhav* too, we observe the home and the world division in the life of Amar, a high-profile newspaper editor and his wife Meeta who are in a childless marriage. They live in a spacious and well-appointed apartment in a swanky new high-rise in Bombay. A retinue of servants look after their home round the clock. In the beginning of the film, there is a sequence that captures the tone of their six-year long marriage. It is a morning after a house party that went late into the night and the servants are already in a flurry of activity. The couple wakes up in separate rooms – Meeta in their bedroom and Amar in his study where he usually works till late. While Meeta emerges from her room with a tea cup, Amar's morning tea is being brought to him on a trolley by the family retainer who then proceeds to assist him in getting ready for the office. One servant hurries with his briefcase, opens the main door and then rushes out to call the elevator while the rest of them stand in attention to see off the master. Amar rattles off last minute instructions about his lunch to the head servant while leaving and almost as an after thought says goodbye to his wife.

After her husband leaves, Meeta aimlessly floats from space to space in the house, vacantly observing the servants in continuing flurry of the housekeeping activities who respectfully ignore her presence. She wanders into the balcony and watches the bustle of life in the *basti* (informal settlement) several floors below, her own routine being quite idle in contrast. The sequence captures a well-appointed and well-run affluent household but the householders don't seem to dwell in it, leading to a jaded routine. The lack of attachment is acutely felt by the wife who describes the house as a hotel. She is gripped by an existential crisis about her presence in the house which she feels is merely ceremonial and not integral. This existential angst is the crisis in the film, although it also introduces a secondary crisis in the plot (reappearance of the wife's former love interest).

In both the films, the crises are resolved when the wives, in swift acts of agency, take charge of the situation, reclaim their houses to salvage their respective marriages. Their transforming acts are essentially spatial in nature and the assertions of their identities linked with their house and their rightful places in it.

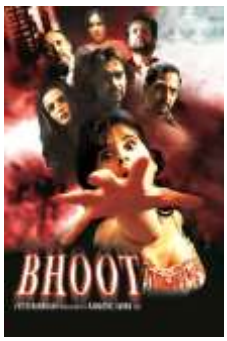
In *Grihapravesh*, the reclaiming involves undertaking radical transformation of the self and the house, all in the span of a single day. Manasi accomplishes this by handing over the house to a contractor and submitting her own self to experts at a beauty salon. The simultaneous transformation is captured in a song sequence in which we see the workmen scrapping and painting the walls with intercuts of the beauticians scrubbing the wife's face and applying make-up. The shots of the house being decorated are intercut with shots of the wife being dressed and ornamented. The wife and the house merge as one and re-emerge triumphant as the man and his paramour are confronted with an orderly domesticity presided over by a confident wife.

In *Anubhav*, the transformation is subtle, there are no drastic physical changes, what changes is the manner in which the wife asserts her claims on the spaces of the house. She had initially described the house as a "hotel". The recovery therefore involves reclaiming her wifely duties and status and thereby finding new meanings in the same physical space. This she does through a clear act of territoriality – she fires all the domestic help (barring one who insists on staying) at once who had a run of the entire household until this time. With them gone she can claim ownership over the apartment, and her life. She takes over the kitchen. The husband resumes to sleep in the bedroom. In the new found privacy of a servant-less

home, they romance each other in balcony, terrace and at their dining table. She takes over the tasks of cooking and serving meals for the husband and his guests, helping her husband to get ready for work and seeing him off at the door, receiving him when he returns and caring for him when he is sick. In many major and minor acts of household tasks, she begins to dwell in the spaces of her house and reclaim both her domesticity and conjugal relations.

These films posit the question of difference between house as an edifice (*makaan*) and home (*ghar*) as an emotional site of bonding and belonging. Both films although located in vastly different apartments, speak of an urban condition, that of the efforts of making a house a home in the face of alienation and ennui, which is felt acutely by the nuclear families. These films are critically acclaimed commentaries on modern marriages in which a distance grows gradually between partners, but they are as much about the houses they live in and how they themselves view them. The physical state of the house or the differently occupied domains within it impact the lived experience and determine the fate of the characters.

5.7 *Bhoot* – unheimlich in a city high-rise



The Filmic House in *Bhoot* is a fifteen-storey suburban Bombay high-rise. A duplex apartment with a terrace on the top floor of this building is rented by middle class white-collar couple Vishal and Swati, but it turns out to be a site of supernatural occurrences particularly affecting the young housewife. The home and the world division is once again observed in this film, yet the house turns out anything but a safe refuge.

Right from the beginning, we are made aware of the mysterious connection of the house with the woman. When she is taken to view the place for the first time, an iconic shot frames her body with the building as she approaches it, its ominous presence lying in wait. Then the camera swings upwards as she cranes her neck towards the apartment at the top. Its elevation

off the ground is constantly referred to in the film. The exterior shot of the tall building recurs many times, almost as a leit motif. Plunging shots down the balcony and top angle shots of the lift shaft showing upward or downward movement of the elevator emphasise the flat's distance from the ground, its constant referring captured in stylised camerawork communicates a sense of foreboding or, as we learn, a reference to a violence act which the flat was a witness to. The heights that afford exclusiveness can also become sites of danger.

The interior space of the duplex constitutes clean orthogonal cubist lines. The flat once rented, is filled with chic, ready-made furniture and various bric-a-brac of home décor. The spatial imagery of the domestic space connotes the aspirational space of the middle-class with disposable income. This the setting for a horror film The duplex's internal stairs figure prominently in the mise-en-scene. There is an unstated menace in the sharp-edged steps that are unprotected, without railings. Swati is often seen to climb up and down this staircase, and these movements are, on most occasions, fraught with tension and symbolise her increasingly precarious condition.

Figure 5.5: Stills from the film *Bhoot*

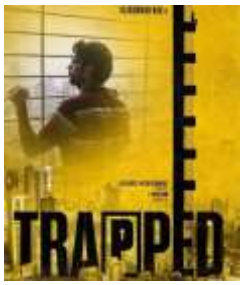
The self-conscious camerawork draws attention to the architectural space all the time with its stylised and oblique framing and distorted viewpoints. This evokes a constant feeling of fear lurking around every corner. The camerawork films Swati's vulnerability in architectural frames. Innocuous spaces such as the kitchen loft become source of unknown fear. The panoramic views of the city from the apartment give an impression of distancing from the real world. Double height spaces and the ambient sound of the many channels on cable TV add to the impression of isolation of the lonely housewife.

This is an apartment invaded by a malevolent spirit, which means that even when her husband goes to work, Swati is never alone. We see sight of the dead woman in several jump scares, and Swati's initial disbelief only leads to her isolation. Unlike the apartment blocks in *Mili* and *Benaam,* the high-rise skyscraper in *Bhoot* offers little possibility of outside help. The private behaviour of the neighbours also means that each one lives in relative anonymity behind closed doors. Here is a nuclear family at its most vulnerable and this situation is aggravated to a dangerous extent when the spirit becomes manifest. The objects such as a large sized doll and a wall mirror left by the previous occupant whose spirit haunts the house are captured in sinister close-ups. The interior spaces and the objects therein are potentially haunted and out to get Swati.

The climatic moments in *Bhoot* happen in the basement of the apartment block, where the ghost seeks revenge against the man who was the murderer. This choice of location is interesting as basement parking areas are treated as merely functional spaces, often dingy and neglected and devoid of habitation where people on the go would spend least amount of time. This lends them spooky quality making them eminently suited for macabre happenings. The apartment block is thus an integral character in the film, it was weaponised to commit a crime, a memory of which it continues to retain and through incorporating a haunted space does not let the world forget it. The final closure is also aided by its architecture as the murderer is impaled upon the protruding steel bars from an unfinished concrete column.

5.8 KEY FILM

Trapped – alienation and un-domesticity 35 floors up



The Filmic House is a towering high-rise named ‘Swarg’ (meaning heaven) in central Bombay. Shaurya, a low level employee in a travel agency who is in urgent need of an apartment of his own is led here by an unscrupulous tout and where he will remain trapped in a top floor apartment for several days.

The entrance to the building is in unfinished state and is guarded by a lone disinterested watchman in a makeshift perch. In his desperation, the young man ignores the tell-tale signs of uninhabited state of the building which we learn has remained unoccupied for some years. The film draws attention to extreme high-rise living. The young man cranes his neck upwards to take in the building and the journey in the elevator is uncomfortably long. It is certainly an unfamiliar and perhaps unattainable experience for a young man starting out in life in a cramped rental shared by several bachelors.

5.8.1 The Apartment on the 35th Floor

The tout leads the young man to the 35th floor apartment which is a typically compact 2 BHK unit and proceeds to give him a tour of the premises using typical broker lingo – TV, fridge, AC, heater in the bathroom, adding that water comes in the morning and there is 24-hour electricity – an apt summary of a house in Bombay that anyone can aspire to. There is an assortment of unrelated furniture such as an over-size sofa, a plastic dining table, a chrome side table, a table fan and a foam mattress.

When Shaurya moves in during the night, everything is working in this partly furnished house, when he wakes up next morning, it is a different story – there is no electricity and the taps are dry. Upon finding himself locked inside by accident he realises that all he has is half

a bottle of water and a packet of biscuits. His cell phone battery has died out and no one knows he is inside, least of all the watchman of the building who was asleep when he moved in. The rest of the film's narrative is Shaurya's efforts to deal with the architectural spaces in which he finds himself captive. Two elements of the house, the main door and the balcony grille, both meant to protect the inside of the flat, come to symbolise his condition of being trapped.

Figure 5.6: Stills from the film *Trapped*

5.8.2 The Main Door and the Grilled Balcony

The horror of his situation fully dawns upon him when Shaurya realises that with the keys dangling on the outside, there is little chance he can open the main door from inside. He kicks at the door, pushes and yanks it. He tries to prise out the keyhole with kitchen implements, without success. In the backdrop we see a blue painted wall decorated with a 'WELCOME' sign made with coloured paper festoons and there are heart shaped balloons – reminders of the young man's romantic intentions, of his meagre efforts to make his bride feel welcomed,

his well laid plans gone horribly awry. He peers through the door viewer. An extreme close-up of the lens fills the screen with a wide-open iris in the centre followed by a fish-eye view of the empty floor lobby outside. The next shot cuts to the inside where the man is seen thrashing about in frustration. He bends down and peers through the gap between the door shutter and the flooring, shouting, *"Koi hai?"* (Is anybody there?)

Next, a montage of shots appear – the podium ramp, the empty parking lot, red painted pipes of sprinkler system, unfinished concrete walls, and a barren stair-well. A grim picture is presented of a building deaf to the cries of help. The scene returns to the 35th floor lobby. A floor level shot of the main door appears, there is light streaming from the miniscule crack at the bottom, a portion of a spectacle frame is visible through it accompanied by the sound of young man's cries of help. The camera starts moving towards the door, hugging the marble floor whose veins appear to ripple in waves, shimmering like a mirage and as unattainable as far as the man inside is concerned. The scene then cuts to inside, the man still seen bent down, his head on the floor, defeated.

Abandoning the door, he goes to the balcony and begins to shout through the grilles, "Watchman…Watchman!" The scene cuts to the shot of the building, in full height, cold to his entreaties. He repeatedly bangs a saucepan on the grille to attract attention to no avail. There follows a bizarre overhead shot which shows a flat screen television slowly sliding out of the balcony grille, threatening to plummet into the seemingly far away bottom blurred out of focus. In his frustration, the young man has yanked out the TV from its base and is preparing to throw it down. Falling thirty-five floors, the television meets the hard ground with a resounding crash, the camera frames the impact by bare concrete walls of the podium. This is an exceedingly dramatic event for any domestic environment but no one witnesses it, least of all the watchman whose attention was focussed on a loud radio.

We see a worn out Shaurya sitting on the balcony with the sky in front of him and the city spread out below. He has a god's eye view of the proceeding. As evening comes, he watches the city beginning to light up. In a different context, such a scene would convey the supreme privilege of high-rise living. For Shaurya, however, this heavenly perch here is a bird-cage in the sky, the grille on all three sides reinforce the metaphor. Grille, the metallic protection against unwanted ingress is a ubiquitous feature of the city's apartment block architecture,

making its presence even on such a great height, its filmic purpose is exact opposite, to prevent egress, to trap.

Both architectural elements – the main door and the balcony grille that are meant to protect the inhabitants inside a flat, now come to symbolise the condition of being trapped. Both these elements are also indexical of contemporary urban living in Mumbai today, where the need for security can in an instant flip over to isolation. Swarg Apartments is connotative of living anonymously in the city, high up in the sky, in splendid isolation. Behind the main door, you are on your own. Having an apartment on the 35th floor like the one Shaurya finds himself in, means that communication with the outside is impossible because of the elevation, itself the source of privilege.

5.8.3 'HELP, Swarg 3501' and the Staircase in a skyscraper

Over the next few days, Shaurya makes several attempts to escape, all proving futile. He tears clothes to hang a large HELP sign on the grille and torches it in the night, almost setting the apartment on fire. But no one notices.

