

Music and the Metropolis in Hindi Cinema: Negotiating the Modern City through Songs

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Despite its eight decades of existence, large scale production and an undisputed centrality to popular culture in India, 'Hindi film songs' (HFS) has remained academically understudied area. But even the thin body of scholarly work on HFS leaves the content-the central object of the songs - mostly unexamined. Being an important location of popular culture, this content can be considered as 'versions and visions' of negotiations between various cultural forces. The most dominant theme of such negotiation in India is its project with modernity and an important site of manifestation of this project is the modern metropolis. Therefore, the representation of modern, industrial and secular metropolis in HFS can be constructed as an indicator of the deeper negotiations with modernity in India. Against this backdrop, this paper focuses on the representation of city and its dwellers in the lyrical schemes of HFS since 1950. The paper is based on the purposive sample of 90 songs which takes up 'city', 'city experience' or 'city dwellers' as their main object of description in their lyrical scheme. The paper limits itself only to discursive analysis of the lyrical content of these songs. The analysis is informed by the larger issue of modernity in Indian context and inspired by the concept of Barthesian 'social myth'. The analysis reveals that the representations of modern metropolis in HFS is primarily woven around Mumbai and is structurally linked to the experience of pastoral countryside and migration and converges on three myths which offer three nuanced perspectives on city.

Keywords: Hindi film songs, modernity, city, metropolis, Mumbai, myth

The incorporation of songs in Indian films is an extra ordinary cultural phenomenon. Its significance can be located at multiple levels. Firstly, the inclusion of songs as an integral part of the film narrative is a unique generic feature of Indian films. Secondly, the large scale of production, distribution and consumption of film songs make this category a 'wonder' in popular culture. As Booth (2000, p. 1) describes, Indian film songs form one of the most intensely consumed popular music repertoires on the planet. This intense consumption in myriad ways by a large and culturally heterogeneous population is the third interesting significance of film songs. Evolved and absorbed over the last eighty years, film songs have become what Sen (2006, p.147) calls a sign that helps us to read the meaning of Indian popular culture. While film songs from many Indian languages can claim such position in varying degree, none can match the feat achieved by Hindi film songs. They score far better on many criteria like: quantum of production, reach, diversity, revenue generation, glamour and most importantly, a pan Indian and global popularity.

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Despite this, 'Hindi film songs' has remained an understudied area. Even the growing fields of film theories and cultural studies have only marginally dealt with its cinematic and cultural significance. The thin body of scholarly work about Hindi film songs has focused mostly on assessment of its generic characteristics, style and historical development (Arnold, 1988, 1991; Ranade, 2006), comparative context and technological platforms (Manuel, 1988, 1993), meaning construction and structural changes (Booth, 2000, 2011), production, style, commercial life and reception (Morcom, 2007), transnational journey and reception (Gopal & Moorthy, 2008) and cosmopolitan orientation of musical sounds (Beasters-Jones, 2015)

However, except for the work by Gopal and Moorthy, these studies do not clearly and adequately place Hindi film songs under the critical perspectives of popular culture. Two work, first by Sen (2006) and then by Kaviraj (2010) do examine Hindi film songs squarely under the scanner of cultural studies albeit only as sections of a larger project. The most significant theme that runs through these studies is India's 'project with modernity' and its relationship with various locations of popular culture including the film music. As Sen (2006) notes:

The conditions of modernity ... provide a ground for popular culture; at the same time the popular is the most important means by which the modern comes to be. This is especially true in the case of postcolonial societies like India, whose defining feature is thought to be one of 'incomplete' modernization (p. 9)

For Sen, songs are enabling device which allows Hindi films to express version and vision of modernity in terms of exterior and interior scenarios that would otherwise be unrepresentable (p. 147). Modernity manifests in different values, institutions, practices and spaces. Of which, the utopian concept of 'romantic love' has been the subject of most obsessive engagement of Hindi films and songs. Among the cluster of other concepts it intensely engages with is the idea of city. Although numerically limited, city in Hindi film songs remains an important issue for critical examination because it offers a fertile ground for both the exterior and interior scenarios of modernity to manifest. Kaarsholm's (2010) observation that 'the production and reception of film is a crucial arena for negotiating and asserting control over the parameters of modern urban culture and politics' (p. 1) applies perhaps more to film songs which also have a much longer and potent life outside film narrative. Taken together, these songs, Kaviraj (2010) argues, "advanced... an aesthetic description and elaboration of the experience of the modernity and it its centre, of the taste of city life. They were linked not as a part of a single narrative but of a single aesthetic" (p. 66).

Against this backdrop this paper focuses on the representation of city and its dwellers in the lyrical schemes of songs mostly from 1950 onwards. Although the history of Hindi film songs dates back to 1931, the paper identifies 1950s as the crucial decade not only because it is considered as the golden decade in aesthetic terms but also because it was also the first decade in which film songs achieved high scale of mass distribution and consumption through Radio Ceylon and *Vividh Bharati*- the entertainment service of All India Radio. The decade is important also because it was the period when independent India's search for new goals and identity began to unfold. Assuming Hindi film songs to be both—a reflection and a force-in this process, it would be prudent to keep 1950 as the starting point. The paper is based on the purposive sample of 90 songs drawn from Hindi films since 1950. Only those songs were selected in the samples which place 'city', 'city experience' or 'city dwellers identified as such' as their main object of description in their

lyrical scheme. The paper limits itself to discursive analysis of the lyrical content of these songs and does not attempt analysis of accompanying visuals or music. The analysis is informed by the larger issue of modernity in Indian context and inspired by the concept of Barthesian 'social myth' as conceived in semiotic.

