<u>REVIEW ARTICLE</u>

Uncanny and Dystopian City: An Analysis of *Siva*[1]

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With rapid urbanisation and people's migration from rural to urban areas in search of work, education and other opportunities, urban conglomerations in India are rapidly growing. A city is marked by diversity, modernity, high-rise buildings, modern infrastructure and consumerism. Popular culture is one of the many resources for understanding the cityscape. The city is not just about physical and material spaces but also includes the lived experiences, interactions, contestations, exclusions and power relationships. Many urban geographers opine that cinema reflects and represents these issues as well as the discourses about the city. There is little or no research on the Cinematic City of Hyderabad. This article analyses the movie *Siva*, which captured the essence of the city of Hyderabad. The discussion maps out its urban spaces by using semiotic and discourse analysis, and addresses the different themes that the discourse reveals. In sum, *Siva* captures the anxiety, violence and evolution of a dystopian city and provides insights to the potential fate of similar urban conglomerations.
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Introduction

Films are set in space, imaginative or real, and then re-presented to the audience in what Stephen Heath terms in his seminal essay, 'narrative space' (Heath 1993). Cinema can also be an archive of the city (Mazumdar 2007), 'a tool to read the cityscape' (Unni 2011), and for cinematic discourse (AlSayyad 2006). To understand the city of Hyderabad, the movie *Siva*, which was released in 1989 and directed by Ram Gopal Varma, is analysed. *Siva* is one of the first Telugu movies that used the city (of Hyderabad) as a character of the story and represented the *uncanny* city (Mazumdar 2007); one of the characteristics of a city and its modernity which is discussed in later sections.

The focus of the Telugu movie industry (which is called 'Tollywood') from its beginning was on rural people and their culture. Movies about urban spaces and residents were very rare and the city location was always Chennai. The city of Hyderabad was virtually non-existent in the cinematic imaginations of the Tollywood industry. It was only after the formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1956 and with government encouragement and subsidies that the Telugu movie industry moved from Chennai to Hyderabad, as did its narratives (Srinivas 2013). It was the movie *Siva* which first captured the city of Hyderabad like no other film had ever done, with on location shoots, without the use of sets (except in songs), and with the use of the spatiality[2] of urbanscapes.

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[1] I would like to thank the anonymous readers for *Urbanities* for their suggestions and criticism, and especially Prof. Jerome Krase for his editorial assistance.
[2] Anthony Giddens (1984) used the word spatiality and later many scholars defined and redefined the term. Spatiality is defined as how the spaces are structured by architecture in public spaces and private spaces, informal and formal use and segregation of spaces, and so on. It informs the power relations of different people and discourses set in that space.

Siva became a hit beyond the imaginations of its director and producer[3]. The movie set a precedent for future Telugu movies with the use of a steady cam, and sound design which had never been used before as effectively. Since then, the importance of using a place as a backdrop to a narrative structure has changed; that is, the narrative has spatial aspects linking the stories to the locale. Many directors after Ram Gopal Varma say their movies were influenced by his movies and especially *Siva*. Directors Puri Jagganath, TriVrikram and Krishna Vamsi are some of the directors who made movies that follow the trends set by Varma. This movie brought Hyderabad's contestations[4] into focus in order to understand and analyse the negotiations and lived experiences of the city. The markers of the city do not just rest on its physical reality, but also in its stories, everyday discourse, art, symbols and imagery (Unni 2011) as well as being constructed by images and representations (Lapsley 1997: 187; Fitzmaurice 2001). To understand the city to its fullest, the representations of the city offer to unravel the *hidden secrets, and notion of the uncanny of the city* (Mazumdar 2007: 40). S.V. Srinivas, on the depiction of Hyderabad in movies and especially *Siva,* says:

> The city's geography and Telangana region's dialect became a noticeable presence
> in Telugu cinema as recently as the late 1980s with Siva (Ramgopal Varma 1989).
> In this film, for the first time in popular Telugu cinema, the local specificity of the
> city was foregrounded, the action being set in narrow by lanes of city's bastis and
> Irani tea shops, against the backdrop of the odd historical monument (2013).