He throws down SOS messages – "HELP, Swarg 3501" written on sheets of corrugated board, first with toothpaste and then with his own blood when paste runs out. When one of the boards is discovered by a young woman, she gives the tall building a puzzling look from the terrace of her low-rise building. Although both buildings are in the same vicinity, they could well exist on different planets as their worlds never seem to intersect. The woman gingerly approaches the tall building to make inquiries. Despite of the watchman's dismissal of anyone living there, she begins to climb the staircase. At this point, we feel that Shaurya's woes are about to end.

However, the woman soon abandons her mission and turns back. The staircase itself wears a grim and deserted look. Unlike in films like *Benaam* and *Mili*, where the staircase of an apartment block is both a means of vertical movement and a place of social interaction, the staircases in skyscrapers are almost always secondary to the elevator. At the best of times the staircases are treated as a redundancy, or a failsafe as we have seen in *Bhoot.* This means that they are deserted for most of the time, prone to misuse if not maintained, and in general

remain unfriendly spaces. In an extreme high-rise such as Swarg Apartment this situation is further exacerbated. One can view the young woman's action of turning back from her mission in this context. For one, it could be reluctance or even an inability to endure the physical labour of climbing thirty-five floors. The other explanation is fear of the unfamiliar. There is no sign of life and unknown dangers could be lurking there. When she looks up in the stairwell, she sees an upwardly spiralling vortex and one would be justifiably afraid of getting pulled into an unknown void.

5.8.4 Urban Geography

The mise-en-scene very eloquently makes us aware of the contrasting scales of the high-rise with its dwarf like surrounding buildings. This is a situation that is taking place in several sites in the existing city, where buildings spring out over and above that which is already present, towering over them almost touching the sky. These buildings are so tall that they are impossible to fully take in at a glance. We saw a similar scene in *Bhoot* emphasising the tallness of the building. The person on the street therefore has no cause to look up, and often the upper parts of the building (and what transpires in them) are completely ignored by those in the low rises. Little wonder then that the young man's efforts to gain the attention from those outside the building fail.

5.8.5 The Bedroom, the Kitchen, the Bathroom

When Shaurya arrives to occupy Flat 3501, he is pleased to find a thick foam mattress in the bedroom. He lays it down, spreads a sheet over it and begins to bounce over it excitedly. He is at last free of his former sleeping quarters that he had to share with half a dozen other roommates and relishes the experience of having the space to himself. He is excited with the conjugal prospects afforded by a flat he can call his own. He wakes up in the morning breaking out in sweat as the electricity is out and the AC had stopped working. This was to be his first and last peaceful night in the bedroom and he never returns to sleep here.

When he realises that he has locked himself in, his first instinct was to rummage through kitchen drawers to find implements with which to break open the lock. When he runs out of water to drink, in his desperation, he tries searching for left over drops in the bathroom geyser

and even in the flushing tank. Not only are the spaces of bedroom, kitchen and bathroom not used for their intended purposes, the objects within became instruments for entirely different ends.

5.8.6 The Living Room

Trapped for several days, the man stakes out his territory in the living room in the middle of soot covered walls and wreckage of broken, half burnt furniture. A BHK type of a flat in a generic apartment block is a well-defined signifier of segregation of functions in allotted spaces – living, cooking, eating, sleeping, bathing and so on. With passing days however, in this apartment, we see all these functions converge into the living room which becomes the centre of all his actions. The other rooms supply him with objects but he puts them to use in the living room. When it starts raining, he brings in the flushing tank from the toilet to make a device to collect rainwater. He drags in the upended body of the refrigerator and converts it into a large tub to store water. When his thirst is sated, he is thrilled with joy and he pours water all over his body right here in the living room and dances in the puddle.

Weak with hunger, he begins to hallucinate. He sees his favourite foods tantalisingly floating in air, only to recoil in horror to see vision of a mouse sandwiched inside the bread. In a back-lit shot his favourite nature show host floats in wearing his trademark khaki and binoculars. Creepers and plant erupt all around him forming a dense thicket while the acclaimed outdoorsman makes a small speech about how to survive in the wild when the supplies run out. The analogy of wilderness for a high-end city apartment may seem ironic but the survival lessons are not misplaced in the given circumstances. The outdoorsman then opens the main door, salutes and leaves, shutting the door behind him, snapping the young man out of his stupor. The door is still resolutely shut, something as simple and ordinary as opening a door and leaving is denied to him.

The ‘lost in wilderness’ survival tropes now come into play – making a fire, killing and cooking a bird, collecting insects for food and so on – inside a living room of an urban high-rise He sleeps here and bathes here, cooks here and eats here. His hallucinations continue and he dreams about his escape, conducting conversations with a rat he has trapped in the vegetable basket of the broken down fridge. Over the course of the days, both house and man

are subjected to extreme ordeals. They transform together from being ordinary and benign to unrecognisably horrid and troubled.

Trapped subverts our traditional notions of homeliness and domesticity and challenges the accepted notions of the use of space within the household. When subjected to conditions beyond the ordinary, every connotation of space and object loses its known signification and has the ability to transform into something unknown. For Shaurya, his situation itself is unchartered territory and he deals with it as best as he can. In this case he makes a single space his entire home. The rest of the flat, tiny though it is, is relatively ignored, and like a small wilderness only used for foraging objects that will ultimately keep him alive.

5.8.7 Escape

There is one memorable panoramic shot in the film of a man hanging outside from the top floor of a tall building with the city stretching out below. The absurdity of such an occurrence is astounding. An ordinary domestic element such a door that won't open has brought about this extra ordinary scene. The trapped man had patiently filed away at the balcony grille to prise open a bar to be able to slip out. The close-ups of act of filing would invariably remind the audiences of prison scenes. His object was to reach the ungrilled balcony five floors below. Once there, he finds the main door unlocked and walks out into the lobby and to the staircase to climb down remaining thirty floors. Upon reaching the ground, his feet wobbling, he walks past the unseeing watchmen and exits the compound. Shaurya is free. To the world outside, nothing happened.

5.8.8 Return to 3501

In the epilogue of the film Shaurya returns to Swarg Apartments to find a closure. When he enters the apartment 3501, the site of his misadventures, he finds that it has been repaired back to a normal state. Here, he has had to overcome his fears of rodents and insects. He has had to overcome his aversion to meat as an avowed vegetarian and finally he must confront the very space that almost killed him. As an ordinary man he was put in a situation that made him do extra-ordinary things. The space too endured incredible violence losing all signification of a domestic space. Both the man and the space seem to have repaired themselves and regained their benign self. The only remaining evidence of the violence to the

space and the ordeal of the man is the broken piece of balcony grille. Shaurya looks at it, and then gazes at the city beyond. It shows a fade out of a sky-scraper under construction, another tall building shooting up in the sky oblivious of the consequences.

The apartment block in *Trapped* is the antagonist, wreaking unimaginable violence on a man and the space he occupies despite being an ordinary setting. That the building is empty has not so much consequence in the film as being stranded so high up where no one can hear you scream. The extreme form of anonymous private living engendered by such high rise apartments can mean that no one will know or care you exist or you cease to exist. Reliance on contemporary technology can prove to be fickle. Trapped looks at the notion of the isolation that is the by-product of gated-community and high-rise living, and charts the anxieties arising out of it. Its epilogue suggests that no lessons will be learnt from the happenings in the 35th floor apartment. An apt commentary on the way the city operates.

5.9 Reading the Filmic Apartment Block as Performative Filmic Dwelling

The representation of Apartment Block in Hindi cinema chronicles a trajectory of evolution of this typology in urban India, featuring several types of internal organisation of apartment planning as well as its gradual verticalization, particularly in context of Bombay city. The discussion on representation of apartment block in Hindi cinema and further analysis of six films indicate a good resemblance with the development of this building typology that has several performative functions in the narratives. Considered together, lived space in cinema performs in multiple ways and communicates meanings regarding domesticity.

In the films analysed, we see the apartment block's transition in form in keeping with the times and at the same time passing through several performative phases – from being presented as a metaphor for national integration or for a big bad city to reinforce city/village binary, it soon comes to express the ordinariness of middle-class urban living. Being an ever-present character in films that centralise apartment living, it defines and shapes the character arcs in the film becoming a means for exploring collegiality and exercising agency. Apartment block, even though ordinary, acts as an antagonist at times and encapsulates haunting, danger or entrapment.

In all these films, the house in its mode of private dwelling, its internal organisation and architectural elements, its collective as well as privatised nature and its extension to public dwelling participates in the film narrative in more specific ways as we elaborate further. In the process, the lived space also communicates social meanings of domesticity in terms of being an inner and a private domain. The house becomes a concrete site of conflicting values of modernity and tradition as we elaborate further.

5.9.1 Private Dwelling: from collegiality to diminishing sociality in the evolving Filmic Apartment

In the lived space and within the narrative scheme of the films analysed, we observe a shifting sense of sociality enacted in this typology of collective living. At the most central level of 'The House' in our model of Filmic Dwelling, like in case of the filmic chawl, we can interpret the filmic apartment block as operative at two levels – the building and its individual units, the flats or apartments. The building as a whole, forms an intermediate level, that of a 'Neighbourhood', between an apartment and the city at large and mediates the existential space of the dwellers. Many films focus entirely on the unit and the building itself is rendered inconsequential or even absent, barring occasional shots from outside. In the films that reserve a role for the building as an intermediate environment, we not only observe different kind of sociality than a filmic chawl but also its increasingly diminishing currency as the nature of the building changes from a low or medium rise co-op housing society to a more gated high-rise.

The movement sequence of the protagonist in *Mili* in her housing society reminds us of the one of Rajaram and the matchmaking priest in the filmic chawls of *Katha* and *Piya ka Ghar* respectively. Here we see similar collegiality in the common areas where chance encounters result in greetings, gossip and conversations conducted in a neighbourly spirit. However, there is a difference in the architectural setting which in turn reveals subtle differences in the way people interact. For one, there is less crowding of human bodies in the given space and then, no part of the private life or possessions are brought out in the common areas, the mise-en-scene is relatively simple and clinical and the setting less dramatic (as is expected in a modernist construction). Also unlike in *Jagte Raho*, the scale of the apartment block is just right for neighbours to know each other making the common areas such as the staircase, floor

lobbies and the terrace much more cordial spaces of common activities. While territorial conflicts do arise, like in the use of the terrace for dance practice, these are resolved relatively amicably. In *Benaam* too, interactions between the neighbours are routinely seen in the common spaces of the apartment block and visiting one another in their flats is quite common. Compare this to *Bhoot*, where there are minimal interactions among the neighbours. The disturbed housewife visits her neighbour in the adjoining flat but the floor lobby is never an active space. Movement of elevator is projected several times in the film, shot from the drab concrete elevator shaft, the upward or downward mechanised movements emphasise the distance from the ground and lack of human contact. The staircase itself is reduced to passive space of utility, used reluctantly when electricity plays truant and is devoid of a lived character in its bare minimalism. The entry and exit from the building via the basement car-park, and then the elevator, reduce the inhabitants' movements to being mechanical and disembodied rather than slow and haptic, where socialities may develop. If the apartment block is a neighbourhood, a picture is painted of one which is lacking in network of spaces where collective lives are lived.

In our assessment of the Filmic House-Apartment Block we find a gradual increase in alienation that the inhabitants of such dwellings experience as their flats start to rise off the ground. Very tall buildings inevitably have uniformly templated plans, that repeat from floor to floor, with minimal common areas. Charting this change from *Mili,* to *Benaam* (relatively low-rise blocks) to *Anubhav* to *Bhoot* (high-rise) to *Trapped*, (extreme high-rise) we can see how the reduction in places where social interactions are possible in apartment blocks leads to the greater and greater isolation of the flat dwellers from their neighbours and from the city at large.

Increasing verticality rather than horizontal sprawl takes the inhabitants away from contact with the ground, which has historically been the connect of the house with its surroundings. It has also led to the diminished role of staircases as movement spaces as elevators take over. Apartment spaces become even more private, with a diminishing sociality in the common passages at floor level. The shrinking room sizes and relegation of the dwelling function to BHK terminology only help in making this alienation more acute. The role of the building itself as an immediate environment – a neighbourhood of sorts has an increasingly diminishing role with the verticalization and privatisation of the typology. Thus, the building only remains a receptacle to hold the privatised apartment high above in the sky.

5.9.11 Inside and Outside the Filmic House-Apartment

The films show the entry and exit from an apartment block is guarded by layers – a compound wall, a gate and a gatekeeper are usually present. In the films featuring a housing society such as *Mili* and *Benaam*, these markers of gatekeeping are notional and the movements are not rigidly regulated, making the relationship with the outside fluid. As the films move to a territory of high-rises, we notice a change. For example, the securitised entrance to the building in *Bhoot* acting as a filter for unwanted ingress. Such notional or more definitive filters of security in an apartment block define the boundaries between inside and outside and provide a façade of safety to the inner domain. The films however show that the dangers in a domestic space may lurk inside, a factor ignored in conventional thinking about homes.