Mumbai as the Default Metropolis

While many cities in India and abroad find mention in Hindi film songs, no one matches the central position Mumbai occupies in the songs and films. This is partially due to the fact that the Hindi film industry itself is located in Mumbai and a large number of the people associated with the film making—including lyricists, musicians and directors, often come from various parts of the country which makes 'coming to Mumbai' an important experience for them. Their personal experiences and negotiations with Mumbai form the 'ether' into which their cinematic expressions regarding city germinate. But besides the story of location of the film industry and relocation of its work force to Mumbai, there is a structural reason for the centrality of Mumbai in the narrative discourse of Hindi cinema. For most Indians, Mumbai offers an environment and experience so unlike other Indian cities which are rooted in their specific cultural history. As Prasad (2010) writes: It is as if any other city, even Delhi, would be too specific, too resistant to the symbolic logic involved in the representational practices of popular cinema. ...Bombay is Bombay plus The City. (p. 86)

This modern, cosmopolitan, a historical character of Mumbai has consistently intrigued Hindi cinema's imagination. This obsession can be judged from a simple fact that there are at least 40 reasonably known films which have Bombay or Mumbai in the title as compared to 18 films having Delhi in title¹. The number of films with *Shahar* (city) or *Gaon* (town or village) in title doesn't go beyond 5 each. An old song from a film *Doli* (Bride's Palanquin, 1947) "Dilli ki gliyon mein jiya nahi lage" reflects the pull of Mumbai over other cities in a lighter manner. Delhi based housewife in this song is bent on going to Mumbai. When her husband tries to dissuade her, she retorts, "*Wahan ijjat bhi hai rupayya bhi; Saigal bhi hai Surayya bhi; Kya karungi mai Delhi main rahake*" (There is respect and also money in Mumbai. There is Saigal and also Suriyya in Mumbai². What will I do sitting here in Delhi?). In a humourous way, the song reveals the deeper pull Mumbai exerts over people. It is not that Delhi or Lucknow is not the subject of description in Hindi film songs. There are at least seven reasonably circulated songs on Delhi and three on Lucknow but the dominant theme in them is either history, past glory or romantic love. International cities like Singapore, Tokyo and Paris also figure in a few songs but they are mostly described as exotic or romantic places (for discussion on constructs of Asia in Hindi films and songs (see Vicente, 2010)). It is therefore, clear that when it comes to critical engagement with life, Mumbai becomes what Prasad (2010, p.86) calls the 'default metropolis' in Hindi cinema and its songs.

Melancholy of Loneliness

One of the strongest lines of critique of the modern metropolis in Hindi film songs emanates from the experience of loneliness and alienation in a crowded place. The loss of identity, lack of social connections, strangeness of the culture and coldness of the social relationships in the city result in the melancholy of loneliness and alienation. "Ae gham e dil kya karu" from *Thokar* (The Blow, 1953) is one of the earliest examples of this critique which sets the broad framework for several songs to follow. A line from the song "Shahar

8

ki raat aur mai naashaad naakaara phiru, zagmagati jaagati sadkonpe aawaara phiru" (Night has befallen on the city and I wander rejected and dejected on the glittering, bustling streets of the city.) encapsulates the register of ideas and visuals that informed many songs including "Hazaar ghar hazaar dar" from *Shahar Aur Sapna* (City and Dream, 1964), "Ek akela is shahar mein" from *Gharonda* (The Nest, 1977), "Seene main jalan" from *Gaman* (Departure, 1979), "So Gayi hai saari manzile" from *Tezaab* (Acid, 1980) and "Bombay Bombay tara rum pum" from *Striker* (2010). Recurring use of words like *Gair* (unrelated or unknown), *Ajanbi* (stranger), *Patthar Dil* (Stone hearted), *Paraya* (Other or Unrelated), *Akela* (Alone), *Tanhaai* (Loneliness), *Juda* (different or disconnected) in these songs indicate the semiotic field which is used to articulate the experience of alienation and loneliness in the city. Interestingly, "Manhattan", a song from *English Vinglish* (2012)- which describes the experience of a middle class traditional Indian housewife as she lands up in New York- uses almost the same vocabulary of *Tanhaai*, *Juda*, *Bejuban* (dumb) as was used in the songs from the 1950s which framed the landing of the provincial male in Mumbai.