Ram Gopal Varma introduced new filmmaking and narrating techniques in his debut movie, *Siva*. Ram Gopal Varma said in an interview that he will never make a family movie or movies like those that Karan Johar directs (Vasudevan 2000). His movies are a departure from earlier movies that were produced in the Telugu film industry. The narratives of homes and family have moved out into the streets of the city. The narratives are now in the public sphere but at the same time remain individualistic and personal. This is a clear departure from social movies and 'message oriented' movies.
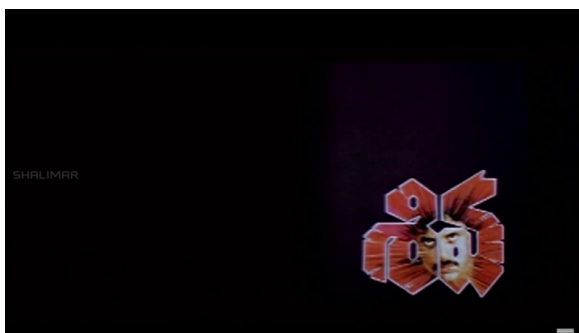

Figure 1. *Title Card of Siva* — Source: YouTube

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[3] Surendra Yarlagadda and Annapurna Studios are the producers of the movie.
[4] Contestations are the negotiations, struggles and compromises for power, access to space, production of meanings of space, everyday living, and so on. Hyderabad's contestations were cultural, political and economic assertions and claims to the city — between the local and immigrants, the Telangana and Andhra people, and the Hindu, Muslim and other minorities.

Siva is the story of a college student who is new to the city. He witnesses the violence and exploitation of some students by fellow students who are active in college politics. The students who win the elections with the backing of local goons and politician do as they please, — disturb classes, harass women, and bully other students, canteen workers and teachers. In return for this support, these students help the goons in their rioting and other illegal activities. The student President is JD, who has the support of local gangster Bhavani (played by Raghuvaran) in collaboration with the politician Machiraju (played by Kota Srinivas Rao). Siva stands up to the intrusions of these outside rowdy people in student politics and runs for the post of president in the student elections. But when one of his close friends is killed and other friends are hurt in an attack by the local goons, he realises that the system that produces such criminals has to be rooted out, as the law is also in the hands of the politician. He says that 'if one JD or Bhavani goes, some other comes in their place'. He quits college, leaves his family as they come under jeopardy, and dedicates himself to wiping out the forces producing such people. In the process, his friends become his supporters and they instruct the local shop owners, merchants and union workers of various factories to stop paying 'mamool' (an illegal fine or tax) to Bhavani and his associates. Bhavani's empire starts to crumble apart as Siva hits his main income sources, and takes down important persons in the gang one by one, and eventually MLA Machiraju deserts him. For Siva, the enmity with Bhavani becomes personal when Bhavani kills his niece and the movie ends with Bhavani falling down an elevator shaft to his death.

The Cinematic City of Hyderabad
The name of the place/town/ city was never mentioned throughout the movie. In the movie, it is mentioned that it is a Nizam area. The language used by the locals, the canteen worker, and one of the villains is the Telangana dialect. It is interesting to note that the characters are either from the lower classes, or play villains and speak in the Telangana dialect. The lead, and his group of friends, enjoy the college canteen worker's quirky narration of Ramayana — the classic Hindu mythological text always recited in 'pure'[5] Telugu by the upper caste and the learned — in the local Telangana dialect. When narrated in Telangana dialect, it evokes laughter, in stark contrast to the hushed reverence the traditional telling of the story elicits. This kind of marginalisation of a region and its people in the filmic representation, and stereotyping Telangana speaking people as uncouth, illiterate working class, or criminal caused a rise in discontent among Telanganas.