At a micro level, in the Filmic Apartment, the main door to the individual apartment also becomes a liminal space between the inside and the outside. In its closed aspect, it is an acknowledgement of privacy of the individuals within, which must be respected at all times. While the door is usually open in a chawl allowing unfiltered entry to all the neighbours, in apartment living, it solidly stands guard to isolate the outside and all entry is regulated with viewing lens and door-bells, resulting in a very different protocol of social behaviour than in a chawl. This protocol was seen to be loosely observed in a housing society as compared to swanky high-rises where it becomes formal and rigid. The main door as a threshold between the inner and outer domain is subtly reinforced in numerous scenes of wives seeing the husband off in the morning and then greeting him again when he is back from work (*Benaam, Anubahav, Grihapravesh*, etc). Here domesticity is seen in the fork of lived experience, albeit with the traditional (patriarchal) norms of male/female roleplay.

The control of the main door is always with the one who is inside who can determine its opening. It prevents any views from the outside but by way of a viewing lens provides the insider a sight of the outside. This is applicable in all ordinary cases except when extra-ordinary things happen as in *Trapped*, where the insider ceases to have control over it and gets trapped, or in *Bennam,* when the unstated menace can creep in through the tiny gap at the bottom of the door. The young man in *Trapped* was seen ardently wishing that he could somehow ooze out through that crack.

Despite the façade of security, things often go wrong in a domestic space, the filmic narratives often capture this side for dramatic effect but at the same time point to the precarious condition of urban dwelling. As seen in *Benaam* and *Bhoot*, a housing society of middle-class families can be vulnerable to murderous intrusion. When this safety is breached, as in the scene in *Benaam* with the poisoned pet lying dead, covered in a shroud in the middle of the living room, it instantly brings the benign domesticity into unfamiliar territory where horrible things can happen at any time. In *Trapped*, the main door, the sentry of the home-space in apartment living that guards against any unwanted intrusion does the opposite by preventing escape. It is a solid barrier that remains unyieldingly shut.

5.9.12 Privacy as coded behaviour in the Filmic Apartment

In contrast to chawl living, the notions of privacy in apartment living are functions of middle to upper middle-class status, as well as modern, cosmopolitan living. In these houses, all the homeowners are, by and large, educated, urbane and cosmopolitan, with a sense of public living that is in direct contrast with that which goes behind closed doors. The role of the main door in apartment living is much more sacrosanct than in chawl dwelling, and is an architectural element not normally breached. Typically, the apartment becomes a progression of spaces each more private than the one preceding, ending finally in the bedroom, the most personal space of all. So, from the floor lobby onwards, the main door, the passage, the living room, the kitchen and dining areas and finally the bedroom become a set of filters. Most interactions from the world outside the apartment are limited to the living room.

In *Mili*, we see privacy in a more nebulous manner. Although, every flat is its own world behind the front door, the neighbours, particularly the women seem to float into one another's flats with ease, ringing of door bells and opening of doors is a recurring motif in the film. However, the recluse hero indicates an expectation of privacy in one's own apartment where one can be left at peace. Prizing privacy and being a recluse is not considered exactly a nice thing in this small community, and a change of behaviour is in order. He must learn to be a good neighbour by admitting others into his space. In later films, we observe the apartment living more closely associated with privacy.

The other sense of privacy in an apartment block relates to the conjugal, for inevitably the apartment is seen as the home of nuclear families. In several films, we see married couples

with or without children inhabiting the apartments, and as such the interior space becomes their exclusive domain. There are some variations to this model, but it is largely adhered to. In this context, it is interesting to observe and comment on how the issue of conjugality is tackled in these films. In general, intimate scenes in the domestic sphere are rarely shown in Hindi cinema; such scenes are reserved for spaces outside the space of home such as hotel rooms etc. Sexual life of the married couple is only suggested but never tackled. The scenes in the bedroom are of those of getting ready to go to party or to the office and so on. *Anubhav* is a rare exception. In *Anubhav,* the bedroom assumes its intended role of a conjugal space to a greater degree – showing both the states of estrangement and sexual intimacy between a husband and a wife.

5.9.13 Filmic Apartment as Unhomely

The sense of being possessed and threatened in a domestic environment is quite apparent in *Bhoot*. In this film, the apartment may be haunted by a ghost but by itself it has a performative role – its uncanny nature is expressed by the architectural mise-en-scene, with jagged edges of the steps, the flickering light from the television, mysterious lofts and dangerously sharp reinforcement bars in the basement carpark. Monica Michlin (2012) refers to Freud's definition of the uncanny, a negation of the word for "home" (*unheimlich*, which is unhomely). She remarks that the term in itself inscribes the home as site and/or source of terror. The haunted house in its uncanniness speaks of the unfamiliar that is inherent within it. Upscale domestic spaces occupied by nuclear couples depict this sense of unhomeliness best, especially in the isolated apartments in high-rise buildings. In this respect, the new breed of horror film has come a long way from the erstwhile preference for ancient haveli or abandoned palaces far away in the wilderness.

But the horror in such spaces is not necessarily dependant only on haunting or demonic possession. The presence of the individual, alone, in an unfriendly filmic space is enough to make the space itself unfamiliar and make it unhomely. This is especially true in the case of *Trapped* and *Pihu*. In case of the former, it makes us think about the ordinary door of a flat in a very different light if it happens to be the only means of egress and harbouring possibilities of mechanical failures of complicated locking systems that are in vogue. The securitised living predicated on such mechanisms when they fail can have serious consequences. The

latter film shows us how the familiar space of a typical modern apartment can prove to be unfriendly and dangerous to a two-year-old who has to navigate through it unsupervised by an adult. The balcony and the staircase of the duplex apartment portray the same feeling of foreboding as in *Bhoot.* Even without the more obvious dangers such as gas stoves and electrical appliances, just the architectural space itself designed for an adult human by default is seen inherently unsafe when the scale of the inhabitant changes. In *Trapped*, the apartment block is the antagonist as well. The extreme form of anonymous private living engendered by high-rise apartments can mean that no one will know or care whether you exist or cease to exist. The reliance on contemporary technology can prove to be fickle as the film shows. The trapped young man has to resort to extreme acts to survive, essentially becoming a caveman in a space that is the epitome of human civilisation's technological achievement.

5.9.14 Things/objects as signifiers

At the level of 'the thing', in a quotidian sense, objects in films serve two functions – the first in the mise-en-scene where objects serve to signify the location and status, often the economic class of the inhabitants or their modern lifestyle in context of apartment living. Living room furniture in differing styles and sophistication in various apartments in *Mili* make them instantly recognisable as not only coming from different scales of status but also of personal taste. This is also the case in the two apartments we discussed in *Jagte Raho*. Kitchen is another place which communicates this by way of presence or absence of gadgets.

Apartment living itself as a modernising way of life brought concepts of exclusiveness in the family life with custom built spaces like bedroom, kitchens and toilets and modern furniture, furnishing and gadgetry. Mcgowan's (2016) research on history of modern furniture and furnishings in Bombay traces this modernising trend to the thirties when coinciding with the emergence of apartment living was a growth of enterprise in fitting these homes with new age styles and conveniences. She seeks evidence in product advertisements and home décor segments in newspaper and magazines, catalogues of furniture makers and writings on contemporary residential architecture to put together a narrative of a domestic modern. Cinema can provide yet another form of visual evidence for this process of modernising Indian urban homes. Judging from the mise-en-scene of the films under consideration, the modernisation was a slow transition. The space of kitchen and bathroom as depicted in these

films are good indicators of this. The apartment kitchens in Mili, Anubhav and Bhoot show sophistication of design albeit in varying degrees whereas the one in Grihapravesh is marked by just a basic gas stove and open storage racks. Even if people lived in apartment blocks, they did not always have access to latest furniture and gadgetry.

The other use of the things in these films is pragmatic, where the objects are used as details, personalised markers of the characters to endow them with certain personalities even if executed in a cursory fashion some time. For example, placing an easel in Mili's room may tell us that she paints although we do not see her actually painting. On the other hand, Shekhar's involvement with his telescope and ham radio is integral in defining him. Similarly, many objects in the living room of the drunk aristocrat in *Jagte Raho* do more than just signify his status, they reinforce his hedonistic self in a suggestive manner.

There are many instances where the things or objects are marked out for specific communication by their presence in the mise-en-scene or by camerawork focussing on them in close-ups. In *Benaam* for instance, each time the telephone rings, it looms large in the foreground, a harbinger of bad news and fear. The peculiar signboards with messages about ideal man and wife in the room of a warring couple in *Jagte Raho* are highlighted to convey the irony of their situation. In *Trapped*, every object in the flat presents an anti-domesticity, as they are put to use in ways unintended for them, weaponizing them or wreaking violence on them. In *Pihu*, appliances in a modern apartment as objects of convenience and comfort to its inhabitant are potentially lethal for a small child left alone. In *Bhoot*, objects left behind by the previous occupant receive a greater focus – a body length mirror and a life size doll are not just traces of their memory, but also witnesses of a crime, and become the carriers through which the possession of mind and body of the housewife becomes imminent. At the minutest level, the things in a filmic house can bring a roundedness to a character or bring to the fore intended emotions or associations and perform narrative roles.

5.9.2 Public Dwelling: the Filmic Apartment's location/disconnect with the city at large

The level of 'urban geography' can be seen as an extension of the lives of the characters and the apartments they live in. The city, its institutions, public spaces and public transport does form a part of the narrative but in most part, the urban existence is framed from the man's perspective. The home and the world dichotomy is visible in the lives of nuclear families, and women's existence is framed in domestic terms. This is then also reflected in the way an

apartment block is imagined in relation with the urban space in which it exists. While the level of urban is a constant foil for filmic chawls, apartment living is depicted as more sophisticated and urbane, but at the same time more insular.

In films like *Bhoot* or *Trapped*, panoramic views of the cityscape are visible from the upper floor apartments, but these vistas come across as distant, generic and undistinguishing. The inhabitants hardly dwell in it, and are for most part physically disconnected from it. In both films though, the distance from the urban surroundings is highlighted as alienating as well as perilous because of the elevation of the individual flats off the ground. The possibility of falling down (or getting thrown down) those many floors is a distinct threat in both the films. The vistas in *Bhoot* add to the impression of alienation that the young woman is experiencing in her life and the space carries the memory of someone being pushed to their death from high up. The cityscape in *Trapped* comes to the fore directly as the protagonist is unable to communicate with it despite his many efforts, He screams to the city, in a sense, to help him, but the city ignores his entreaties every time.

Filmic representations of high-rise apartment blocks signify a disconnect with the ground and the messy reality of the city at the ground level. The extreme high-rises such as the one in *Trapped* capture the processes of rising gentrification in the erstwhile mill lands of Bombay. The impacts of such rapid transformations of working-class neighbourhoods in the city are widely critiqued. The function of dwelling is reduced to real estate in the city and its attributes measured in terms of profit rather than lived experience, relegating the dwelling function to BHK terminology. But the film asks another question – what is it like to live so high up in the air where no one can hear you scream? The trapped man can observe the hustle and bustle of the street and the low-rise dense neighbourhood below. There are two contrasting worlds sited side by side but in complete disregard of one another, particularly the lofty heights of new high rise give an appearance of being removed from the messy city from where it rises. This removal can be very costly as we find out in the film.

5.9.3 Beyond the Performative – ways of looking at the Filmic Apartment

5.9.31 The Filmic Apartment as metaphor or symbol

The filmic apartment considered either as a single unit or as an entire block, is deployed at most times at a functional and performative level in which the plots revolve around aspects of

lived life, yet we can observe many instances where it communicates higher level meanings beyond the lived experience.

In case of filmic bungalow in Hindi films, we observed how a few films, families and the houses they live in are presented as metaphors for the nation or a reformist state. We can observe similar symbolism in *Teen Batti Char Rasta*, where the apartment is a metaphor for the nation and its diversity. The voluminous living room in which several daughters-in-law converge is presented as a space where a common identity is forged, where linguistic differences are overcome in a happy family. The film has a clear political message, that of subsuming the regional or linguistic pride in favour of unified nationalism. Made during the time of demands of linguistic states in the new republic, the film addresses the anxieties around such demands, one can say that the patriarch of the family represents the paternalistic state with centralising tendencies that ignores regional aspirations. The film intends to allegorise the house for a message of national integration, it creates space for daughters-in-law speaking diverse languages, but in case of love affair of the youngest son with their domestic servant, it stops short of problematising the issue of caste by couching it in euphemism of skin colour and then converting it into an issue of class difference.

In *Jagte Raho*, the logical, rational articulation of a multi-storey mega apartment block as a whole is a metaphor for the generic idea of an uncaring city – one with a bustling population of various social and economic classes, affording anonymous existence, and harbouring within its fold several forms of corruption hidden away from the outward moral facade of its denizens.

At another level, the identity of filmic apartment as the other typologies of filmic house, is seen to be closely linked with that of the woman of the house. In modern nuclear families too, the house becomes indexical of the housewife. The films in this chapter such as *Anubhav, Bhoot* are examples of this, particularly *Grihapravesh* in which the symbolism is the strongest.

5.9.32 Domesticity and its preferred relationship with modernity

The idea of modernity as avant-garde meant to be forged in the outer domain and thus divergent from domestic ideals of inner sanctity apparently sets up an oppositional relationship between domesticity and modernity. However, at the level of practices, there is

also observed compatibility between modernity and domesticity as Heynen (2005) points out. Madhava Prasad (1998) observes in Hindi cinema a preferred relationship to modernity, an assimilation of modernity into older order. On the one hand, there is an acceptance of a more modern outlook based on the tech and science and on the other, a need to go back to the glorious older pristine roots. Popular cinema as a reflection of the society can be situated astride both the tendencies of the co-existence of modernity and tradition.