It seems therefore, that cutting across decades and demography, Hindi film songs structurally link modern metropolitan experience to a sense of anxiety stemming out of loneliness and cultural alienation. This anxiety however, is not the experience of the culturally or socially marginalized figure. As argued by Kaviraj (2010) and as reflected in the works of poets like B. S. Mardhekar in Marathi or Jibanand Das in Bangla, it is primarily the melancholy for the loss of old cultural capital and identities that the feudal, traditional towns and country side best owed upon the socially, culturally privileged class of the Indian society. In cities, many members of this culturally privileged class began to symbolically restore their sense of geo-cultural belonging by taking a nickname or surname coined after the place they originally hailed from. This was a standard practice among Urdu- and to a lesser extent in Hindi- literary figures as well. Many leading lyricists of Hindi cinema from 1940s to 1970s used to have such nicknames. For example: Sahir Ludhianvi (Ludhiana), Majrooh Sultanpuri (Sultanpur), Hasrat Jaipuri (Jaipur), Shakeel Badayuni (Badayun), Kaifi Azami (Azamgarh)³. In more general way, the lines they wrote for the city songs, reflects the cultural critique of the flattening of identities under the pressure of moral individualism and instrumentality of western modernity by a prominent category of protagonist of Hindi cinema which Kaviraj (2010, p. 70) describes as the 'cultured, middle or lower middle class provincial male'.

This melancholy is usually underlined by the sense of inescapability from the city. 'Once you leave your hometown for the city you can never go back' is a recurring sentiment in these songs. Lines like "Yahan se jayenge kahan, Aman payenge kahan, Ye bebasi ki jindagi, Ye jindagi ki bebasi" (There is nowhere to go from here, There is nowhere to find peace, It's a helpless life, But it is inevitable to carry on) from the song "Hazar ghar haza rdar" articulates this despair in rather pathetic way. In another song "Kisane dikhaya tha bata tuze Bambai ka raasta" (who the hell showed you the road to Mumbai) from the film *Jiyo to Aise Jiyo* (Live Life Like This, 1981) a group of city urchins cautions a newcomer in Mumbai that he would repent on his decision to come to Mumbai so much so that he would never be able to return to his hometown out of shame. Collectively, these songs point to the permanent uprooting from the traditions, severing of social relations and disconnect from the past that the city brings in the life of the migrant. The 'unassuageable call of loneliness' (Scruton, 2012), which modernity imposes through the cities, gets expressed in Hindi film songs along with the aching admission of its inevitability. Modernity becomes place of no return.

City and Class

An equally important line of critique of the city in Hindi film songs emerges from the class consciousness. There is a fault line that seems to divide the cityscape in songs for the rich and poor wherein the addresser of the song is always the latter. One of the earliest examples of such addresser comes from the film *Do Bigha Jameen* (Two Acre Land, 1953). A group of migrant labourers in Kolkata sing this song "Ajab tori duniya o mere Rama" (O lord, the world you created is very weird). Although the song does not explicitly refer to city in its lyrics, the context of the story implies that the 'duniya' (world) that the migrants find weird is the city where morality and religion are up for sell. The rich can easily buy them in auction but poor would find it difficult to survive. In "Chino Arab hamara" from *Phir Subah Hogi* (It Would Dawn Again, 1958) the class based comment acquires a direct political dimension when it sarcastically compares the ideals of Nehruvian socialism with the harsh realities in the life of poor in Bombay.

The class conscious protagonist of this song complains that all the buildings in Bombay have been appropriated by the rich and capitalists and poor like him are left with no choice but to make the footpaths their home. Together these songs established a broad class based framework which informed many city songs like "Tere shaharon se raja" from *Naach Ghar* (Dance Bar, 1959), "Ye to pattharon ka shahar hai" from *Patthron ka Shahar* (Stone Hearted City, 1972) "Shaba shaba Bambai ke bananawale" from *Bharat ki Santan* (Children of India, 1980), "Are dekh li teri Bambai" from *Oh Bewafa* (Oh, Disloyal, 1980), "Ye Bambai hai pyare" from *Anadi Khiladi* (Innocent Proficient, 1986) and "Bam bam bam Bambai" from *Swarg* (Heaven, 1990). In most of these songs, city remains a place of luxury, comfort and unlimited consumption for the rich, and struggle, exploitation and denial for the poor. Drawing on Kaviraj's (2010) and Prasad's (2010) observations about films, it can be said that as we pass through 1950s, the culturally elite, reformist but economically poor addresser of songs finds himself in the increasing company of both the underclass (as in "Shavashava") and the urban middle class (as in "Ekakela."). Almost till 1990s, one of the important dichotomies within which they place the city remains embedded in the concept of class. The trend however, begin to fade off as one enters the era of liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG) from early 1990s wherein the city continues to remain an object of critique but not so much on the older lines of class. It appears that the 'cultural logic of late capitalism' (Jameson, 1991) ushered in by the LPG process in India have blurred the old class based distinctions in songs.

