

Copyright Violations, 'Inspirations' and Adaptation in Indian Films: A Case for Cinema as Visual Anthropology?

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ABSTRACT The field of visual anthropology encompasses relationships between anthropology and visual media, but its applications have been primarily limited to studying the visual manifestations and pictorial aspects of culture as well as cultural behaviour of humans, and to the study of ethnographic film. Copyright violations and 'inspirations' refer to the unauthorized remakes and copies of western films that abound in the Indian film landscape. The objective of this paper is to analyse the anthropological issues in the making of cross-cultural adaptations and remakes, both authorized and unauthorized, in the Indian film industry. It does so by analyzing the anthropological information inherent in, cross-cultural adaptations, and in various violating and inspired versions of foreign films being made in India. By doing so, it seeks to establish a stronger conceptual association between cinema and visual anthropology, thereby presenting a case for cinema as visual anthropology.