

AKUI KAMALABALA WOMEN'S COLLEGE

Estd.- 2016

(Affiliated to Bankura University)

Vill.+ P.O.- Akui, P.S.- Indas, Dist.- Bankura, Pin-722201

Website: akuiwomenscollege.org • E-mail: akw.college@gmail.com • Ph-

9474918607



Ref. No. :

Date.

Title of Paper	Author Name	Name of Journal	ISSN No.	Year of Publication
URBAN DYSTOPIA AND GRAPHIC NOIR: EXPLORING POSTMODERN CITY IN THE CONTEXT OF INDIAN GRAPHIC NOVEL, MUMBAI CONFIDENTIAL	Dr. Nandini Maity	Sambodhi	2249-6661	2022

Title Page of the Journal

SAMBODHI

Indological Research Journal of L.D.I.I.

VOL. XLV

2022

EDITOR
JITENDRA B. SHAH



L. D. INSTITUTE OF INDOLOGY
AHMEDABAD

Nandini Maity
16.4.22

Co-ordinator
I.Q.A.C.

Akui Kamalabala Women's College
Akui, Bankura, W.B.

Dev
16.04.2022
Principal
Akui Kamalabala Women's College
Akui, Bankura

**URBAN DYSTOPIA AND GRAPHIC NOIR: EXPLORING POSTMODERN CITY IN THE
CONTEXT OF INDIAN GRAPHIC NOVEL, *MUMBAI CONFIDENTIAL***

Dr Nandini Maity Assistant Professor Akul Kamalabala Women's College
maitynandini@gmail.com

Abstract

The discourses related to film noir usually fosters the perception of a gloomy urban underworld marked by crime with a typical anti-hero caught in moral dilemma, resorting to unconventional tactics to keep evils at bay. In the post-war era, noir discourses expanded its horizon to incorporate other disciplines viz. sequential art forms. This study aims to speculate how the post-millennial Indian graphic narrative, *Mumbai Confidential* by Saurav Mohapatra and Vivek Shinde incorporates the aspects of postmodern urban world with neo-noir traits influenced by German Expressionism with a quasi-flâneur protagonist loitering the cityscape. The illustrations, made dramatic through expressionistic brushstrokes and the cinematic techniques employed, often seem to blur legal and moral boundary lines between the legitimate and the illegitimate of the dystopian urbanspace. This Indian graphic narrative with unconventional drawing techniques and disorienting textual strategies seems to balance itself unsteadily between the dream and the reality. This study would also archive the fundamentals of neo-noir genre in the context of this Indian graphic narrative by Saurav Mohapatra and Vivek Shinde which is often characterized by a threatening atmosphere of psychological oppression, anxiety, a sense of entrapment, futility and stark realism.

Key words: Noir, Neo-noir, Urbanscape, German Expressionism, Sequential Art, Postmodernism

Introduction: Noir and Graphic novel

Most of the urban comics and graphic novels seem to exhibit violence and darkness, a current trend that hardly goes unremarked. Visual depictions of brutality, the unforgiving side of city life coupled with criminal activities, pessimism, gloomy underworld and representations of violence which splash across the pages of comics, as for example in *Batman: Gotham Noir* (2001), *The Fade Out* (2014-2016), et al., contribute time and again to the discourses of noir. 'Noir', a French word coined by Nino Frank in 1946 was used by him to label certain films with emerging trends marked by crime scenes and presence of an antihero caught in moral dilemma. In the present times a subtle twist in this urban noir genre is evident in the way these contemporary films, for example *Memento* (2000), *Insomnia* (2002), *Point Blank* (2010) et al., as well as comics and graphic novel tend to synthesize a vast range of diverse topics which still foreground the scaffolding of the classic film noir.¹ Contemporary comics, as *The Fade Out* (2014-2016) by Ed Broobaker relies on the pictorial reproduction of the post-war Hollywood movie clips reflecting noir-ish traits, thereby introducing cinematic techniques in sequential art form.² The incorporation of German expressionism is evident which seems to provide a quasi-psychological angle to the classic noir genre in the way the contemporary art form, be it film or sequential art³ use high contrast black and white pictures, unbalanced rather abrupt angles creating a mysterious and shadowy effect. The effect of German Expressionism can also be found on Indian film industry; Himanshu Rai, producer of *The Light of Asia* (1925) introduced German Expressionistic techniques in Indian Cinema.⁴ In this minimalist technique certain things are deliberately left out to be deciphered by the readers' imagination where gestalt

1. Pettey, *International Noir*, 62.

2. Diffrient, "Contemporary comic books and Hollywood noir", 1-2.

3. This term was coined by the comic critic Will Eisner in his ground-breaking book, "Comics and Sequential Art" in order to explain how illustrations are used in sequence in any kind of graphic storytelling.

4. German Expressionism in Indian Film

Nandini Maity
16-4-2022

Co-ordinator
I.Q.A.C.
Akul Kamalabala Women's College
Akul, Bankura, W.B.

Dr. 16.04.2022
Principal
Akul Kamalabala Women's College
Akul, Bankura