The Gendered City

Besides, articulating contrasting perspectives on the city of Bombay, the iconic song "Yehhai Bombay meri jaan" from C.I.D (1956) also brings out the gender dimension of framing of city. The voice in the song which claims the life in Bombay to be pragmatic and easy is female voice whereas the male voice in the song finds the city to be a deceitful and difficult place. Similarly in the song "Dilli ki galiyon mein" the voice which is attracted to the liberating opportunities of Mumbai is a female voice and the one which wishes to continue with the feudal landscape is the male voice. "Jiye teri Bambai" a song from film *Dekh li Teri Bambai* (Seen your Bombay, 1961) also shows two pickpocket girls from rural background moving confidently in Mumbai celebrating the open access to public spaces which they claim to be so unlike Delhi, Mathura and other cities they had been to. These examples are interesting in the sense that, while the male voices were mostly heard struggling with the city right till the 90s, the female voices—however limited by number- were mostly heard

celebrating the liberating experience and anonymity of the modern metropolis. In his analysis of "Yehhai Bombay meri jaan" Kaviraj (2010) observes:

Literary studies have shown conclusively that in the artistic literary reflection of the colonial world, the voice of ... rational understanding of the external, particularly city world is a male voice.... But women are usually not the carriers of a sly knowledge of the city and its world of power and opportunities. They are never at home in the modern. (p. 71)

Hindi film songs provide contrary evidence. Women in the songs are not just at home in the modern city but also more likely to construct it as an attractive and liberating space which probably the traditional, feudal landscapes deny them.

While women in the films are usually at home in the cities, men are generally not at ease with the girls in and from cities. The city-countryside opposition which Prasad (2010) finds to be a grand theme in the analysis of Hindi films, manifests prominently only along gender line in film songs. City women are rarely described in positive light in Hindi film songs by the addressers from the countryside. In the song "Ek bade baap ki beti" from the film *Bandi* (The Imprisoned, 1957) a group of villagers denigrate the young daughter of a wealthy landlord for her alleged 'promiscuous' behaviour and identify her modern education in the city to be its cause. The addressers of the song "Ye Bombay shahr ka bada naam hai" too criticise the city girls for behaving like men and showing no trace of feminine modesty. The children in the "Shava shava" song lash at the culture of Mumbai which allows women to smoke. Two songs from the nineties- "Shahar ki ladki" from *Rakshak* (The Protector, 1996) and "Bambai ki chhokariyaan" from *Vinashak* (The Destroyer, 1998) describe city girls as stylish flirts who entice innocent men and therefore, should be kept at distance.

But perhaps the most telling example of the gendered framing of city-countryside divide is a song "Nariyan shahar ki nariyan" from *Charanon ki saugandh* (Swear by Your Feet, 1988). The song is a verbal exchange between a group of city girls on a picnic to countryside and local young men. The rural men call these girls flirt, loud mouthed and indecent bunch of women who are a disease from the cities. To this, the city girls sharply retort that the village boys are a bunch of morons who have been left far behind by the rest of the world. They compare the village boys with frogs from small ponds and describe themselves as the waves of ocean. It is one of those rare songs, where the stereotypes of both the genders come out in full blow on the city-countryside divide. In "Paiyya padu shahar ka jadu" from *Bambai Se Aaya Mera Dost* (My Friend Has Come from Mumbai, 2003) only women gets stereotyped along the city- countryside lines. The songs describe the girls from city as stylish, smart, seductive, and the village girls as beautiful, innocent and modest. Even the males from city are also considered by village girls as stylish, seductive but unreliable for relations.

These songs collectively represent city as a place of sexual promiscuity, immodesty, relational manipulation and sometime contrast it with the countryside which is usually characterised as innocent, modest and moral. Though these values get stuck to both i.e. men and women from both the places, they come in sharp focus and gain more weight in case of women. This point to the sense of uneasiness with what Srivastava (2006, p.139) describes as 'women question' in post-colonial context: how to have women in public but also within the grip of watchful, adult masculinity. Most of the lines of disapproval of women in these songs emanate precisely from the uneasiness with women inhabiting the public spaces in cities but often 'defying the masculine grip'. The problem seems less with the women *per se* than the modern cities which allow for such uninhibited presences.

Site of Attraction and Consumption

City as a place or a logic of modernisation has always been present in the narrative schema of Hindi films. Prasad (2010, p. 83) describes this relation of city to cinematic imagination as the external aspect of the concept of city which has two dimensions—city as a site of attraction and city as a logic of urbanization which transforms the countryside into an extension of itself. This according to him, makes ‘going to Bombay’ a significant turn in the plot. Most often, this event of going to or arriving in Mumbai is justified by the first dimension i.e. Bombay as a site of attraction and opportunities. This justification is usually expressed through the narrative instrument of song. One of the most popular example of this practice is the song “*Mera juta hai japani*” from *Shree 420* (Mr 420, 1955). Although the song does not overtly refer to city or its attractions in its lyrics, it visually encapsulates the journey of the lead character (played by Raj Kapoor) from countryside to the Mumbai which he describes as journey to the open road (*‘nikal pade hai khulli sadak par’*). The subtle reference of city in this song as a new open space finds echo in many songs to follow.