Of the three Filmic House types under consideration, perhaps the most indexical to modern living is the apartment block. The compact planning of individual units in function differentiated rooms as a means of modern living become an interesting setting for examining the conflicting as well complimentary relationship of domesticity with modernity. The apartment block is a complex organism in itself – in order to function smoothly several services and amenities are needed which are all the products and now hall marks of modern living – the elevator, air conditioning, electrical appliances, pumped water supply even multi level parking. A modern kitchen is filled with such gadgets that ease cooking and cleaning, providing a possibility of leisure to women. Having a well-equipped kitchen with the traditional triumvirate of cooking stove, refrigerator and kitchen sink separate the apartment from the erstwhile chawl. New gadgets like the refrigerator and the gas stove, and set pieces of furniture like sofa sets became symbols of modernity. The role of women in this transitional period is of extreme significance (Adarkar, 2003).

The architectural mise-en-scene of films under discussion capture these markers of modern living as a slow adaptation in the lives of urban middle class. Films such as *Benaam* refers to occasional annoyances arising out of someone throwing garbage from an upper floor window or by oddly parked vehicles blocking the way. These details are indicative of imperfect adaptation to a modern way of life of an apartment block where everyone would ideally mind their own business and learn to obey rules of a civil society. Although the emerging urban middle class began to embrace apartment living, the upward mobility among the white-collar educated class with enough spending power to effect home improvements took some time to manifest. The primary struggle still remained that of finding an affordable apartment to own or to rent, particularly for young people in love or newly married couples, unless they already belonged to moneyed class and were situated in posh homes to begin with.

Living in an apartment is therefore a transition into different kind of lifestyle, one predicated on the ability to live independently as a nuclear family. While the space is domestic, there is an arc of learning that leads to the making of the apartment a home. In a Filmic Home we can see this arc in several examples. Apartment living as depicted in Hindi cinema, with its emphasis on a private world as a modern urban condition, narrativizes the life of a nuclear family, particularly the conjugal life of a married couple. In the films under consideration, we see that this domestic space is at the centre of its narrative. In most, we observe the space of the apartments inexorably linked with the women of the households. The housewife as a modern, educated woman here is caught in the flux between her traditional roles and modernity of her physical environment. The urban context is often limited to allude to the man's sphere in the outside world where he, more often than not holds a white-collar job, while the wife is largely confined to the domestic sphere despite of the leisure provided by a modern lifestyle and availability of servants and maids. The resulting ennui becomes a plot point that drives the narrative in various directions.

The dichotomy of tradition and modernity is presented as a binary in the two individual apartments in *Jagte Raho* but with subtle differences. In the home of the hedonistic aristocrat, the modern lifestyle of the husband is equated with vices and immoral behaviour while the wife desperately struggles to maintain her traditional ways to uphold the sanctity of their home. Viewed differently, one can see the man's antics to make his wife drink and dance as attempts to draw her in to the world of gramophone, piano and modern dancing, to include his wife in his life as his companion. But the film upholds the moral superiority of home as a traditional domain. In the home of the gambler, the marital strife arising out of pernicious habits of the husband and volatile nature of the wife is presented as an ironical situation where the husband and wife stray from their traditionally assigned roles of a wise teacher and a goddess incarnate respectively. Even in a nuclear family, the patriarchal codes are upheld in the film narratives undermining modernity.

A certain middle-class domesticity at the cusp of tradition and modernity is thrown into sharp relief in *Benaam*. The housewife maintains the order of the house, assisted by a full-time house help, while the husband is busy at work. The light banter between the couple about who the house belongs to is indicative of the clear separation of spheres. *"Naukri mai karu, paise mai kamau, lekin ghar uska."* (I am the one who works and earns money but she says

it's her house) and *"Ghar ko mai sambhalu, bachhe mai janu, lekin ghar uska."* (I take care of the house and bear children, but of course the house is his).

The film also juxtaposes their ordinary domesticity in their apartment with the grand bungalow of husband's boss where office parties are held with gay abandon. The good housewife is modern enough to participate in such socializing if only to support the husband in his efforts for career advancement, but is not too modern to drink or dance, which is seen as praiseworthy by the boss. Moral judgements are passed on unmarried women who freely drink and dance with married men. The new woman as a modern subject has a complex personality beyond stereotypes as is visible in films featuring acts of exercising agency by the housewives in shaping their own destinies. In both *Anubhav* and *Grihapravesh*, the wives take charge of their domestic situation and recover their marriages by reclaiming their home. An ambivalent portrayal of modernity with pick and choose attitude is the hallmark of Hindi cinema and it manifests in the domestic realm in many complex ways.

5.10 Coda

In Hindi cinema, apartments as dwelling type communicate not just the status of its inhabitants as modern middle-class, white-collar families but also to visually characterise a contemporary setting for stories that tell tales of specific individuals and not necessarily an overarching social type. The filmic house thus is neither a timeless entity nor is it divorced from its urban context. This provides a setting which is less stereotypical and more real and even ordinary because of it. In that sense, the filmic apartment's architectural space is most akin to what Wollen (2002) has termed as 'character'. Within this characterization, there is a potential for the unfolding of all manner of narratives that the filmmaker may want to experiment with and perform its role as per the demands of the story. Despite this, we find that very few films are centralised on apartment dwelling and we can identify a few possible reasons for this.

Most apartment films in Hindi cinema deal with issues relating to a nuclear family -- essentially those of a married couple. This has not been a favoured subject in Hindi cinema where audiences seem to prefer films dealing with romantic love that eventually lead to a union and not the ones that begin with a man and a woman already married. The 'marriage

films' (films that deal with issues of married life)[52] set in the context of apartment living are perhaps too close to the everyday realities of the urban middle-class audiences and may offer, in part, an explanation for why very few Hindi films feature domestic settings in apartments. In the evolving history of domestic settings in Hindi cinema, the visualities of depiction may have changed but a preference for joint families has persisted, reappearing even with a greater zeal in the neo-traditional social milieu of films around the millennium. This valorisation of the joint family settles the choice of the domestic setting in favour of a bungalow or a mansion. The scarcity of 'marriage films' and 'apartment films' make any survey and deeper analysis eminently valuable as we have found in this chapter.

Another reason we discern from our analysis of this typology is that the apartment architecture is the most ordinary and the least dramatic which may limit the scope of articulation of mise-en-scene, especially in comparison with the other two types discussed in this study. This may dissuade the filmmakers who may also want to sidestep the added issue of difficulty of filming in necessarily smaller spaces of the apartment settings. That is why we find that, when deployed, filmmakers have specifically sought to dramatize the looming presence of apartment block in their films. This explains why the paradigm of verticality finds a greater favour in film narratives than the sociality of a (relatively low-rise) housing society in the context of apartment living. Tall apartment blocks looming large in the filmic space, captured with self-conscious camerawork evoke both awe and foreboding in the mind of the viewers.

In some of the films we have analysed, the narrative space in cinema has captured the effect of extreme high-rise living, its diminishing sociality resulting in alienation and isolation in the lived life. Filmic representations of gated, high-rise apartment blocks signify a disconnect with the ground and the messy reality of the city at the ground level, capturing the processes of rising gentrification, especially in the erstwhile mill lands and inner-city areas of Bombay. Despite the façade of security, things often go wrong in such domestic spaces and the filmic narratives often capture this side of apartment living for dramatic effect. At the same time, this also points to the alienating effect of modernist blocks and the precariousness of modern urban dwelling.

[52] See Jeanine Basinger, *I Do And I Don't: A History of Marriage in the Movies*, Vintage Books, New York, 2014. The author introduces the theme of 'marriage movies' to discuss the depiction of married life in Hollywood films.

Chapter 6
Conclusions

6.0 Summary

Through this dissertation, we set out to study the 'Filmic House' in Hindi cinema from the standpoint its architectural space. Architectural space articulated by filmic specificities was considered as lived space, participating in the filmic narrative and communicating meanings of domesticity. The Filmic House was defined by combining multiple ways of thinking about home/house – architectural, filmic, social and cultural. For its analysis, an interpretive model was devised based upon the architectural theory of lived space as existential space, theorised by Christian Norberg-Schulz. In order to examine the filmic house, we formulated a typological approach. A filmography was generated for each typology by adopting specific criteria for film selection: films that centralized domestic space with an integral narrative and performative role in the film and films that communicated explicit and implicit meanings of domesticity through their representation.

In a chapter each, the thesis discussed a dominant urban architectural typology – the bungalow, the chawl and the apartment block by way of their filmic representations.
A broad discussion of the typology's representation in Hindi cinema was presented, using examples from a wide range of films. Selected films were then analyzed using the 'Model of Filmic Dwelling', including, in greater detail, one key film for each building type. The filmic house in each film was foregrounded by the analysis of its architectural mise-en-scene, external appearance, internal organization, use of things or props, extension into the public realm etc. and their narrative implications in the films.

The lived space of the several filmic houses was seen to be participating in the narrative in various ways. Mobilising cinematic and architectural perspectives of home in a popular

cultural medium such as Hindi cinema yielded several inferences for each house typology as a social space charged with meanings, and each chapter has consolidated them in the form a set of readings.

In this chapter, we summarise the readings and insights of the previous chapters in order to draw out an overall rich picture, make comparisons and present general conclusions on the subject of filmic house in Hindi cinema in consonance with the objectives and research questions set out earlier.

6.1 The House-Films: A Rich Picture of the Filmic House in Hindi Cinema

We have defined the Filmic House as domestic space rendered in a film. It is a narrative space which provides fictional, synoptic, condensed or heightened experiences of the space. We find a rich picture of the Filmic House emerging out of such representations of domestic architecture in Hindi cinema. The Filmic House as a cinematic experience brings private life into public space. It puts the quotidian and the familiar under a spotlight, making interesting what may otherwise be dismissed as ordinary and therefore unworthy of attention. Its close examination reveals nuanced meanings regarding the nature of home as social space.

One of the objectives of this dissertation was to create a filmography of post-independent Hindi films that centralized the filmic house in its narrative, and one that was integral to the narrative. In the act of creating such a pool of films, and a discourse around them, we are now able to posit a category called **'House-Films'** – films in which houses are principal characters that are identifiable, classifiable, and potentially a rich resource for cultural studies. The specific lens of analysis was architectural space in cinema, and therefore the manner of classification adopted was that of architectural house types. There are other ways of classifying too – one could adopt an auteur-based or a genre-based approach or look into social categories such as joint family house or nuclear couple house. Our approach has allowed for the creation of a rich picture of representation of domestic space in Hindi cinema across generic forms and filmmaking styles, from the mainstream to the neo-realist.

A longlist of around forty films was generated, representing three dominant urban house types – the Bungalow/ Stand Alone House, the Chawl, and the Apartment Block. Using these

films, a general discourse emerges on the representation of the house types and the various ways they have been deployed in filmic narratives.
We find that in the manner of such representation, there is a fair deal of correspondence with the architectural forms of the individual house type and its variations in the real world, particularly in Bombay where the Hindi film industry is based and derives many of its stories from, and has been a default city for most of its cinema history. It is not the task of the films to represent the real world; cinematic imaginations can and do present fictional worlds or deal with the real worlds in creatively imagined ways. Having said that, one can say based on the close reading of architectural mise-en-scene in these films that the development of house types and their architectural forms in the real world have had an influence on this cinematic imagination. We find that filmic bungalows are imagined on a relatively abstract level (they are often timeless, symbolic, metaphorical and even allegorical) as compared to filmic chawls or apartments which are closer to their real-world existence. As such, these films can be seen as archives of lived space, having a good potential for enriching architectural histories of residential spaces (in Bombay and in India), particularly in understanding the ways in which lives are shaped within them.

In each category of building types, five or six films were analyzed in depth, focusing on the architectural mise-en-scene of the house. This has provided insights about the films themselves and the typologies represented. In popular imagination, as also in the eyes of critics, the mention of a house in Hindi films evokes an image of a stand-alone house, likely a bungalow or a mansion, and the tropes associated with such houses. Our study shows that there is a great deal of diversity of house forms and variants within the house type when it comes to choosing a specific residential space as per the demand of the narrative.

The Filmic Bungalow as a single-family, stand-alone dwelling is represented in diverse architectural forms, as traditional bungalows, colonial bungalows, vernacular cottages or modern bungalows. These bungalows are seen across physical scales and social class and are, more often than not, abodes of joint families where they become sites of enacting family dramas. Here, we observe changing socio-cultural values expressed through the material form of the houses. Domains like living rooms, dining rooms or internal chowks are spaces where family relations are forged and familial codes enforced, while sub-domains like bedrooms act as spaces for individual expression. Spaces such as roof terraces are often seen by individuals as liberating compared to stifling spaces like courtyards. Architectural elements such as

staircases are deployed as dynamic spaces as well as locations for dramatic denouement. Conflicts within bungalows arise based on the pressures of patriarchy as well as the need for privacy and individual growth which are the result of collective family dwelling.