The recognisable locales and specific places suggest that it is the city of Hyderabad. The chase scene of the hero and his niece on a cycle by the villains in a car is shot on Raj Bhavan road, Erragadda bridge, and in the old city *basti* (slum) is easily recognized as Hyderabad. Many

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[5] The notion of pure Telugu is either classical Telugu or the Telugu spoken by coastal Andhra, now Andhra Pradesh. Most of the literature, art, films and conversation in formal settings use the Telugu spoken by natives of coastal region. There were many instances where erstwhile Telugu film makers opined that Telangana dialect is lesser Telugu (Srinivas 2013).

people recognise the theatre in the movie as the Ganga theatre, and the final scene is shot in the Swapna Lok complex. The college campus scenes are shot in Keyes High School, Secunderabad. The School is famous and sits right beside a bus-station hub. Almost all the city buses connect to Secunderabad, and it is the main node connecting different parts of the city. The railway station is within walking distance of the School. The School is surrounded by Irani cafes, bakeries, movie theatres and other leisure places. The 'Hotel Hilight', where Siva and his friends have lunch on a regular basis, is still operating in the Kukatapally area.

Even when the narration tries to generalise the setting and make it appear as though the events can happen in any city or town, the recognisable locations become part of the narration and cannot be separated from it (Nowell-Smith 2001). In support of this argument, Barbara Mennel (2008) in *Cinema and Cities* talks about the city depicted *In Things to Come* (1936) which looks like London and it is considered as London for her analysis. The setting in *Alpha-Ville* (1961) is Paris in her analysis, but the Paris in that movie displays *no typical signifiers of Paris* (Mennel 2008: 134). She goes on to say that it is seeing *a familiar city in unfamiliar ways through a narrative that is projected onto the cityscape*. In the movie *Siva* also, the typical signifiers of city, the past of the city, and the people of city are not shown and talked about. The movie and the characters look toward the future. The distortion of the futuristic vision of the young and how it becomes dystopic is delineated in the later sections.

The Migrant/Stranger in the City
It is stressed many times in the movie, that the protagonist Siva, played by Nagarjuna, is an outsider. He migrates to the city because his brother was transferred there for his job. It is the migrant who takes the role of a stranger. It is the stranger in the city that defines the city. His separation and slow integration creates interesting perceptions on the city (Clarke 1997, Mazumdar 2007).

Figure 2. *Entry of Siva* — Source: YouTube

The relationship of the stranger to the city is highlighted by David Clarke (1997) in his editorial introduction to *Cinematic City*. The stranger, Clarke says, is symbolic of the ordering of the city which is sometimes 'annihilated' or 'displaced'. He cites David Harvey (1980), who calls the stranger's experience in the city as *the transitory, the fleeting and the contingent* (Clarke 1997: 4). The stranger — Siva — who arrives in the city and is new to the college, is appalled by the apathy of everyone towards the atrocities and disturbances caused by some students and forces outside the college. Siva moves in a detached way, observing the incidents of 'bad students' disrupting the classes, harassing women and mistreating the canteen worker.

As Bourdieu says, the city's modernity is overwhelming, and the sounds, the sights and the sensory simulation of the city desensitise the citizen; George Simmel terms this the blasé attitude (Mazumdar 2007, Mennel 2008) and David Harvey (1980) calls it *blasé indifference* (see also, Baeten 2002).

As the stranger becomes familiar with the surroundings, he learns to navigate the urban spaces. The stranger is 'proximate' yet 'distant' (Clarke 1997, Mazumdar 2007), *known and unknown, and charming and horrific* (Mazumdar 2007: 37). In his prior life, he never experienced the desensitization and violence that is an everyday part of the life of city folks. He retaliates and responds violently by ripping out a cycle chain to beat up the miscreants. This incident becomes an iconic scene. To analyse the journey of Siva in the city which is shaped by random events, I use Ranjani Mazumdar's tropes to define the stranger and his rage in the city. Those tropes are '*angry young man*' and the '*psychotic*' and the how Siva — the stranger and *Flaneur* — becomes a gangster and turns from an angry young man and almost becomes psychotic.