A 1972 film *Gaon Hamara Shahar Tumhara* (Village Is Ours, City Yours) opens with a song which expresses this sentiment directly. The male protagonist of the film is shown going to Mumbai while singing “Nai hawamein udane, Dekho ban ka mor chala; Apna gaon sambhalo yaaron, Mai to shahar ki ore chala” (A bird from forest is eager to fly in new open air; Take care of our village, friends I am going to the city). The rustic but street smart character Vijay from *Don* (1978) sings “E hai Bambai nagari ya” in praise of Bombay wherein he describes the city as a land of gold where people from faraway places come to ‘cash the cheque of their luck’. Songs like “Bambai ki kasam” from *Nainsafi* (Injustice, 1989), “Bum Bum Bum Bambai” from *Swarg* (1990), “Aamchi Mumbai” from *Badmash* (Ruffian, 1998), “Ye hai Mumbai” from *Mumbai Matinee* (2003) carry references of Mumbai as the place of opportunities, luck or pleasure. The song “Chhote chhote shaharon se” from *Bunty aur Babli* provides a new dimension to it. The characters who sing the song in the film are from small towns in the hinterland. They find the peace and beauty of their small towns to be unengaging and inadequate for their aspirations and decide to go to Mumbai which, for them, is an ocean of opportunities. The song thus articulates the aspirational pull of the city in the post liberalization context. In a subtle way, the song written by Gulzar—at least in its lyrical scheme—offers an inter textual negation of the sharp criticism of city and a romanticization of countryside in Sahir Ludhianvi’s “Tere shaharon se raja hame ban bhale” (The forest and our countryside are far better than your city) from *Naach Ghar*.

An understated corollary of the pull factor of city is that, those who get most quickly and desperately attracted to the city are usually the socially marginalised people from the countryside. Addressers of many songs from “Dilli ki galiyon mein” from 1947 to “Chhote chhote shaharon se” from 2005 stand testimony for this corollary. These addressers include married woman from feudal family, poor girl, labourer or peasant from village, poor but carefree person, day dreamer, trickster men and women from countryside, cheeky characters, etc. Such addressers describe Mumbai as a ‘large hearted’ city that ‘absorbs and assimilates everyone’ ‘spurns bullying’, ‘feeds the hungry, clothes the poor and uplifts the fallen’ and ‘does not discriminate’. This is quite contrary to the despondency expressed by socio-cultural elite. It is not that the marginalised do not face difficulties and despairs in the city. But the promise of city overweighs the despair and often the character resolves to stay put in the city and fight all odds. For example, the petty pickpocket girl of the song “Bambai ki kasam” swears by Mumbai that she will not leave the city even after death. Such

resolve can also be found in songs like “Kisane tha bataya tuze”, “E hai bambai nagariya”, “Bambai hamari bambai” from *Street Singer* (1966) “Chhota sa aadami hun” from *Chhota Aadami* (Common Man, 1986) etc.

One more notable dimension of the city lies in its consumptive appeal. City becomes a site of consumption, entertainment and romantic engagement. Foreign cities like Singapore, Tokyo and Paris are framed in this way in Hindi film songs. Mumbai too is described on these lines but often with a subtle sense of disapproval or defeat as the addressers of the song find the consumptive possibilities in the city out of their reach.

City Dialectics

Notwithstanding the type of character, city generally gets described in dialectic terms in Hindi film songs. In songs like “Yehhai Bombay Meri jaan” or “Kisane tha bataya” the dialectic comes out in full focus with each addresser taking a view of the city from opposing ends of the polarity. But in songs like “Yehhai Bombay Town” from *Supari* (Contract to Kill, 2003) or “Yehhai Mumbai” from *Mumbai Matinee* (2003) even the singular addresser describes the city in contrasting terms. A recurrent theme which generates contrasting description in these songs is the experience of the city as a material space and emotive space. Lines like ‘one gets everything here but love’, ‘here buildings are tall but people are dwarf’, ‘wealth is everywhere in the city but everyone is restless’, ‘buildings are strong here but relations are not’ in these songs collectively argue that the city may be rich in material terms but impoverished in emotions. City is also contrasted on its appearance and reality. ‘People in city cheat others and call it business’ laments the male addresser in “Yehhai Bombay meri jaan”. Similar sentiments are reflected in lines like ‘Mumbai is a famous city but here every work seems like a fraud’, ‘People talk of loyalty but no one has any allegiance with anyone’ and ‘Here people are fond of fake love’. As explained earlier, a lot of contrast in city space is described on the lines of affluence and poverty. In fewer instances than expected, city itself gets contrasted with the countryside where city is a site of sexual promiscuity, relational manipulation and immodesty and the countryside stands for innocence, modesty and morality. These contradicting appearances of city seem to baffle the migrants as well as locals. That is why, many songs in their lyrical scheme, evoke the semiotic space constituted by words like ‘strange’ ‘surprise’, ‘astonish’ ‘marvel’ (*ajab, gajab, hairaan, hairat, nyaari* etc.) to describe city experiences.

Conclusion: Three Myths of City

This dialectic discourse on city or modern metropolis in Hindi film song broadly converges on two myths. A myth, according to Barthes, is a culture’s way of thinking about something, a way of conceptualizing or understanding it. . . . a chain of related concepts (Barthes, 1973, cited in Fiske, 1990, p. 88). The above analysis demonstrates that the portrayal of city in Hindi film songs is often based on chain of related concepts and therefore, qualify to be treated as a myth. The first and apparently more dominant myth of city in Hindi film songs is constructed by the culturally elite, reformist but economically poor addresser—mostly provincial male—who arrives in the modern city. The city in his view is a place of deception, despair, loneliness and anonymity. It is a space in which modern principles, values, institutions, modes of life, unfold but always in a travestied form (Kaviraj, 2010, p. 76). He feels being let down by the city and its modernity which had attracted him as a member of pre-modern society.