The chawl and the apartment block, on the other hand, are multi-unit, multi-family, collective forms of urban dwelling, as such their filmic representation is seen at two levels – the first, akin to a neighborhood when taken as a whole and the second, as tenement/*kholis* or apartments when observed as individual units. Their filmic representations offer a telling comparison between the two modes of lived space and how these are deployed in narratives.

The Filmic Chawl is usually observed to house working class or lower middle-class characters. This building type is represented through various constructional technologies (like their counterparts in the city) such as *lakdi* chawl, cement chawl or masonry chawl with articulated facades, each one having material signification regarding its own state of repair and communicating subtle meanings about the status of the inhabitants. Variation in their internal layouts, such as chawls facing inwards into a chowk or outwards onto the street has a narrative import in the manner of how the collective dwelling functions – whether it is perceived as an internal world, wary of winds of change or whether it creates a dynamic relationship with the outside world in a productive way. The interior space of the filmic *kholi* is often presented as the result of its internal adaptations, given the constricted space or the manner in which the inhabitants negotiate their need for privacy and personal space. The concept of interior structuring of space as a network of domains and sub domains assumes a different meaning of multi-functionality.

Filmic Apartments are usually shown as dwellings of modern, cosmopolitan, middle-class, white-collar nuclear families. The filmic representations follow the real-world trajectory of the development of this typology closely – this is seen in the evolution of apartment's internal organization as well as the apartment block's increasing verticalization. We trace these changes over the decades, where the apartment type transforms from being sites of mass housing to the more collegial spaces of co-operative housing societies to the isolated existence that is the result of smaller and smaller apartments in taller and taller buildings. Filmic apartments have chronicled all these types in the few films that centralize such residential spaces.

Common spaces in the chawl such as galleries and staircases are dynamic movement spaces active with life. The very limited space inside individual tenements invariably means that so much of life spills over into these common spaces of movement, requiring tacit understandings among the chawl dwellers to share them to live together without conflict. We observe that the chawl becomes an intermediate level of space for the chawl dwellers where collective living blurs boundaries between private and public or inside and outside. In case of the apartment block, the collective layer of spaces operates in different ways than in a chawl. Apartment living is, in contrast, premised on conventions of privacy behind main doors unlike the open-door customary in a chawl. The common spaces of movement such as staircases and floor lobbies in an apartment block are spaces of guarded collegiality, as long as the scale of the block is in tune with human scale. In extreme high-rises we observe that these spaces almost entirely lose their sociality and remain mundane spaces of utility.

The layering of private, semi-public and public space differs considerably in chawls and apartment blocks, both forms of collective urban living display a quality of learned behavior among the dwellers arising out of the architectural organization of the blocks. In the films we analyzed, we observed all these distinct spatial and architectural attributes in the filmic house, which are exploited by the film makers to drive their stories or to introduce major plot points.

The primary function of the choice of house type (and particular variants of it) by a filmmaker is seen to be centered on class identity – the identities are communicated through material signification, contrasts of scale, style of décor and the objects within. While class identity and the issue of class difference has been a major concern in Hindi cinema from very early on due the influence of the progressives steeped in Marxist ideology, this cinema has mostly stayed away from addressing caste in a direct manner. Indirectly, one can observe it even if it is conflated with class. This has a repercussion on the filmic house, particularly in the way the servants are located within a house organization. The upstairs/downstairs syndrome[53] is visible in quite a few bungalow films and in some films, irony is brought in by

[53] Upstairs/downstairs syndrome refers to the practice of British aristocracy living in large manor houses to strictly follow class distinctions between the masters and servants who would work in the areas generally placed below ground. Such classist distinction persisted in modern architectural terminology of 'served' and 'servant' spaces – where spaces such as kitchen, wash areas and sanitation spaces are said to be serving the main living areas. In Indian society, this must be viewed as a caste issue, as the servants belong to lower castes, traditionally kept away in separate quarters.

swapping these locations. Again, this becomes complicated in apartment films where a question arises of where to place the servants and is never satisfactorily answered.

Seen together, the films we have examined present a changing sense of living, especially when seen as changes within a typology. Thus, in traversing Hindi films from the fifties to the present, we also traverse modes of lived experience through these filmic houses which have transformed and in turn transform the lives of the inhabitants. This is a particularly compelling observation in the case of the apartment typology, which has seen the most evolution over the past half century, both in the real world and in its representation on cinema. This relatively modern form of living results in negotiating with the increasing isolation from the neighbors. This isolation is, on occasion, taken to extremes in the house-films, but these very exaggerations are useful readings for both sociological researchers into urban living as well as the designers who create these forms of architecture.

In the evolving history of domestic settings in Hindi cinema, visual depictions and architectural mise-en-scene have changed keeping with the aesthetic preferences of their times but the preference for telling stories about joint families has persisted, even with greater zeal in the neo-traditional social milieu within a neo-liberal economic environment. The valorization of joint family system in Hindi cinema has remained an enduring trait and explains the choice of the domestic setting in favor of a bungalow or a mansion with abundance of space, making it the most ubiquitous house type. But when a joint family is set in a one room chawl tenement, the issue of lack of space really comes to the fore. Here, the strains of living together are seen exacerbated to the fullest, creating a behavioral sink in a very constricted space. A level of comfort in such habitation is possible but based on a textured understanding of interior space, which is often multifunctional, and the result of negotiations and compromises between its inhabitants. On the other hand, the ‘marriage films’ (films that deal with issues of married life) set in the context of apartment living are perhaps too close to the everyday realities of the urban middle-class audiences and may offer in part an explanation for why very few Hindi films feature the domestic setting of apartments; but those that do feature them portray the quotidian everyday domesticity in a filmic house.

The creation of a rich picture of domestic architecture in Hindi cinema has enabled us to generate not only a repository of films but a rich set of readings on the role of architectural

space of the house in their narrative schemes. While cinema may deploy easily recognizable tropes, the diversity of this rich picture shows their creative adaptation to different narrative forms and exploitation of their spatial attributes for narrative effects, confirming for us that the filmic house is not a mere backdrop but participates in the narrative itself in very specific ways. We can therefore conclude that the depiction of the filmic house in Hindi films is not stereotypical or unidimensional but diverse and layered.

6.2 Lived Space of Filmic House and its Performative Roles

In populating the filmography, we identified 'House-Films' that establish clear relationships with architectural space and domestic space, particularly dealing with the lived experience in terms of privacy, territoriality, intimacy, the relation with the public realm, inside and outside, home and the street, the city and the world. We can state that these films present the Filmic House in ways that transcend their presence as mere backdrops in front of which the characters lead their lives, but have performative functions integral to the narrative.

'The Model of Filmic Dwelling' adapted from Norberg-Schulz's schema of lived space as existential space was used as a broad framework to analyse and interpret the films. In this framework, the 'filmic house' remained at the core of the analysis, the objects or props within the house/settings assumed the level of 'the thing'. Together these constitute what Norberg-Schulz termed 'private dwelling', which brings us inside and represents the need for 'being situated'. The model recognised the public realm as an extension of the private world, forming social relations of 'public dwelling' represented by the level of 'urban geography'.

The analysis helped to create a discourse about lived space in films centered around the house and generated several readings regarding the lived space and its participation in the narrative at various levels. The essential findings regarding the performative role of the filmic house in Hindi cinema using the model of filmic dwelling can be summarized as follows:

6.2.1 Private Dwelling

6.2.11 The House

The filmic house performs several roles in the film narrative. They become, from film to film, spaces of quotidian urban living or spaces for the enactment of spectacle; spaces that are

expansive or ones that are claustrophobic; spaces for the development of the individual self or spaces of confinement or even entrapment; spaces for forging family relationships or spaces of discord and acrimony; healing spaces or those that inflict violence on its inhabitants; familiar spaces of comfort and retreat or spaces hiding malevolent aspects within the outwardly familiar.

For example, in the bungalow films, the houses variously raise the issue of relationship with dwellers such as travellers, trustees or owners, and in the process bestow differing meanings on the houses themselves (*Musafir, Dil Daulat Duniya*). A disorderly house is a cause for falling apart of a bickering family (*Bawarchi*). The houses are presented as spectacles and function to dazzle the viewers and elevate the tragic (*Devdas*) or participate in the uncanny and trap the victims (*Kaun?*). The house may serve as a space of confinement and suppression of individual desires (*Sara Akash*) or become a cause of existential angst and in its transformation a site of wish fulfilment (*Teen Bahuraniyan*).

In the chawl films we see representation and enactment of its social architecture (*Katha, Piya ka Ghar*). It functions as the concrete space of 'inside' in a dialectic between insider and outsider (*Katha*), The space of the kholi opening up intrusion and voyeurism, becoming an oppressor, a carrier of unsavoury associations, tormenting the housewife (*Dastak*), while in its claustrophobic nature becoming a cause of severe spatial anxiety for a rural bride (*Piya ka Ghar*). It doubles up as a space for sex work, breaking down the binary of housewife/ tawaif (*Kali Salwar*) or becomes a spatial link between two very different individuals (*Dhobighat*).

We observe the apartment films passing through several performative phases – from being presented as a metaphor for national integration (*Teen Batti Char Rasta*) or for a big bad city to reinforce city/village binary (*Jagte Raho*), it soon comes to express the ordinariness of middle-class urban living (*Mili, Benaam*). Being an ever-present character in films that centralise apartment living, it defines and shapes the character arcs in the film becoming a means for exploring collegiality and exercising agency (*Mili*). Apartment block, even though ordinary, acts as an antagonist at times and encapsulates haunting, danger or entrapment (*Bhoot, Benaam, Pihu, Trapped*).

We find a few observable attitudes towards the representation of house in Hindi cinema and in each one the house performs various functions. The house-films discussed and analysed exhibit a combination of these attitudes in varying degrees.

The Filmic House as a backdrop for domestic action:

At the most primary level, the filmic house is a container of domestic action or family life. Its architecture performs its basic function of communicating the status of the characters in the story and contributing the visual style of the film. It should be noted that other elements of mise-en-scene such as costumes also play a role in this, communicating in a more direct way. Architectural space of the house, unless overtly dramatic, does so in a contemplative manner. This can be generalized over all the films in which a domestic situation is depicted. This is also a default situation for architectural space to accommodate the lived experience.

The Filmic House as Narrative Space:

Here, the relationship between the architectural space and its inhabitants is more nuanced, affected and textural, where the full potential of lived space is specifically mobilized in the film. The filmic space becomes integral to the narrative— assisting or hindering the life of the inhabitants. A truly performative space in a filmic house may even shape the lives of its inhabitants. Here, architectural space, its domains and the elements within perform or communicate to their desired potential, as the spaces themselves are narrativized. Such spaces communicate meanings in relation to the characters, their existential situations, habitat and notions of domesticity in specific socio-cultural contexts.

Thus, the filmic house gets dramatized, it becomes performative, and participates in the narrative alongside other characters. The filmic spaces connote meanings about the inhabitants, their interpersonal relationships and their existential state. In these films, the filmic space has a clear bearing on the narrative and plays an integral role in the narrative of the film.

The Filmic House as Concept House:

While being a backdrop for domestic action as well as a narrative space, the house is also a conceptual space for representation of notions related to family, society or even the nation state. The filmic house in such cases can be read as a metaphor, a symbol or an allegory, to represent values or concepts other than itself. This is particularly evident in representations of the filmic bungalow when joint families inhabit them. These narratives are allegorized depicting the concerns and anxieties of a traditional society coming to grips with modernity. making the house a metaphor for nation.

6.2.12 The Thing

Things, objects or props function at the smallest level in the mise-en-scene of the filmic house, and aid in characterizing its inner space. At the level of 'the Thing', the objects present several attitudes in the manner of their usage and are seen to perform in many ways.

Things in the mise-en-scene:

In a quotidian sense, objects within the filmic house serve to signify the location and status, often the economic class of the inhabitants or their lifestyle, anchoring them into their current existential state. For instance, the mise-en-scene of chawl films are completely different from the bungalow or apartment films. The cluttered aspect of the spaces in chawls invokes a lived quality quite different from the upper-class orderliness (where nothing is ever out of place) of a bungalow or clinical sparseness of an apartment. Living room furniture in differing styles and sophistication or the presence of gadgets in the kitchen convey affluence and modernity while iron cots, charpoys or primus stoves convey modesty of means. Even absence of things is highlighted in some films and desire to acquire them become vital plot points.

Things as personalised markers:

The other way of using the things in these films is pragmatic, where the objects are used as details, personalised markers of the characters to endow them with certain personalities even if executed in a cursory fashion some time. Specific objects such as a telescope, a painter's easel, a carom board, or a treasure chest that characters in a film engage with help in defining them as individuals, providing nuanced information about the character's development arc in a film.

Things with heightened focus – narrative and symbolic functions:

On many occasions, things are singled out for specific attention by way of filming techniques. Such heightened focus communicates in a concise and synoptic way narrative or symbolic meanings. Framed family photographs or portraits of saints on the walls either convey back story, memories of migration or certain old-world values or even irony. Unusual objects like sign boards are also used drive across narrative meanings. Oversize bed, ringing telephone, kitchen knife, birdcage, wall clocks, objects leftover by previous occupants, and many other such objects carry narrative charge – conveying fear, horror, memory, dreams, or

psychological states. At times, ordinary domestic objects function as disorienting elements or used for unintended tasks in narratives that invoke unhomely.