Uncanny Urban and its Youth

Freud used the term 'Uncanny,' or rather *unheimlich* which translates as 'unhomely' (McQuire 2008). The familiar becomes unfamiliar and strange, as the domestic is disrupted. This concept of *unhiemlich* has larger social and cultural implications (Eckhard 2011). In *Siva*, homes are virtually non-existent. Except for Siva and Asha, none of his friends are ever seen at home, or in home, or even talk about home. The interior scenes of Siva's home are always uncordial as Siva's sister-in-law resents him and his brother is helpless in relation to her taunts. Siva's sister-in-law is harassed when she goes out to buy groceries. She comes and complains to her husband and asks why they could not live in a good locality. Her husband explains that rents are high in good localities and hence, they cannot afford to live there because he has to save for Siva's education. This increases her resentment towards Siva and she openly scolds him for being a burden. The bad and unsafe versus good and safe neighbourhoods are spatially related to the economic status of residents. The blame for the harassment is not put on the perpetrators but on something as abstract and uncontrollable as space. The visibility and attention to the risk of harassment and sexual violence might be less in elite spaces, but it exists in posh localities as well.[6]

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[6]   https://www.hindustantimes.com/delhi/at-least-2-women-sexually-assaulted-every-day-in-posh-delhi-localities/story-O4qAWPRoPBET3amuipfC2K_amp.html
http://m.indiatoday.in/story/women-unsafe-in-posh-delhi-online-poll/1/153315.html
m.timesofindia.com/city/mumbai/Mumbais-wild-west-Bandra-Kurla-Virle-Parle-citys-most-unsafe-areas/articleshow/17484597.cms

Figure 3. *Siva with his Niece* — Source: Youtube

Although he feels unwanted and a burden at his home, Siva is warmly received and loved by his niece Keerthi with whom he has a strong bond. Asha is seen at home with her brother, only thrice in the entire film. Talking about home, McQuire (2008) says home is not just *a physical structure but a place which instils a sense of cultural belonging and existential shelter* (McQuire 2008: 7). Home is absent for the young adults in the movie. Literal homes are hostile, non-existent, or in villages. The college, streets and the leisure places are also hostile places, as the danger of violence is always beneath the surface. The cityscape is 'unhomely', 'derelict', 'dehumanised' and uncanny (Christodoulou 2011: 44).

Uncanny and Urban go together in creating and writing cities in both academic and popular literature (Wolfreys 2008, Baeten 2002). Uncanny is *seeing from the place of other* (McQuire 2008: 9). Uncanny in the urban is characterized by disorientation and spatial estrangement (Eckhard 2011: 13) and embodies one's desires (Christodoulou 2011). With each act of violence and disruption of order and normative rules in urban space, the uncanny emerges.

The movie starts in a classroom, the lecture ends and the students walk out of the classroom. The audience sees dangerous-looking men outside the college. A student points them out to another student who is talking to his friends. The men drag him, beat him and leave him on the street unconscious while everyone looks on. Siva's classmates tell him that as long they remain invisible, ignore and 'unsee' the harassment happening to them and others in the college, they can be peaceful and happy. And, they would remain happy if it was not for his outbursts. This is the one of the stanzas song they sing:

Botany paatam undi, matinee aata undi
Deniko votu chepparaa
History lecture undi, Mystery picture undi
Sodara edi bestu ra
Botany class antey boru boru
History rustu kantey restu melu
Paatalu, fightlu unna film chudu
Break lu, disco lu chuputaaru[7]

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[7] This translates, 'There is botany lecture and there is matinee picture / To which one we shall vote / There is history lecture, there is Mystery picture / Brother, tell me which is the best / Botany class is

Figure 4. *Students singing and dancing* — Source: YouTube

The youths' problems are as simple as watching a movie or attending a lecture, passing exams or topping them, and deciding whether to love or not. For the friends of Siva, the first act of violence by a restrained, inward looking, well-mannered and shy Siva — the characteristics of angry young men as defined by Ranjani Mazumdar (2007) — is the first uncanny urban experience on the college campus. The stranger Siva directs his distracted flâneur gaze towards taking control of the urban space like a gangster. The uncanny urban space, and its violence, are hidden under its ordered and rational spaces, which is abruptly uncovered by Siva's act of violence (Christodoulou 2011: 45). Once-safe streets, the college campus and leisure places become nodes of violence, and the underbelly of the city marked by violence, corruption and criminality is exposed. Meetings take place in dark rooms and in the cheap sleazy bars of the city. The youth come into close contact with them and realise that these urban spaces and their crowds are sites of violence (Mazumdar 2007: 30).