The materiality of city life and instrumentality of its social relations become the subjects of his deep moral criticism. His disapproval of both, sometimes take the form of a leftist critique of the symbols, institutions and practices produced by the early capitalism in Mumbai in the 1950s. But deep down, it seems to relate more to his discomfort with the moral individualism, materialism, progressivism and the new gender politics modernism ushers in. Hindi film songs express this discomfort mostly as irony or melancholy. Interestingly, such songs also admit the inevitability of the modernity and rarely express the desire to retreat to their pre-modern context. "*Shahar ki raat aur mai*", "*Hazar ghar hazar dar*", "*Ek akela is shahar mein*", "*Seene main jalan*" "*Ye Bumbai shahar hadson ka shahar*" from *Haadsaa* (Mishap, 1983) are some significant examples of this myth. The myth comes in its full and somewhat blatant form in "*Tere shaharon se raja*" from *Naach Ghar*. Most of these 20 plus songs use sophisticated Urdu or Hindi lexicon and are written by lyricists like Sahir Ludhianvi, Majaz Lukhnawi, Ali Sardar Jafri, Gulzar, Shahryar who are well known literary figures as well. Thus, on screen, off screen and in lyrical narrative, these songs reflect a view of city from 'above'.

The second myth frames the city in mostly opposite way. The songs subscribing to this myth are usually addressed by the social or culturally marginalised characters generally from the non-urban background. Interestingly, most female voices are found to subscribe this myth. Here, the city is seen to be a liberating and egalitarian space with opportunities of progress and redemption. Anonymity or the lack of identity in city is welcome by these addressers because what they possess back in countryside is a social identity located well down the social hierarchy. They welcome the cosmopolitan nature of the city. As Kaviraj (2010) puts it: city gave them a sense of freedom from restrictive village customs [which] was enjoyed by most characters in the films as a context in which genuine love could be experienced against the deterrents of deprivation and social and cultural taboos (p. 79). The songs do occasionally acknowledge the despairs produced by the city but they are far from being melancholic about them. Such songs employ a non-poetic, everyday vocabulary and imagery to describe city. Among the 10 plus songs which broadly subscribe to this counter myth of city, "*Bumbai hamari Bumbai*" and "*Bumbai ki kasam*" stand out for the unbound love expressed for Mumbai. These songs offer a view of city from below.

From mid 1990s, against the backdrop of terrorism and growing references to underworld in popular discourse, we witness a new version of Mumbai which cannot be accounted under either the dominant or the counter myth. Extending Prasad's (2010) argument about films to songs, it can be said that, these songs inscribe Mumbai 'into the cinematic register of urban life in its own right, coming out of the shadow of the city-country equation' (p. 88). Using 'Bambaiyya' slang⁴, these songs locate 'concreteness of urban existence' not in streets or buildings but straight into the dubious dance bars, betting dens and underworld's hideouts. "*Boriwali mein betting ka adda*" a song from *Hatyaar* (Weapon, 2002) is one such song wherein the city gets described not just with specific names of places but also the activities they are infamous for. These songs offer vivid and almost anti-poetic descriptions of the people and places located on the moral and legal periphery. "*Kasa kay bara hai, I am Mumbhai*" a rap song from a 1998 film *Bombay Boys* narrates a story of Mumbai where '*Bhai*' (don) and his underworld penetrate city deeper than the custodians of law and order. This and similar songs brand Mumbai as 'dangerous' place and expose its underbelly in an unapologetic, 'matter of fact' manner. Although

limited by numbers, these songs collectively build an alternate myth of Mumbai which is so gaudily seen in many gangster movies in 1990s and 2000s. It frames city not as a moral or ideological issue but as a civic and security problem. It is a view of city from under.

The city in Hindi film songs thus remains a deeply ambivalent space. Songs like “Ye hai Bombay Meri Jaan”, “Kisne tha bataya tuze” or “Ye hai Bombay Town” base their narrative structure on this ambivalence itself. While other songs may reflect any one or other myth in varying degrees individually; collectively they point at Hindi film industry's profound sense of uncertainty about the way modern city could or should be framed. This may partly be due to the variety of addressers whom the musical conventions of Hindi film songs have chosen to frame city from time to time. But if city is a modern space and these song are a ‘version and vision’ of the same then, this uncertainty imply that India's project with modernity itself is far more graded, complex and to use Sen's (2006) observation- incomplete. Hindi film songs are just one more expression of the same ambivalence, perhaps the most popular one.

Notes

¹Some examples for films with Bombay or Mumbai in their titles- Holiday in Bombay (1941 & 1963), Bombay Calling (1942), Bombay (1949 & 1995), Kya Yeh Bombay Hai (1959), Bambai Ka Babu (1960 & 1996), Bombay Talkies (1971), Salaam Bombay (1988), Bombay Boys (1998), Mumbai Meri Jaan (2007), Once Upon a Time in Mumbai (2010 & 2013). Examples for Delhi- Nai Delhi (1956), Delhi Ka Thug (1958), Delhi Ka Dada (1961), Delhi 6 (2009) Delhi Belly (2011)

²Kundan Lal Saigal (1904-1947) was a very popular actor-singer of 1930s and 1940s. But more than acting, his became popular for and is still remembered for singing style. His songs in films like Yehudi ki Ladki (1933), Puran Bhagat (1933), Devdas (1935), Street Singer (1938) Tansen (1943) Shahjehan became very popular and established a distinctive style of singing in the early phase of history of Hindi film song. This style became a role model for singers of 40s and 50s. Suraiyya (1929-2004) was a very popular actress-singer of Hindi films from 1940s to early 1960s. She was well known for her beauty, acting skills and melodious voice. Along with Noor Jahan and Shamshad Begum, she was a leading female voice in Hindi films before Lata Mageshkar's popularity began to peak up in the late forties. Her acting and singing in films like Anamol Ghadi (1946), Jeet (1949), Dastaan (1950), Afsar (1950) and Mirza Ghalib (1953) was very well received by audiences.

