



Media, Film and
Communication

Working Paper Series

Visiting Scholar explores the aesthetic of *naqqal* in Hindi cinema

*Professor Anjali Gera Roy – “Copycat Bollywood: Where it is not plagiarism”, 26th June 2014,
Department of Media, Film and Communication, University of Otago*

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On Thursday 26th June the Department of Media, Film and Communication, in collaboration with the New Zealand India Research Institute, was delighted to welcome Anjali Gera Roy, Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur. Roy, a widely published scholar, delivered an original talk which endeavoured to explore what she argues is a more productive way of conceiving the notion of copying in the context of Hindi cinema.

Asserting the need to address a lack of scholarship on the influence of the Perso-Arabic tradition in Hindi films, as opposed to the Sanskritic (whilst recognising their intrication in Hindi cinema), Roy sought to rethink unacknowledged copying in terms of Indianised Perso-Arabic *naqqal*. This term, a form of traditional performing arts mimicry, offered Roy a way of reinterpreting Hindi films such as *Parichay* and *Sholay* in terms of an aesthetic of reembodiment rather than through a Platonic suspicion of the copy. By way of this Indian aesthetic, specifically demonstrated in the bodily art of *naqqal* as a creative making different, Roy argued that such films could be judged in terms of emotions produced, rather than as plagiaristic or in breach of Western copyright law. Two corresponding

pleasures for Indian film audiences were identified in terms of the expansion of detail over originality and that of repetition with a difference.

Roy concluded her talk by stressing the importance of a more collective way of thinking through Hindi film production that problematises the copyright attached to private property rights, intellectual property, and capitalism.

She has been a generous guest who has spent significant time discussing her research with staff from the Department and from across the University, as well as postgraduate students.

An expanded version of Professor Roy's talk can be found here:

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/mfco/research/otago040229.html>

Author biography

Alex is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Media, Film and Communication, University of Otago. His thesis explores politics, democracy, and society from the position of concrete activism in Malaysia and looks to develop a new theorisation of the Malaysian political landscape.