The youth work in the hope of achieving a utopian city. They hope the violence inflicted upon them and the deaths of their close friends are sacrifices made toward achieving ideal urban spaces. This hope can be termed a *Utopian Impulse*, as conceptualised by Jameson (cited in Mazumdar 2007: 40). The fatal violence inflicted upon Naresh, the death of Mallik and Chinna, each meticulously violent and horrible, slowly turn the uncanny urban space into dystopian space. Jameson says that the utopian impulse fails to abolish death and that it robs the death of its sting. Here we see the undying hope of youth that the sting, and the value attached to the death of their dear ones should not go in vain. And, as Jameson noted, the utopian impulse remains unrealised, while the hope of the youths quickly turns into an urban nightmare (cited in Mazumdar 2007).

City — For the Youth, by the Youth and to the Youth?
In the movie, the young of the city are represented as makers of the city. The movie is marked by the absence of older people. The oldest urban person is around forty. The only elderly

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boring / Resting is better than history class / Watch a film with songs and fights / They show discos and break dancing.'

characters in the movie are the grandmother of Siva's friend who comes from the village to the city to claim the body of her dead grandson. The grandson is the opponent of the politician Machiraju who briefly appears a few times and who also gets killed in the end. The city is no place for older persons, and even if they do live in the city, they are in danger.

The agency of any change rests in young people who are below thirty. Older persons like Asha's brother — a police officer, and Siva's brother — a government employee — are shown to be helpless. As discussed earlier, the absence of the family is omnipresent in the movies. None of the young peoples' parents are present, or even talked about. Siva lives with his older brother and so does Asha. The presence of family and elder family members denotes stability, and the absence of family signifies the unstable, lonely and distressed lives of the young in the city (Harvey 1980). The city is oppressive, and the lack of stability for the city's inhabitants is characteristic of a dystopian city (McArthur 1997).

In the movie, the city is predominantly a space of the youth. The future of the 'city in ruins' rests in students like JD (a 'bad' student) and his gang who get involved with the local rowdy group. The brighter future for the city rest with students like Siva ('good' student) and his friends. They are sincere in their studies, feel responsible towards the society and their family, but occasionally bunk classes for some fun and movies.

The urban spaces are conducive for the young forming social bonds beyond their families. The stability not found in their families is compensated for by forming strong social bonds outside the family. These urban spaces are at the same time threatening, as violence lurks around almost every street corner. However, spaces such as the college canteen, the hotels, ice-cream parlours and tea stalls become places for establishing long lasting friendships, loyalties through camaraderie, as well as the discussion of politics.

The youth are represented as accepting everyone with no discrimination on the basis of gender, class or religion, which seems like a utopia existing only in fictional narratives. This raises the question whether the ownership of the city resides only in the youthful, while older groups are relegated to the fringes as mere spectators or victims/subjects of the changes that take place. Why is a certain age group privileged over the other? Is this changing relationship of the city and its culture reflected in the movie of that point of time? (Gandy 2006)

Asha — Modern Woman of the City
Asha (played by Amala) is introduced to Siva by his friend and described as the 'most active girl in the college'. She is a college student, a liberal young girl of the city, and for a while this is celebrated. She enjoys the freedom and access to the city equally as her male friends and sometimes speaks in Hindi. She visits ice-cream parlours alone and goes to the evening show at the theatre with male friends. She waits confidently at bus stops and seems comfortable at a gym which is considered as the male domain (where only men are seen working out).

Her upper-middle-class status is reflected in her education, makeup and dress, which allow her access to these typically male-dominated urban spaces. Her nonchalant and irreverent attitudes do not limit her, even if the city ever tries to do so. The city provides anonymity,

endless opportunities and entertainment, as it helps this aspiring and free-spirited woman to explore the city (Phadke et al. 2011).

