

Department of Liberal Arts, Indian Institute of Technology Bhilai  
and the Association for Literary Urban Studies  
present

**Experiencing Home**  
Domestic Architecture in Urban Writing

An international conference

22 & 23 February 2024

**Concept Note & CFP**

The complexity of what constitutes urban life lends itself to multiple points of enquiry. While urban studies at large has delved on planning, governance, housing, livelihood, waste, and heritage, literary urban studies has engaged with the ways in which the lived experience of urbanity structures identity and selfhood across the scales of the personal and the public. Much of this scholarship has tended to typically reflect on the spatial and material footprints of civic life and public spaces in cities on literary texts: how individual and collective notions of self are informed by their interaction with the multiplicities of urban life, or how cultural memory is inflected by its conjunctions with the contours of urbanity as an aggregating force.

Home has often been understood in this corpus as a site of refuge or sanctuary from the travails of city life, something which needs to be guarded from the overwhelming flux of the everyday. The tangled trajectories of industrialisation, nationalism, and colonialism brought a pronounced emphasis on the home as the fulcrum of social existence over the course of the long nineteenth century, even as they birthed a dynamic new sense of the everyday which is both generated by and generative of the bourgeois world order. This was accompanied by the consolidation of familial domesticity as one of the pivots of modernity's institutionalisation of sexual and economic selfhood, which in turn also brought about a radical reconfiguration of marriage and adolescence as central to the ways in which familial relationships are structured to mediate with the world at large.

In all of this, home has held a place of significance as the stage on which domesticity and urbanity have sought to shape each other within broader zones of influence. We are interested in dwelling on questions which emerge from this dialectic seepage of the affective, spatial, and material. How did colonialisms impact cultural notions of privacy vis-à-vis the emergence of public space and domain? How have homes evolved over the course of recent and modern history to reflect the changing needs of urbanising societies? How have various urban cultures interpreted and internalised modernities to balance aspiration and tradition in the ways in which they conceptualise homes? How does urban informality radically alter the lived experience of home? We intend for this conference to be a first step towards sustained investigation of these and allied concerns as articulated in literary cultures across the board. Our focus will be primarily on South Asia, but we are open to considering proposals on other regions as well. Interested participants may consider the following as thematic guideposts:

- Colonialisms, nationalisms, and homes
- Materiality of domesticity in urban writing
- Evolution of domestic architecture in literary canons
- Informality, precarity, homelessness
- Home and the spatialisation of gender and sexuality
- Ghettoization, domesticity, and lived experience
- Emergence of new literary registers and genres

**Proposals of not more than 300 words** in MS Word format accompanied with **bio-notes of a maximum of 50 words** should be emailed to **dept\_la@iitbhilai.ac.in** by 25 September 2023. Selected presenters will be intimated by 15 October 2023 and **working drafts** of not more than **3000 words** will be **due by 20 January 2024**. The conference will be held in-person at the IIT Bhilai campus in Chhattisgarh, India. There will be no registration fee for participating in the conference, and selected participants will be provided board and lodging for the duration of their stay at IIT Bhilai for the conference. One of the conference outputs may be a special issue in a journal relevant to the field.

*Conference Committee:*

Anubhav Pradhan, IIT Bhilai  
Sonal Jha, IIT Bhilai  
Barsha Santra, IIT Bhilai  
Cecile Sandten, Chemnitz University of Technology  
Ishita Sareen, DAV College, Chandigarh