³Naksh Layalpuri, Firaq and Jafar Gorakhpuri, Kamal Amrohi, Khumar Barabanqui, Shaikh Dehlavi, Arzoo, Majaz & Noor Lakhnawi, Asad & KaifBhopali, Qamar Jalalabadi, Gauhar Kanpuri, Shamim Azambadi, Naza Sholapuri are some more examples of this trend. But this trend is not seen in any significant way after the 70s. Of late, one finds artists in film and media industry with surnames based on family profession. For example: Abbas Tyrewala, Rony Screwvala.

⁴‘Bambaiyya’ literally means ‘of Bombay’. Bambaiyya slang is a style of Hindi spoken in otherwise Marathi dominated city of Mumbai. It is spoken particularly by the lower class dwellers of the city whose mother tongue is not Hindi. Bambaiya Hindi –sometime also called as Tapani Hindi- is a combination of word, derivatives and syntax drawn from Marathi, Gujrathi, English and Tamil. It also has its own special vocabulary- Tapani being one from that set. Bambaiya Hindi is often associated with characters belonging to lower class people in Mumbai, petty criminals or gangsters, rebels, carefree youth or lower rank police personnel. (For more discussion on the same see (Trivedi, 2006))

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Songs reffered

Following list of songs includes the relevant information in the sequence given below:
Title or the first line of the song: from Name of the Film (Year of release of the film, Director' name) Lyric by (Lyr.-); Music by (Mus.-); Sung by (Sng.-)
Aamchi Mumbai: from Badmash (1998, Dir.- Gautam Pawar) Lyr.- Satish; Mus.- Shyam Surrender; Sng.- Bali Brahmabhat
Ae gham e dil kya karu: from Thokar (1953, Dir.- Lekhraj Bhakri) Lyr.- Majaz Lakhnawi; Mus.- Sardar Malik; Sng.- Talat Mehmood
Ajab tori duniya o mere rama: from Do Bigha Zamin (1953, Dir.- Bimal Roy) Lyr.- Shailendra; Mus.- Salil Chaudhury; Sng- Mohammed Rafi
Are dekh li teri Bambai: from Oh Bewafa (1980, Saawan Kumar Tak) Lyr.- Saawan Kumar; Mus.- Vedpal Verma; Sng- Kishore Kumar