Her modernity is reflected in the ease by which she dons western wear and also slips into traditional wear with no fuss. The modernity of the city girl and her freedom is clear when she replies to Siva's concern that people might gossip if they rode a bicycle together, 'Do you think it is the 1940s or did you come from Srikakulam forests?' She is friendly with men and women, and she can also go on dates with a boyfriend to a restaurant. This is a deviation in the depiction of women in Telugu movies. Even in the movies that came after *Siva,* the women meet their lovers in secret, and are scared and guilt ridden. She has a casual relationship with her brother who is modern and liberal just like her. The gender of Asha is never stressed and she is an equal to the men and the representation of Asha in the movie is empowering and positive. This freedom, and access, ends when she is threatened by the villains. In the beginning of Siva's and Asha's friendship, Asha tells Siva that she does not want to get married as she hates cooking, household chores and other wifely duties. She gets married to Siva, and under his protection stays at home, restricted to wearing sarees and being the perfect housewife and hostess, while doing the same things she said that she hated about marriage. The freedom to loiter is also not for married woman. If a woman's safety is threatened, the only solution is marriage and remaining at home.

The City as Site of Conflict: Making of a Dystopian City
The city during the day is shown by washed out colours and excessive sunlight. The heat is oppressive and blinding. The streets are mostly empty, but the crowds gather and watch the spectacle when violence erupts in the urban space. The streets and other public places are sites of conflict. Here the sites of spectacle, like the college campuses, streets, Irani cafes, restaurants and the shopping mall in the final scene, become sites of violence thereby unleashing the uncanny shock of urban (Mazumdar 2007). The violence that they hate and restrain within themselves, in turn, becomes their only means of fighting it. Siva becomes like the anti-protagonists except for being on the moral side.

Figure 5. *Sunny, tropical, City washed out by the Sun* — Source: Youtube

The college dropouts Siva and his friends acquire a legion of cars, guns and other weapons, and seem to live comfortably. The narrative does not show the source of the money for acquiring the weapons and material comforts. It is tacitly understood that they get their money and resources through the same means as do the villain and goons, but without the use of force and exploitation. They happen to be on the right side of the moral binary and, hence,

the means used for the steady flow of money and resources are forgiven and overlooked. The irony in the statement of Siva, 'if we kill one JD or Bhavani, another Bhavani and JD will take his place' is evident when Siva kills Bhavani and might eventually replace him. The protagonist Siva, like Ranjani Mazumdar's (2007) angry young man, fights for the good of other people and to reduce the frustration of the young with failed promises of development, and visions of a better future.

There are only handful scenes of the city at night, when gruesome murders or violence are committed. The horror is palpable and the tension runs through every frame. During the first night of the city depicted in the cinema, the brutal violence committed on Naresh and the scene of his face being smashed on a boulder shocks the audience. This kind of violence, and the eerie silence intermittent with equally horrific background music, breaks with the conventional film violence shown in earlier movies.

Figure 6. *Use of shadows and darkness*. Source; YouTube

The movie gets even darker as it progresses, and in the second night scene a politician is killed. The days are still hot and sunny, washed out but the night scenes and interior scenes get darker. The cinema uses low-keyed lighting and shadows to convey the narrative's progression towards darker tones. The night scenes display the darkest side of the city spaces as an urban concrete jungle with ominously dark shadows lurking within the light (Mennel 2008). For example, larger than life shadows of Chinna (friend and associate of Siva) are displayed while he is being chased by goons of Bhavani (anti-protagonist). Their projection onto the high walls of the apartment captures the proximity of violence to the citizens of the city. Only the high concrete walls separate the safe spaces from the violent spaces of the city streets (Krutnik 1997). The city sleeps through the violence when the first act happens in a residential area, and it seems distant from and unaware of the violence unfolding on the streets.

Figure 7. *Chinna running away from goons* — Source: YouTube

Figure 8. *Goons on the concrete; Urban Violence* — Source: YouTube

The city is haunted by death (Mazumdar 2007: 151). For Mazundar, death in the city has the ability 'to do each other the greatest injury, without any one of them being actually wrong (Mazumdar 2007: 26). The villain Bhavani is not seen until an hour into the movie, Bhavani is, like Siva, restrained and marked with brevity. We witness Siva becoming as cruel as Bhavani and the movie ends on ambiguous note on whether Siva becomes Bhavani or not. With each death, Siva gets closer to becoming a gangster and the city becoming a dystopian city.