6.2.2 Public Dwelling

6.2.21 Urban Geography as a context for the filmic house

The category of 'urban geography' has been defined as an integrative level of public dwelling to establish the outward context for the filmic house. Its relevance is the relationship of the Filmic House within its larger urban context, to see how the film constructs urban space to situate the house and extends the narrative space of the filmic house.

We observe that in most house-films, the narrative space is largely interiorized, its outward context, in the realm of the urban or its placement in the city is distinctly underplayed. The house itself is a material or typological entity, when depicted from the outside. While an establishing shot should expectedly allow for contextualization within an urban space, this happens only in few films, least of all in the bungalow films. The characters' negotiation with the physical space outside the house (street, neighborhood, commute to work) is largely absent in these films. In many cases, their interaction with the city as a social space is minimal. The level of urban that indicates their urban existence is more often only invoked and not physically represented in the bungalow films. In chawl and apartment films, urban geography is more delineated, there is a greater interaction with the urban space and some of them, it extends the narrative space. The house-films provide a nuanced perception/ perspective of the urban space – when viewed in relation with the architectural space of the house. Also throws a different light on the binary of home and the world.

Many films carry underlying stories of migration to the city, especially of female characters. Leaving behind one's 'original home' and finding or making a new one in the city with its strangeness and attractions is visible in the house-films. The relationship of the Filmic House with the level of the Urban shows the following attitudes:

The urban as an invoked space:

In most house-films that focus on the inner domain of the house, the city is not a lived space but an invoked one. The urban location is alluded to by cursory (or expository) dialogue or by

way of establishing shots using a montage of images of the city's landmarks, akin to a sight-seeing experience for the viewers. Characters may inhabit other institutions in the city, like a workplace (even that may be an invoked space) but rarely the public spaces of the city. In such scenarios, the urban space does not feature in the narrative scheme. In other cases, the city is invoked through references to the housing situation or to the corruption in real estate business in a metropolis like Bombay. These references could be indirect or visual (images of construction sites) or sometime having direct bearing on the narrative. Search for an affordable home or desire to move to a better habitation, and poignancy of its impossibility is openly or tacitly invoked in films.

The urban space as a narrative extension of the house:

This refers to the house-films in which the city forms a productive context to the house, locates it in time and place and functions as a space of negotiation in the daily lives of its inhabitants, its public spaces and institutions are tangible spaces bodily inhabited by the characters. While these depictions are infrequent, when they are observed they provide another existential anchor for the characters in the film, connecting the private dwelling with the public dwelling through the medium of the lived experience in a productive way, adding texture to the narrative space.

The urban as a space of freedom/escape:

In many films, another mode of productive extension to the urban space is through the great outdoors, public spaces and transport or the hustle and bustle of a city providing the characters escape from stifling or oppressive indoors of their house. The anonymity of the urban space ('being alone in a crowd') affords privacy and freedom for self-expression often denied within the house, especially in a household dominated by patriarchal codes. In such cases, the relationship of house/city as safe/perilous or private/public is inverted.

The urban as a hostile/ corrupting/ alienating presence:

This refers to the films in which the urban space forms a context to the house but in a counterproductive manner, where the surrounding neighborhood may turn out to be hostile or the attractions of the city, the outer world may be considered as corrupting the purity or sanctity of the inner world. In films where class struggle is paramount, the urban space is presented as a playground for the corrupt rich while the underclass is left to deal with its

messy realities. The other manner of depiction of the urban space is through the use of panoramic views of the city from dwellings high up in the sky where the characters often gaze at the city in a vacant manner without dwelling in it. Such depictions connote the removal from the realities of the street level and resulting alienation and isolation.

6.2.3 The Placeness of Filmic House

To appreciate how the filmic house and its lived space can be understood as existential space it must be described as a simultaneous totality where the levels interact in a complex and dynamic way, describing and impacting the existential situations of the inhabitants.

Norberg-Schulz considers the morphology of a house as that of a 'place' (or centre, or a system of centres) which contains an interior structure of dwelling with 'domains' and basic directions of vertical and horizontal as 'paths'. It also consists of its exterior mass and like a figure on a ground, has varying relation to the 'outside'. Such a theory of space acknoeledges human presence and that there is a context to it, both inward and outward.

The analysis of films in previous chapters has revealed the significance of domains and paths playing out differently for each of the house type under consideration. For example, the staircase as a prominent path, providing a vertical axis to the house evokes different emotions because of its differing character and narrative action. It assumes different meanings when a heiress makes a solo dramatic descent into a vast living room of a bungalow, from a rural bride negotiating an unfamiliar experience of a vertical ascent on dingy but crowded staircase in a chawl, to a fragile figure of a lonely housewife on a frighteningly bare and barren concrete staircase in a tall high-rise (because the elevator is out of order). Similarly, a figure of a woman at a window, gazing out through a grille, can signify wistful yearning for freedom, or an excited desire to connect with a patch of sky, or sometime a present a different perspective of the outside world through her active gaze.

According to Norberg-Schulz, the placeness of the house is determined by the character vested in space by way of bodily movement and action. That is to say the house could be understood as 'place' when its 'space' is charged with the 'character' of lived space. It occupies a central position in defining man's relation with his environment – both outward and inward. Norberg-Schulz states, "The more man is 'at home', the more precisely he can define his environment." (1971, p.31). The discourse on the filmic house has shown that these definitions are rarely precise, they are more like 'works in progress'. For instance, we have

seen in these films, the dwellers living in less than perfect situations that call for adaptation or they move into houses which present several challenges, some outright threatening to their very being and then having to overcome them. They have to learn to share space, to cohabit with other family members and unruly or sometime hostile neighbours. They have to learn to defend their homes or stake claim to their rightful place within it. There is also seen a quest for home, a roof over their head, to find love or self-identity, a place to call their own, one they would be proud to call their home.

The physical/material space of the house in its imperfections is sometimes articulated by the characters themselves – dissatisfactions, fears, dreams or desires – always impacting their existential situations. In the filmic narratives the striving and struggles of dwellers is for 'placeness', for being at home, for overcoming the constraints or precariousness of urban existence. Every effort is an act of placemaking, of finding their location in the world.

6.3 Hindi Cinema's Modes of Framing Space of the Filmic House

The analysis of Filmic House allows specific insights into domestic space, but being steeped in the tradition of the Hindi film, the manner in which this is represented can be best understood though the film form specific to Hindi cinema.

6.3.1 Tableaux, Juxtaposition, Movement

In Hindi cinema, we observe that a very common means of conveying melodrama is the framing of space that captures the mise-en-scene in medium shot with the characters arrayed full frontally in front of a signifying backdrop. Examination of the filmic space shows us that the 'tableaux' as a framing device is seen best in the context of the living room. The living room or the family domain within the house receives the most attention. Particularly in the filmic bungalow, we observe the tableaux as a spectacle, especially in song sequences, where the vast interior of the living room allows for dance movements (especially dances in groups) to take place without restriction.

There is often a mismatch and discontinuity between the exterior appearance of the architecture and the interior arrangement of the enclosure. This may point to several limitations of filmmaking – expediency, lasse faire or budget constraints. However, when

viewed by the evidence of filmic space alone, one can surmise an attitude towards space making that uses the idea of 'juxtaposition' rather than 'continuity'. The house is therefore a generic theatre of a domestic drama, to tell stories of domesticity rather than being a specific entity. The lack of continuity is often ignored, where the main concern is the invocation of higher order concepts (such as family values, unity or harmony) through the juxtaposition of spaces, lending an abstract quality to the house.

The presentation of architectural space is often decontextualized, with the inhabitants occupying it in a perpetual present. This does lead to a lack of a point of view in the film, where the camera has a neutral stance.

In some films though, we see an attempt to challenge this form. This is done by the carefully created movement sequence, using a mobile camera (often by following a character) and a montage of edits, establishing a certain continuity through a combination of shots including close-ups that allow for a fuller exposition of the architectural space. This is where the Filmic House is appreciated as a kinaesthetic space, where architectural space is in conformity with the lived experience. The movement sequence goes beyond the role of establishing shots and creates a social milieu of the house for the audience to get embedded in. There is also visible stylised and self-conscious camerawork in some recent films that draws specific attention to space and its architectonics.

This characterisation is not absolute but graded. As we move from bungalow to chawl to apartment block, the space of the house tends to become less iconic and more kinaesthetic.

6.3.2 Song Sequences in filmic house

We have already mentioned the presentation of the song sequence as tableaux. However, in many house-films, we find certain song sequences have an extended role, more than an unrelated interruption in the film narrative that a cinephiliac may derive pleasure from. In such films, the song sequences featured in the interior of the houses function as expository to the lived experience. Our analysis shows many examples of such creative use of the song sequences to establish the existential situation of the characters within the domestic setting. While the narrative slows down for the duration of the song, the song also gives us a lingering look at the interior space allowing the private dwelling to be foregrounded in the mise-en-scene. Thus, we can say that as a very characteristic feature of Indian cinema, the

song sequences are not merely extraneous attractions but deployed as creative interruptions (as lyrics as well mise-en-scene) to communicate certain aspects of the filmic house.

6.3.3 Absent Spaces

The peculiar formalism of the Hindi film, the episodic nature of its presentation of space makes it focus on some spaces more than others. There is an uneven and hierarchical concentration in the filmic interior, where the common areas are largely relied upon to drive the narrative while the individual spaces or sub-domains are used to develop narrative sub-plots or give texture to the characters.

The exposition of the rituals of daily life that provide texture to a domestic setting is largely expended with, the rhythms of daily life are mostly missing giving rise to a peculiar presentation of the house as a timeless entity always existing in the present zone. For instance, in all the films surveyed, very few show the characters waking up in the house, rather they are shown already awake. Even rituals of eating meals central in any family life when shown are presented in iconic manner – a tableau. A greater lived experience is evoked when the films do invoke some of these things making the narrative space a fuller entity.

For example, we find that there is an absence of television sets in the mise-en-scene of the filmic house well beyond the time of introduction of this medium in Indian urban homes. A significant aspect of the social life in chawls and apartment blocks in the seventies and eighties was collective viewing of television. The films of that era strangely sidestep this detail. The television set does make its appearance in more recent films but its underplaying continues in most of them.

There are some spaces barely shown in the house-films. Toilets and the activities of ablution are rarely depicted. As such, these spaces as interior spaces are left unexplored. At the other extreme, the bath tub, as an object in the bathroom is very much an aspirational trope and is occasionally seen for its allusions to affluent high living. The occasional scene showing a female inhabitant luxuriating in a bath tub covered in soap suds is a filmic fantasy, part of the larger film going experience.

6.4 Filmic House and the Discourse on Domesticity

A study of representation of domestic realm in Hindi cinema and its lived space gives us a better understanding of home/house as a social space. Narrativized spaces in films communicate explicit and implicit meanings of domesticity and socio-cultural notions of home in varied forms and modes of urban living.

The analysis of filmic house indicates that the binaries of inner/outer, private/public or safe/perilous usually associated with the home vis-à-vis the world are not always clear-cut, the distinctions are fluid and at times the relationships are inverted. The filmic bungalow is the most interiorised house type, yet within it are observed public zones of common dwelling of a joint family. The concept of inside/outside and private/public assumes a fluid shape in filmic chawls due to the physical structure and organisation of the working-class chawls in which so much of private life spills out in the semi-public spaces of common movement. Home as a private space and the ideas of personal space are very tenuous in chawl living. In contrast to chawl living, the notions of privacy in apartment living are more guarded and differentiating between publicness and what goes on behind the closed door where entry is regulated with viewing lens and door-bells. Within the apartment too, there is a progression of privacy from living room to the bedroom. In all three categories of house types the socialities of common dwelling are observed albeit playing out differently. Privacy and its attainment in varying spatial contexts of the house types is also a learnt behaviour that involves negotiations with others.

It is accepted wisdom that boundaries between the home and the world are intended to secure the inner domain as a peaceful refuge and elements such as thresholds, doors and windows are there to regulate these boundaries as desired by the inhabitants. The filmic narratives highlight fractures in this accepted wisdom about domestic spaces. We see rigid barriers that may trap the inhabitants inside, physically as well psychologically. Behind closed doors, the inner world is often seen to stifle self-expression or contain discord and danger. The protective metal bars on windows or balcony grilles connotes imprisonment too. On occasion, no amount of building defences will hold the barriers, making the home space vulnerable to intrusion. The home/house as a contested space in cinema challenges many accepted notions of domesticity as a benign construct. Filmic narratives have captured these fractures or

contestations for dramatic effect but at the same time point to the precarious condition of urban dwelling.

The other contested idea regarding benign domesticity is the dichotomy of traditions vis-à-vis modernity. The upholding of traditional values is privileged under the holds of patriarchy, resisting change. In the many films discussed or analyzed in this study, it is observed that Hindi cinema's preference for 'happy ending' resolves the conflicts arising out this dichotomy in favor of the traditional values, maintaining the status quo. We observe that while film form is changing, especially in the post millennial films and so is the filmic house, resolutions in the films are still largely self-similar.