- Bam bam bam Bambai: from Swarg (1990, Dir.- David Dhawan) Lyr.- Sameer; Mus.- Anand Milin; Sng.- Amit Kumar
- Bambai hamari Bambai: from Street Singer (1966, Dir.- Chandrashekhar) Lyr.- Hasrat Jaipuri; Mus.- Shankar Jaikishan; Sng.- Mohammed Rafi
- Bambai ki chhokariyaan: from Vinashak (1998, Dir.-Ravi Dewan) Lyr.- Deepak Chaudhary; Mus.- Viju Shah; Sng.- Vinod Rathod
- Bambai ki kasam: from Nainsafi (1989, Dir.- Mehul Kumar) Lyr.- Anjaan; Mus.- Bhappi Lahiri; Sng.- Alisha Chinai
- Bombay Bombay tara rum pum: from Striker (2010, Dir.- Chandan Arora) Lyr.- Prashant Ingole; Mus.- Amit Trivedi; Sng.- Siddharth
- Boriwali main betting ka adda: from Hatyaar (2002, Dir.- Mahesh Manjrekar) Lyr.- Anand Raj Andand; Mus.- Anand Raj Anand; Sng.- Sudesh Bhosale, Vinod Rathod & Nitin Raikwar
- Chhotasa aadami hun: from Chhota Aadami (1986, Dir.- Krishnakant) Lyr.- Jainendra Jain; Mus.- Mahesh Naresh; Sng.- Kishore Kumar
- Chhote chhote shaharon se: from Bunt aur Babli (2005, Dir.- Shaad Ali) Lyr.- Gulzar; Mus.- Shankar Ehsan Loy; Sng.- Sunidhi Chauhan & Udit Narayan
- Chino Arab Hamara: from Phir Subah Hogi (1958, Dir.- Ramesh Saigal) Lyr.- Sahir Ludhianvi; Mus.- Khaiyyam; Sng.- Mukesh
- Dilli ki galiyon mein jiya nahi lage: from Doli (1947, Dir.- S. K. Ojha) Lyr.- Nazim Panitpati; Mus.- Ghulam Mohammad; Sng.- Zoharabai Ambalewali & G. M. Durrani
- E hai Bambai nagariya: from Don (1978, Dir.- Chandra Barot) Lyr.- Anjaan; Mus.- Kalyanji Anandji; Sng.- Kishore Kumar
- Ek akela es shahar main: from Gharonda (1977, Dir.- Bhimsain Khurana) Lyr.- Gulzar; Mus.- Jaidev; Sng.- Bhupinder Singh
- Ek bade baap ki beti: from Bandi (1957, Dir.- Satyen Bose) Lyr.- Rajendra Krishnan; Mus.- Hemant Kumar; Sng.- Manna Dey & Chorus
- Hazar ghar hazar dar: from Sahar Aur Sapana (1963, Dir.- Khwaja Ahmad Abbas) Lyr.- Ali Sardar Jafri; Mus.- J. P. Kaushik; Sng.- Manmohan Krishna
- Jiye teri Bambai: from Dekh Li Teri Bambai (1961, Dir.- Kailash Bhandari) Lyr.- Aziz Kashmiri; Mus.- Vinod; Sng.- Balbir & Sudha Malhotra
- Kasa kay bara hai: from Bombay Boys (1998, Dir.- Kaizad Gustad) Lyr.- Kiran Kotrial; Mus.- Ashutosh Pathak & Dhruv Ghanekar; Sng.- Javed Jaffrey
- Kisne dikhaya tha bata: from Jiyo to Aise Jiyo (1981, Dir.- Kanak Mishra) Lyr.- Naksh Loyalpuri; Mus.- Ram Laxman; Sng.- Jayant Kulkarni & Bhupinder Singh
- Manhattan Manhattan: from English Vinglish (2012, Dir.- Gauri Shinde) Lyr.- Swanand Kirkire; Mus.- Amit Trivedi; Sng.- Bianca Gomes & Clinton Cerejo
- Mera juta hai Japni: from Shree 420 (1955, Dir.- Raj Kapoor) Lyr.- Shailendra; Mus.- Shankar Jaikisan; Sng.- Mukesh
- Nariyaan shahar ki nariyaan: from Charanon ki Saugandh (1988, Dir.- K. Bapaiah) Lyr.- Anand Bakshi; Mus.- Laxmikant Pyarelal; Sng.- Alka Yagnik, Kishore Kumar
- Nayi hawa mein udne dekho: from Gaon Hamara Shahar Tumhara (1972, Dir.- Naresh Kumar) Lyr.- Rajendra Krishna; Mus.- Laxmikant Pyarelal; Sng.- Mohammed Rafi
- Paiyya padu shahar ka jadu: from Bambai Se Aaya Mera Dost (2003, Dir.- Apoorva Lakhiya) Lyr.- Sameer; Mus.- Anu Malik; Sng.- Alka Yagnik & Sonu Nigam
- Seene main jalan: from Gaman (1977, Dir.- Muzaffar Ali) Lyr.- Shaharyar; Mus.- Jaidev, Sng.- Suresh Wadkar
- Shaba shaba bambai ke bananewale: from Bharat ki Santan (1980, Dir.- NA) Lyr.- Verma Malik; Mus.- Sonik Omi; Sng.- Asha Bhoshale & Usha Mangeshkar
- Shahar ki ladki: from Rakshak (1996, Dir.- Ashok Honda) Lyr.- Deepak Chaudhary; Mus.- Anand Milind; Sng.- Abhijeet
- So gayee hai saree manzile: from Tezaab (1988, Dir.- N. Chandra) Lyr.- Javed Akhtar; Mus.- Laxmikant Pyarelal; Sng.- Nitin Mukesh
- Tere shaharon se raja: from Naach Ghar (1959, Dir.- R. S. Tara) Lyr.- Sahir Ludhianvi; Mus.- Dutta Naik; Sng.- Lata Mangeshkar & Mohammed Rafi

Ye Bambai hai pyaare: from Anadi Khiladi (1986, Dir.-NA) Lyr- Abhilash; Mus.- Ram Laxman; Sng.- Udit Narayan, Ashok Khosala & Vinod Sehgal
Ye Bambai shahar hadson ka shahar: from Hadsaa (1983, Dir.- Akbar Khan) Lyr.- M. G. Hashmat; Mus.- Kalyanji Anandji; Sng.- Amit Kumar
Ye hai Bombay meri jaan: from C.I.D. (1956, Dir.- Raj Khosla) Lyr.- Majrooh Sultanpuri; Mus.- O. P. Nayyar; Sng.- Mohammed Rafi & Geeta Dutt
Ye hai Mumbai: from Mumbai Matinee (2003, Dir.- Anant Balani) Lyr.- Milap Zaveri; Mus.- Farhad Wadia; Sng.- Sonu Nigam
Ye to pattharon ka shahar hai: from Pattharon ka Shahar (1972, Dir.-NA) Lyr.- Irshaad; Mus.- Usha Khanna; Sng.- Mohammed Rafi
Ye hai Bombay town: from Supari (2003, Dir.- Padam Kumar) Lyr.- Javed Akhtar; Mus.- Sandesh Shandilya; Sng- K.K.

(All songs were accessed in mp3 format primarily from www.youtube.com. The lyrics were accessed from www.hindigeetmala.net and www.lyricmint.com)

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