Hyderabad is wary of immigrants and, although outwardly welcoming, the anxiety of what strangers bring to the city underlies the fear. Many academic writings concern this anxiety (Luther 2006) and some argue that immigrants who do not understand the culture of Hyderabad are responsible for diluting it (Pandey 2015). For example, the communal riots that happened in 1978 and in 1990 (due to the repercussions of the Babri masjid demolition) were blamed on politicians and the unaccommodating immigrants (Vittal 2002, Engineer 1991). The communal riots have become an annual event since the 1990s and communal riots broke out in 2000s, as well as more recent years (Kruizinga 2008). This communal tension is hinted at when Siva's family is visited by some men donning Tilak (Red powder put on forehead — indicating religious identity) asking for donations to build Lord Ganesh's temple (alluding to building the

Ram temple at 'Ayodhya').[8] The assertions of identity and marking the differences has become aggressive with the increasing entry of migrants from different backgrounds (religious, cultural, linguistic, economic and ethnic), which is an ugly side of the cosmopolitan city. This anxiety and suspicion in the cinema is represented by illiterate and uncouth locals who speak in Telangana. The earlier migrants, and some new ones, are middle class, educated and work in government sectors. This cultural stereotyping and the suspicions fostered the Telangana movement since the Andhra Pradesh state was formed in 1956. The grievances of local Telangana were left unaddressed and fuelled agitations in the 1970s, early 1980s and late 1990s until the formations of a separate Telangana state in 2014.

Sanjay Baru (2007) notes that Hyderabad was undergoing interesting changes around the time the movie *Siva* was released in the 1980s. In earlier times agricultural profits from the coastal areas were invested in Madras, Vijayawada and Vishakhapatnam in the Andhra region. From the 1980s, it was invested in Hyderabad. Industrialisation was spurred by private investment and facilitated by state subsidies. There were also distressed sales of land in Hyderabad for many decades after the 1956 police action, as rich Muslims emigrated to the Middle East and other foreign countries, and middle class and poor Muslims to other parts of India where the Muslim population is large (Luther 2006). This situation was taken advantage of by land grabbers, rowdies and politician (Engineer 1991). The chief ministers and other major ministers of Andhra Pradesh were from coastal Andhra. As a consequence, the businesses and industries in city were set up by first-generation immigrants and upper castes from the coastal Andhra peasant class (Baru 2007).

In *Siva*, the noble wish of the immigrant/stranger and his friends who speak the Andhra dialect to cleanse the city of its Telangana-speaking criminals indicates the underlying prejudices and the politics of the times. At the time, the city and the nation were going through a period of rapid industrialisation and were ready to usher in globalisation and its by-product of consumerism. Hyderabad did not industrialise as early as Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, but from 1980s the cityscape changed along with the changing economic, social and political processes (Baru 2007). The final two scenes of the film are important for understanding the global city that Hyderabad has become and its transition towards a dystopian city.

Siva's bond with his niece and love for her is symbolic of the innocence and hope that still exists in him. This hope is evident in that although he has no qualms about hurting enemies, he will never kill despite his close friends' death. Siva arranges for his brother to get transferred to another town, distancing him from his family. His house with his wife Asha is always teeming with his 'followers' who were once simply his friends. The house keeps receiving people with complaints and grievances, which Siva helps to solve. Asha is always anxious for her and her husband's safety. The moral lines between Siva and Bhavani, good and bad, moral

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[8] The main issue about Ayodhya is that Hindus believe that the site of Babri Mosque is the birthplace of Ram and a temple was destroyed to build a mosque. Some sections of Hindus demand the temple be built on that location. This dispute became a cause for communal rife amongst Hindus and Muslims, and a cause for numerous communal riots. The politicians keep bringing up this issue for political mileage.

and evil, are blurred with death of Siva's niece Keerthi. If the depictions of deaths in the movie are unconventional in the Telugu narrative pastiche, the murder of a child was almost non-existent before, and unthinkable and devastating in reality as well. When Bhavani loses everyone's support, he kidnaps Siva's niece Keerthi. At the same time, an arrest warrant is issued for Bhavani. Upon learning that he has lost everything and will be jailed, he kills Keerthi not with rage, but in a chillingly calm way.