This is despite of modernity being the essential setting of the filmic house. All the films surveyed and analyzed are located in the time and space of the modern era of 20th century post-independence India, and represent modern forms of the urban dwelling. The filmic house, its architectural spaces and its interior arrangements can be seen as one side and the other side is the lived experience. In the house-films, modernity, with its universal values of individual self-fulfillment, the appreciation of a person's privacy and personal space and a liberal and expansive approach to one's place in the larger world is constantly undercut by the pressures of conformism to old-world hierarchies and roles. As we have seen, the status-quoist narratives reinforce illiberal (even feudal) values, and undermines modernity.

This dichotomy is most acutely expressed in the characterization of women (mostly middle-class and educated) who inhabit these filmic spaces. While all around them, contemporary objects and modern amenities proliferate and are freely used, the spaces themselves tend to be embedded with meanings and significations that are at odds with the times, and even the desires of their inhabitants. In the films analyzed, there is an inexorable linkage of women with the domain of the domestic. Women are central characters in most house-films rather than being peripheral as is usually the case with popular narratives in mainstream cinema. Even so, women characters play the roles expected of them in a patriarchal hierarchy of living the *grihasta jeevan* as *sugrihinis* or ideal housewives. While this may be amply obvious in narratives featuring tradional houses, the hold of patriarchal values defining a woman's place is also subtly manifest in modern apartment living. Thus, women are often represented as confined to the inner domain of the house. The main door is the location where

they are shown sending off or welcoming back their husbands, and this becomes a signifier of the limits of their domain. In most part, the urban existence is framed from the man's perspective. The home and the world dichotomy is visible and women's existence is framed in domestic terms even when they are modern subjects living in modern homes. We can definitely see in these films that modern ways of living do not cancel out patriarchy, it only redefines it.

Despite this, the films show the women characters exercising minor and major acts of agency and rebellion with respect to their homes, their own existential situations within it and even resisting patriarchy. They are seen registering their protest, taking charge of bad situations, claim territoriality and assert their rightful place in their homes. At any rate, in many house-films, the women characters do not just neatly fall into stereo-typical categories that most critics of Hindi cinema have led us to believe.

The analysis of Filmic House presents a sharp commentary on our contemporary present as seen through the modes of inhabitation. We find that status-quoist Hindi cinema presents us with a picture of society in flux, inhabiting the present uneasily, with the baggage of the past looming over every aspect of the lived experience.

6.5 The Filmic House: Implications for the practice of filmmaking and architecture

Hindi cinema has been particularly fecund in presenting variations of domestic spaces over the course of nearly seventy years. Through the exploration of the Filmic House, we can see the nation and its citizens evolve. We can chart their progress along and against the grain of modernity, and get a ringside view of Indian society and domesticity at its most granular and textured. Over the course of this research, we realized that the House-Films have been largely under-represented in film and cultural studies. This study has revealed the complex nature of domestic space forged by myriad interconnections of modes of dwelling, not just a benign backdrop for domestic life. It points towards a great deal of potential for being a performative entity as a whole and in parts through its narrativized architectural elements. The filmmakers, set designers and students of films need to be more alive to the narrative possibilities of filmic house and exploit them critically in their craft. In general, the film professionals can gain immensely by being more conscious of the role of architectural space in cinema, which has been the objective of this study.

The appreciation of cinematic representations of domestic spaces is equally relevant for the profession of architects. In general, architects have neither the wherewithal nor the inclination to appreciate their own designed spaces as lived experience. The profession has, since its early days, concentrated on the abstract nature (and manipulation) of space, retaining its materiality and presence at a conceptual level. The planning of a particular architectural design, is twice removed from the idea of occupation— first, as it is conceived as something looked down upon from a height (which is what a plan is), second, most architectural designs are made for users that the architect has no knowledge of and therefore can only imagine in the course of the design as an archetype. The architect/ designer can tend to get obsessive about the physical details and aesthetic harmonies of the intended space rather than figure out how that space will respond when the user moves in.

In a sense then, the realm of the architect and the realm of the user rarely overlap, as usually the architect moves out well before the user moves in. Cinema on the other hand, despite its spatial and temporal compressions, disruptions, exigencies and stylizations allows us to get closer to the 'lived experience'. The Filmic House shows us the ways of the practice of the everyday as seen through the medium of cinema in a manner that architectural drawing cannot. Modernist architectural imaginations consider a house as a utopian domestic space whereas the lived space in cinema makes us aware of its imperfections as both physical and social space. Our analyses of these houses in Hindi cinema have allowed us to span the appreciation of domestic space from architectural space at one end of the spectrum to inhabited private space at the other. It is in the coming together of these two domains that we see the house as both a cultural artifact and a social space.

The filmic house is inevitably shown as occupied. Characters inhabit spaces that pre-exist and have been living within that space or they move into a space already present. The filmic space of inhabitation responds to the needs of the narrative and reflects the existential states of the characters. Architects can do well to appreciate this factor by asking themselves whose story they are attempting to inscribe on the spaces they design. The narratives inevitably emerge only when the users move in. Only with occupation does architectural space become 'Lived Space'. Pallasmaa (2007, p.8) has remarked, 'The act of passing through a door is an authentic architectural experience, not the door itself. Looking through the window is an authentic architectural experience, not the window itself as a visual unit.' It is specifically

through film that we are able to make the transition from the architectonic to the embodied (Penz, 2018).

The representation of domestic architecture in a popular cultural medium such as Hindi cinema gives us a deeper understanding of home where the discourse on dwelling goes beyond architectural design. Through cinematic imaginations and even exaggerations, we become aware of the dichotomy of designed spaces and the lived experience of people inhabiting them. Film analysis in this study points to many such instances, most notably in the tales of high-rise living.

It has been claimed that 'film constitutes the most comprehensive lived in building data in existence.'[54] While this may sound grandiose, it does establish a location of architectural and filmic study that deserves greater attention. We acknowledge that cinema allows us an additional opportunity of making 'post-occupancy surveys'[55] of housing in real life through the representations of architectural spaces seen through the enactments of its use. The Filmic Space is therefore a good depiction of post-occupancy evaluation of architectural space and how it impacts human behavior and is therefore of significant value to architects and designers. Through the creation of a filmography based on house typology, and the appreciation of its evolution as depicted in Hindi cinema over the years, we can say that these films are a useful means to case study the housing scenario in the city not as built but as inhabited, the kind of space whose learnings architects can absorb to create more responsive designs in the future.

6.6 Contributions of the Dissertation

This dissertation brings to forefront a much-neglected subject in Indian film studies and establishes its rightful place as a subject worthy of attention by drawing out its rich picture in Hindi cinema. The study posits a significant category of films in Hindi cinema that can be

[54] François Penz, *Cinematic Aided Design: an everyday life approach to architecture*, New York: Routledge, 2018

[55] A post-occupancy survey is an interview-based methodology carried out after occupants of a particular space come to occupy it. Its objective is to see whether the design has been successful in fulfilling the needs of the users. In architectural practice, the assessment tool of the post-occupancy survey has been around, but this is rarely carried out in the hustle and bustle of projects and deadlines.

termed as ‘House-Films’. Many of these films have receded from public memory and been lost in the obscure folds of cinema history. They however are potentially a rich source of represented domestic architecture and adds to an understanding evolving values of domesticity in Indian society. The study is therefore of interest not only to students of architecture and cinema but also to social researchers and commentators on the cultural processes in our country.

In approaching cinema from the perspective of architectural space, a new, fresh way of looking at Hindi cinema has been discovered. Combining architectural and cinematic modes of domestic space has extended the understanding of the notion of home. Devising a model for film analysis and interpretation -- ‘Model of the Filmic Dwelling’, the study has contributed a useful method of approaching film studies through architecture theory. The model has provided a rounded and comprehensive view of the Filmic House as lived space that brings one inside as well as connects with the outside. This has been the main validation of the model. A limitation of the original theory on which the model is based is acknowledged while applying it to Hindi cinema and as such the devised model is adapted suitably to function as a broad framework, not as a rigid structure, for free-flowing film analysis. With this model as a framework, the study has extended the discourse on domestic space and its socio-cultural implications through cinematic imaginations that have chronicled its lived experience and validates cinema as a relevant and interesting medium for appreciation of architectural space.

6.7 Directions for Future Studies

For Filmic House

This dissertation has shown the worth of the ‘Model of Filmic Dwelling’ as an interdisciplinary tool that can be applied to analyze the filmic house to gain fresher insights into the lived experience. The domestic sphere has been a neglected subject both in architecture and film scholarship. The present work has focussed on formal urban house types. Architectural histories of these house types are also being written only recently. More work is needed here and cinematic depictions must be a part of those histories.

The methodology used in this study could be mobilized to look at the filmic representation of slums or informal housing in Indian cities as it can tell us much about the changing

spatialities over the decades and the manner in which its inhabitants deal with the various challenges of urban living. Films such as *Chakra, Dharavi, Gaman,* or the more recent *Gully Boy* could further populate the subset of House-Films. Although the dynamics of private and public dwelling is likely to differ significantly for informal housing compared to the formal house types taken up in this study.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are large dwellings such as Havelis at the margins of the big cities that have historically been appreciated as forms of architecture but rarely examined as occupied space, especially in the post-independence period. Films such as *Muhafiz, Paheli, Garam Hawa* and *Jalsaghar* are some examples to be looked at afresh using this model to reveal notions and practice of domesticity within them.

The model can be equally gainfully used to study the Filmic House in other language cinemas in India. Satyajit Ray's dealing with the thematics of home space and his treatment of architectural space has been widely commented upon. This leads to a third possibility in which the Filmic House can be analyzed, that of examining the films of an auteur whose films have explored the idea of home/house. Filmmakers such as Hrishikesh Mukherjee and Basu Chatterji have made 'the home' a subject in many of their films and a study of their approach in dealing with domestic space is worthy of a study.

For architecture and cinema

This thesis has focussed on filmic space and its performative functions. There is also a need to construct a history of set design in Hindi cinema and Indian cinema in general. The interiors of many houses featured as film settings could be systematically studied as documentation of changing fashions and tastes in interior décor and furnishings over the time.

As a personal after-note, I might add that the appreciation of the representation of architectural space in cinema can be of particular benefit to the student of architecture and design. As a longtime architect and teacher of architecture, I can testify that the architectural curriculum as it stands is largely bereft of the appreciation of the lived experience and is overly loaded in favor of abstract conceptions and representations. Introducing the House-Films appropriately into the classrooms can be beneficial in sensitizing the architects and designers of the future by focusing on this important dimension of their discipline.

Appendix-I

Brief Synopses of Films Surveyed

Shri 420 (Mr. Fraudster)

(Dir: Raj Kapoor, 1955)

Raj, a graduate, arrives in Bombay from a faraway village in search of work. The first thing he has to do after reaching the metropolis is to pawn his gold medal, that was awarded to him for his honesty, for a sum of Rs.50- which gets immediately stolen. This is his initiation into the city. He finds shelter in Ganga Mai's slum and a job in a laundry. He befriends, and then falls in love with Vidya, a poor school teacher. Maya, a socialite, one of the laundry customers, recognizes his skill at cards and lures him to the city club with the intention of making money. Here Raj meets corrupt capitalist Seth Sonachand Dharmanand and his business associates. As the Seth's agent, he gets drawn deeper and deeper inside the murky world of con and cheating in business, including selling a dream to the poor people of the slum of owning a house for a hundred rupees. The film reaches a resolution when a repentant Raj exposes the criminal activities of the Seth and his associates.

Jagte Raho (Be Vigilant)

(Dir: A. Mitra, S. Mitra, 1956)

An unnamed villager migrating to the city enters a large apartment complex in search for water. The watchman mistakes him for a thief and raises an alarm, waking up the sleeping residents and a chase ensues. The villager runs for his life, confused at first and seeks refuge within the labyrinthine spaces of the vast apartment block. The inhabitants who have now formed themselves into smaller mobs seek him flat by flat, while he keeps shifting his location to evade them. In this way he becomes aware of many social evils that go on behind the close doors of the flats, from the mistreatment of women to criminal activities. When in

the end he manages to leave the building, he finds the mobs have dispersed. He is still thirsty and finds water at a nearby temple.

Teen Bahuraniyaan (Three Daughters-in-law)

(Dir: S.S. Vasan and S. Balasubramaniam, 1968)

A joint family living in a traditional bungalow in the city is ruled over with an iron fist by a strict disciplinarian former schoolmaster. He is a widower who lives with his three sons, their wives and children and keeps a vigil on their coming and goings and their expenditures. Their quiet life gets shaken when a popular film actress comes to live in a neighbouring house. They get acquainted and invite the actress over for tea. The wives become anxious about the state of their house. This leads to a flurry of activity to transform the house, with each family unit trying to outdo the other in terms of borrowing and spending to acquire the most material of commodities and interior decorations. This leads to strife between the family members and the patriarch who is witness to this. As the consequences of the needless consumption makes its presence felt, the patriarch takes it upon himself to resolve matters and the family members, especially the daughters in law come to realize the folly of their ways and resume living within their means.

