URBAN ASSEMBLAGE: THE CITY AS ARCHITECTURE, MEDIA, AI AND BIG DATA.

• Paper / Proposal Title:
De-Urbanizing the Screens: A Socio-Semiotic Study on Intermediality in the Hindi Films on Small Town

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• Abstract (300 words):
With the reinvigorated ardour on the ‘focus on the local’ and ‘going desi’, aligned with the current socio-political climate of the nation-state, Hindi film industry has invaded the “two cliché-ridden polarities between the urban and rural” to bring forth a new territorial understanding of spatial realities in the South Asian context through the representation of small towns (Shandilya, 2017; Shoma A Chatterji, 2017). This paper aims to document and closely interrogate that ‘dominant trope’ of ‘chhote shehar’ or small towns through the mediated representation of the space in the recent globalised Hindi cinema (Christian Metz, 1977; Chandler 2002). The interconnection of the various modes of technology and the socio-semiotic communication between characters through varied social media platforms facilitate in the breaking of caste, class and gender barriers amidst the highly gendered structure of a small town. In the vein of Brian Larkin’s argument of ‘media infrastructures’ as an essential part of cinema sensoriums, this paper would particularly
like to focus on the various facets of the ‘intermedial’ influences especially by the social
media in challenging the hegemonic structure of the small town (Larkin, 2013). With the
help of the methodological tool of mise-en-scène in select films like Tanu Weds Manu
(2011), Masaan (2015), Dum Laga ke Haisha (2015), Lipstick Under my Burkha (2017), and
Anaarkali of Aarah (2017), the endeavour would be to critically analyse the ‘images’ to
decipher the negotiation of the individual with the space. In order to unravel the
theoretical underpinning of the emergent preoccupation with small towns and critically
engage with the discursive study of the social space, this paper would delve into
analyzing the ‘non-verbal’ languages, ‘social codes’, rhetoric of the films and how they
transcend beyond the attempt at quotidian meaning making to point out a larger
ideological fervour infused in them (Wollen, 1969).

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Sayanty Chatterjee has completed her graduation in English Literature from Bethune
College, University of Calcutta; M.A. in English from Lady Shri Ram College, University of
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Aysha Iqbal Viswamohan is a professor of film studies, drama and popular culture in the
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She has widely published in film studies and popular culture, including edited volumes like
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