Figures 9 and 10: *Bhavani and Keerthi* and *When Bhavani decides to kill Keerthi* — Source: YouTube

The fuzzy boundaries of the moral divisions between the legal and non-legal and the legitimate and criminal, in the city are attributed to industrialisation by Ranjani Mazumdar and is a reflection on dystopian forms in urban life (Mazumdar 2007: 27). With industrialisation and globalisation, the city has become complex and dangerous, and with the death of a child — dystopian. The image of the city is now marred by violence (Mazumdar 2007: 28) and the complexities are captured in cinema. With the arrest warrant issued for Bhavani, Siva had won; the angry young man had won. But with the murder of his niece, he turns *psychotic* and his rage is internally directed toward revenge.

The fight between Siva and Bhavani does not use a background musical score. The fight on the top of the Swapna Lok Complex (a shopping complex) uses the diegetic sound of the traffic below. The shopping complex, traffic sounds (honking of cars, revving noise of bikes and cars), surrounded by tall buildings and an under-construction elevator (where Bhavani falls to his death) are some of the main visual markers of the city. These markers are used in the climax fight scene which symbolises that violence and conflict have become part of the city and is inseparable from its imagination and representations (Mazumdar 2007).

Figure 10. *Final fight between Siva and Bhavani* — Source: YouTube

Barabara Mennel (2008) talking about deaths in city in the movie *Metropolis* says that after the fall of a villain from the top, the hero on top is now the head of the metropolis. In *Siva*,

it is the migrant standing atop of a mall that controls the city now. The violence in a mall and the everyday life proceeding as normal is the 'Co-existing of Events' (Narkunas 2001: 156). The malls are signs of urbanism and growing consumerism that is transformed into the site of a final struggle for dominance. As Mennel says, 'The contemporary urban development of malls is subversively portrayed with iconic horror as a site of danger' (Mennel 2008: 145).

Conclusion

The city has been represented as unliveable and oppressive (Krutnik 1997, McArthur 1997). The chase scene of Siva and his niece on his bicycle on wide roads, then running in the slums, and finally catching the bus to get away from the attackers, traverses the city and represents the claustrophobic spaces where one seems to be trapped (Tolentino 2001). But, at the same time they provide opportunities to escape into safe spaces. Tea stalls, hotels, college canteen, the streets and a shopping complex (in the final scene) become the spaces where the showdown happens and either one of the parties (villain and hero) will establish, maintain or destabilise the existing power relations. There is no privacy in a dystopian city, or in a gangster film. Anthony Vilder says that private experiences become public in the modern metropolis, and the streets are the prime sites of narrative action in gangster films (cited in Mazumdar 2007: 152) The uncanny city reveals the ambiguities and insecurities of city dwellers when the violence, hidden under the order of urban surface, bursts its seams. In the uncanny and dystopian city of *Siva* everyone is a stranger, and is as scared and insecure as everyone else (Tolentino 2001). Women are unsafe as masculinity controls all its spaces. This masculinity finally subdues Asha who reluctantly moves away from masculine spaces into domesticity. The dystopian city offers only violence as a solution to the problems of crime and violence. Since *Siva*, the tropes of dystopian gangster cities have been depicted in many movies such as *Gaayam* (1993, directed by Ram Gopal Varma), *Antham* (1992, directed by Ram Gopal Varma) *Gulabi* (1996, directed by Krishna Vamsi), *Pokiri* (2006, directed by Puri Jaganath) and *Jalsa* (2008, directed by TriVikram Srinivas). It must be noted that many of the Ram Gopal Varma's movies themselves after *Siva,* and his movement to Bollywood, have been 'Gangster 'movies like *Company*, *Satya*, and *Sarkar* which deal with even more of the complexities of city that can now be explored.

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