Dastak (Knock)

(Dir: Rajinder Singh Bedi, 1970)

A newly-wed couple, Salma and Hamid migrate to Bombay and find rented accommodation in a masonry chawl in a seedier part of the city. What they are unaware of is that the tenement was previously the home of a famous ‘tawaif’/ courtesan whose home was frequented by admirers and customers. Soon there are knocks on the door of former customers wanting the same experience. Matters are not helped by the fact that Salma is herself a fine singer. The tenement is also shaped in a way that the windows are overseen by tenements in neighbouring buildings and there is the constant presence of voyeuristic onlookers into her tenement. These unwanted gaze and the knocks keep her constantly on edge in her own home, even as Hamid is out for large parts of the day at work. This leads to friction between the couple. There is the constant aspiration to leave to a better place but that is not possible given their circumstances. The story is resolved when both come to accept their situation in the chawl itself, determined to fight rather than succumb and make a life of it.

Anubhav (Experience)

(Dir: Basu Bhattacharya, 1971)

Meeta and Amar are a couple residing in Bombay's then tallest high-rise apartment building for several years. They are upper middle class and have every need served by a retinue of servants. They have no children and the busy hours that Amar keeps as an editor of a national daily hardly gives them time together. One day Meeta, tired and bored, dismisses all her servants (except one) and takes matters into her own hands to run the household. This brings several changes in her life. She is also confused when Amar hires her former lover Shashi as an employee and spends a lot of time working with him. Meeta has to overcome this new situation and exercises agency over her home and husband to a happy reconciliation.

Bawarchi (The Cook)

(Dir: Hrishikesh Mukherjee, 1972)

In a traditional bungalow in Bombay, a joint family presided over by a retired postmaster lives in constant acrimony. Each of the postmaster's sons have their own rooms and families bicker with each other, specifically over the presence or absence of servants. In this family an orphaned relative is both accepted and exploited as part of the family. Out of nowhere, a cook comes to the household and offers his services. Impressed by his skills, the entire family takes to him, and through the course of time he works on each member to bring them together and embrace the virtues of hard work and sharing.

Dil Daulat Duniya (The Heart, Wealth and the World)

(Dir: Prem Narayan Arora, 1972)

An elderly homeless man Udharchand Shikarpuri finds an innovative solution to his homelessness by surreptitiously occupying a vast modern bungalow in Bombay on the sly when its inhabitants are away for six months of the year. This particular year, he allows two other homeless youths to move in with him. Soon their families and other similar persons move in. Udharchand establishes them in various bedrooms and runs the household like a patriarch, and all the other members fall in line. It is a good life until the real owner of the bungalow himself joins the merry band as a manservant and his estranged wife as a cook. This leads to a comedy of various errors. When the six months are over, Udharchand leaves oblivious to the knowledge that his deception has been made known to all. The story also includes various asides into the corruption of the real estate market.

Piya Ka Ghar (Home of the Beloved)

(Dir: Basu Chatterjee, 1972)

Ram and Malati have an arranged marriage brokered by a matchmaking priest, who goes to her native village to make the connection. After the marriage ceremony in the village, she arrives in the big city of Bombay where she realizes that her husband's joint family live all together in a small tenement in a Bombay chawl. The family consists of aging parents and three sons, one of whom already is married. Their tiny kholi is frequently visited by their chawl friends for various social activities. The chawl tenement is partitioned with makeshift panels to segregate the married couple for privacy. While the parents sleep in the living room, Ram and Malati are relegated to the kitchen for their own private space. Life in the kholi also follows the chawl culture where the doors are always open and neighbors come and go casually. All this causes a lot of stress in the young bride who comes from a large village house and has now to contend with a lack of personal space and privacy. The story follows her travails to get used to her new space and to come to terms with her circumstances and develop affection for her husband and her extended family.

Mili (Mili)

(Dir: Hrishikesh Mukherjee, 1975)

Mili is the story of a precocious and enthusiastic young woman who lives with her father and an aunt in an apartment block. She is full of joie de vivre and chooses to spread happiness everywhere. The film shows apartment living as a cooperative and collegial activity, where the many inhabitants come and go to each other's flats without inhibition. The alcoholic and depressed son of a very rich family takes residence in an upper floor flat and come into frequent contact, and conflict with Mili and several other inhabitants. Mili, through her cheerful temperament changes him, makes him give up drinking and brings him out of his depression and eventually falls in love with him. Just as they are planning a happy life together it is found that Mili is suffering from a terminal illness and does not have long to live.

Grihapravesh (Housewarming)

(Dir: Basu Bhattacharya, 1979)

Manasi and Amar are a married couple who live in a modest rental apartment which has seen better days. Her days are spent in cooking, household chores and seeing to the needs of her husband and her eight year old son. They have dreamt of buying a much better house but

can't find one within their means. The idea of saving money to buy their own home takes possession of Manasi who spares no efforts in thrift. She chases the dream of an ideal house while letting the existing house, and her own physical state slide into a state of neglect. The onset of such ennui in marital life is the rife condition for Amar falling in love with a younger woman at his workplace, setting off a crisis in the film. When Amar tells manasi that he is going to bring the young woman home to meet his wife, Manasi undertakes a radical transformation, both of herself and of the house, all a single day. Manasi accomplishes this by handing over the house to a contractor and submitting her own self to experts at a beauty salon. The wife and house merge as one and re-emerge triumphant as the man and his paramour are confronted with an orderly domesticity presided over by a confident wife.

Katha (Story)

(Dir: Sai Paranjpye, 1982)

Katha, loosely based on the fable of the Hare and the Tortoise, is set in a chawl in Bombay. The film shows how different families within this tightly knit urban community live with all their foibles and aspirations. The central story is that of a meek clerk Rajaram who lives in the chawl and is silently in love with his neighbour Sandhya. His efforts are punctuated by the arrival of his boisterous college friend Bashu, who moves in with him, ostensibly for a short while. With his sweet toungue and smooth ways he quickly endears himself to all the chawl inhabitants, including winning the heart of Sandhya. He takes advantage of everyone's trust but when exposure is imminent, he exits the scene. The resolution involves all the inhabitants of the chawl, and while the swift footed 'hare' Bashu, an outsider, runs away, the slow and steady Rajaram, the trusted insider, salvages the situation by marrying Sandhya.

Kaun? (Who?)

(Dir: Ram Gopal Varma, 1999)

An unnamed young woman lives alone in a modern two storied bungalow in a suburb of Bombay. She sees the news about a serial killer on the loose on her television. Suddenly, the doorbell rings and a man who claims he has been called to that address asks to be let in. She is instantly suspicious and refuses entry. He relentlessly badgers her speaking to her through doors and windows and presents all sorts of reasons to be let in, which she keeps deflecting, even making the story that her husband is sleeping upstairs. The man tells her that he has heard someone upstairs. She lets him in and asks him to investigate. Yet another man enters the house with a gun claiming to be a police inspector. The woman then sets one man against

the other and in a set of devious turns kills them both. It turns out that it is the woman herself is the killer and the attic is filled with the corpses of former victims who might have wandered into the trap.

Kali Salwar (Black Leggings)

(Dir: Farida Mehta, 2002)

The film is based on a short story by Sadat Hasan Manto. The film follows the trials of Sultana, a prostitute and her partner/pimp who come to the city in search of work and finds rented accommodation in a tenement of a timber chawl in the erstwhile mill lands of Bombay. The film swaps the location of the original story to Bombay's milllands of its contemporary times and weaves in a number of characters from Manto's other stories. Sultana makes friend with an elder prostitute, with whom she wanders the streets and learns about the city. Here, she encounters various other denizens of the chawl and the city and soon is immersed in the hard living that the underclass of the city have to go through. Mired in poverty, she turns all her attention and desire in acquiring a black garment for the ritual observance of Muharram.

Devdas (Devdas)

(Dir: Sanjay Leela Bhansali, 2002)

Devdas (2000) is another remake of the famous Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay novella. The story of the film is centered on a trio of characters and rooted in the mansions of the wealthy feudal families. Devdas and Paro are childhood sweethearts, even as Paro's father is an employee in Devdas' family household. Devdas returns from England after an education, and his family rejects any possibility of Paro and Devdas being united due to the class difference. Paro is married off into a family even wealthier than that of Devdas. Devdas goes into decline and alcoholism, and seeks solace at the brothel of Chandramukhi who begins to care for him. He in turn is still obsessed with Paro, and in declining health and inebriation seeks to get a glimpse of her one last time. When Paro come to know that Devdas is lying at her door step she rushes to see him, but is thwarted by members of her family. Devdas dies a lonely death at her door. The narrative of this tragedy is set in the most lavish of houses, where residential spaces are spaces of spectacle.

Bhoot (Ghost)

(Dir: Ram Gopal Varma, 2003)

A young couple Vishal and Swati rent a flat in a tall high rise in a Mumbai suburb. The couple are made aware that the previous resident had committed suicide by jumping off the terrace of that very flat. This news affects the lonely and impressionable Swati who has to stay at home while her husband goes to work. The modern building's layout leads to an anonymous living where privacy is paramount and doors are always closed. In this isolated state Swati is haunted by the specter of the previous resident who seeks revenge for her own death. The building's watchman is mysteriously murdered and a police inspector comes to investigate. Swati's paranoia and strange behavior concerns Vishal who is at first skeptical and tries to alleviate her condition by consulting a doctor. This does not help, so an exorcist is called in who manages to find the entire story behind her behavior and exorcises the ghost who has by now sought the revenge by impaling the culprit.

Dhobhi Ghat: Mumbai Diaries (Laundry Bay: Bombay Diaries)

(Dir: Kiran Rao, 2010)

This film is a cross-cutting narrative between four characters, but not all in the same time and place. We are concerned with two characters who successively rent a tenement in a chawl in the inner city areas of Bombay. Arun is an artist 'slumming it' in the chawl seeking to find his muse in his changed surroundings. After he moves in he finds a number of discarded objects left behind by a previous occupant, amongst which are a few video tapes. Intrigued, he plays them to discover Yasmin, who lived in the same kholi before him. She came to Bombay as a new bride and recorded her new surroundings and her life as a video diary for her brother back in the village. Arun finds a life lived quite differently from his own although in the same tenement. Over a period of time he becomes aware of her abandonment by her husband and sees the last entry of the video diary which is a makeshift suicide note.

Trapped

(Dir: Vikramaditya Motwane, 2016)

Shaurya, an employee in a travel agency faces a deadline for finding a house from his girlfriend, and searches for a place with affordable rent. A tout offers him reasonable rates and shows him a partly furnished flat for rent on the 35th floor of a high rise in Bombay and he moves in the same evening. The next day, by mistake, he locks himself in with the keys on the other side of the door. There is no way he can get the door to open. He discovers that he is

inside a flat without food, water or electricity and his cellphone has run out of battery charge. He is trapped and all his efforts over the next few days are to try and communicate with the outside world, at which he is unsuccessful. After that point, he is left to fend for himself and to survive, the situation wreaking a great deal of violence on the space and the man inside. Eventually he takes the great risk of climbing down from a balcony (by cutting open a grille) onto the flat five floors below which is open and finds liberation.

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Publications and Paper Presentations by the Candidate

1. Spectacle, Space and the Tragic in the Hindi *Devdas* Films

Paper read in the Annual London Film and Media Conference- June 2013 at the University of London. Published in the conference e-book: *The Pleasures of the Spectacle: The London Film and Media Reader 3*, Drummond, P. (Ed.), 2015, pp. 77-87.
The ISBN for the e-book is 978-0-9573631-5-1.

2. Cinema, Architecture and Domesticity:
The Filmic House in Basu Chatterjee's *'Piya ka Ghar'*

A paper published in *Creative Space Journal,* (A peer reviewed scholarly journal in architecture), ISSN Print: 2321-3895, ISSN Online: 2321-7154)
Dalvi, S. (2019) Cinema, Architecture and Domesticity: The Filmic House in Basu Chatterjee's 'Piya ka Ghar'. *Creative Space*, *7*(1), 57-66. Retrieved from https://cs.chitkara.edu.in/index.php/cs/article/view/162

3. Quest for Home in Bombay: *Some Readings from Hindi Cinema*

A paper presented in National seminar- 'Mumbai: Colonial to Mega City, Structures, Processes and Movements.' March, 2017. Conducted by Dept. of Sociology, Mumbai University, Kalina.

4. Theatres of Domesticity: The Filmic House in Hindi Cinema

A working paper presented at Research Symposium at CEPT University, Ahmedabad. 15-16 February, 2019.
This paper presentation was featured in local newspaper coverage.
https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/homes-seen-through-cinematic-lens/articleshow/68040343.cms

5. Filmic House: Not At Home in Bombay

A Presentation made for *KRVIA Encounters*, at Kamla Raheja Vidyanidhi Instt. of Architecture, Mumbai. September 2017.

6. Domesticity and the Filmic House: Readings from Hindi Cinema

A presentation made at Kala Ghoda Art Festival, Mumbai: Urban Design and Architecture Segment. February, 2018.

7. Designing Class: politics of space in Indian cinema of 1950s

Essay published in *The Indian Quarterly*, A Literary and Cultural Magazine, Vol.2, issue 3, April-June, 2014, pp. 48-55.

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