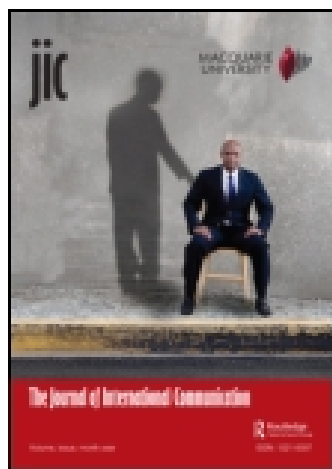


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# Film remakes as cross-cultural connections between North and South: A case study of the Telugu film industry's contribution to Indian filmmaking

C.S.H.N. MURTHY

**Abstract:** Remakes have been a phenomenon for many years in the global film industry. The Indian cinema industry, one of the world's largest industries, has been drawn towards remakes since the beginning of the talkie era (1931) for their ability to ensure profits and high grosses. Moreover, remakes offer a great opportunity to directors and producers to produce a known film in a different way. Although attempts to classify remakes of traditional Hollywood films have been made by Druxman, Horton and McDougal, Forrest and Koos, Frow, Stern and Leitch, no attempts have been made to explain remakes in the Indian film industry, in which the cross-cultural influences on a pluralistic society such as India offer a fertile area of research to explore. The present study, which is heuristic and based on hermeneutics coupled with moving image analysis, is the first to attempt to build a theoretical construct at the intersection of cross-culturalism, industry, and inter-textuality, and posits that a cinema industry with more cultural diversity has a greater probability of producing remakes for wider audiences. For the first time in an Indian context, this study identifies the cross-cultural indices that would offer the necessary environment to produce the best and largest number of remakes in terms of the industry and inter-textuality. Emphasising the cross-cultural significance of Indian film remakes, which the previous studies on Hollywood remakes have neglected, the present article aims to study the contribution of the Telugu film industry as a cross-cultural connection between North and South India. Efforts have been made to show how the identified cross-cultural indices have enabled the Telugu film industry which has the entire infrastructure necessary to produce the largest number of remakes independently every year since 1931 in a wide variety of languages, such as Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, English (Hollywood) and Telugu.

**Keywords:** remakes, inter-textuality, intra-textuality, cross-culturalism, connection between North and South, pluralistic society, linguistic and religious diversities in India

## I. INTRODUCTION

Film remaking is a distinct activity that film-makers all over the world have engaged into offer the best of the cinema in one language in other languages (Verevis 2006, p.1). Usually film is a visual treat of an idea/story based on a text or director's imagination. Its *mise-en-scene* (stage craft) is the creative potential of the director and his/her team. Either the story (narrative) or the *mise-en-scene* (way of telling the story as a distinct genre) of a particular making of a film turns out to be unique or outstanding. Such a film might become instantaneously a trend setter or might become a box office hit grossing highest revenues. As and when a film grosses beyond its own director/producer's imagination, it becomes cynosure of the film-makers from other regional/linguistic industries. Sometimes either same director or other directors from same language or other languages get involved into remaking the hit film in other languages. There are many occasions in this film world where same film has been remade several times in same language/other languages either by the same director or by the other directors. In the process the directors tend not only to remake the film either closer to text/previous make or improvise the film over the text/previous make or bring out film in a different form (both in text and *mise-en-scene*) either in the same language or other language. Since this a creative and highly imaginative process, a number of variations occur with respect to narration, settings, music and the very culture of the film. However, the main idea of any film remaker would be to ensure that he/she conveys the film to the audience in the most creative manner he/she could.

'Although the cinema has been repeating and replaying its own narratives and genres from its very beginnings, film remaking has received little critical attention in the field of cinema studies', according to Verevis (2006, 1). The classifications of Druxman (1975), Horton and McDougal (1998), Forrest and Koos (2002), Frow (1990) and Stern (1995) and Leitch (1990), together with Stam's (1999) concept of adaptations drawn on Gerard Genette's (1983) hypertext (given text) and hypotext (anterior text), are currently used to explain various remakes being produced in Hollywood.

Although Verevis tried to provide a comprehensive review of the existing literature and classifications of remakes from various perspectives, such as remaking as an industrial category, remaking as a textual category and remaking as a critical category, he did not explain how to understand, relate to and interpret film remakes from culturally diverse countries, such as India. Verevis's only citations were of two case studies, *Last Man Standing* (Walter Hill, 1996) and *A Fistful of Dollars* (Sergio Leone, 1964), as remakes of *Yojimbo* (Akira Kurosawa, 1961), 'reveals something of their likeness, an account of the historical, cultural and authorial "filters" through which they are transformed to tell something about the indigenisation of these models' (Verevis 2006, 91).

Remakes have been well accepted by the Indian audience since the beginning of the talkie era (1931). Film-makers in India have remade films from different cultures to reflect their local culture and vice versa, thus rendering the films both local and global. Furthermore, remakes within a national context (e.g., from Bengali to Hindi or Telugu or from Telugu to Hindi and Tamil) also have cross-cultural significance when it comes to local adaptations. It does not seem academic to underrate the remakes as mere copies or to describe them as the outcome of a dearth of ideas (Chopra 2011, pp.34–37). Remakes offer ample scope to trace the

cross-cultural origins that we observe today in culturally divergent, pluralistic and developing societies.

In India, where film remakes performed in certain languages (Telugu, Tamil and Hindi) more than other languages have been widely viewed in theatres and on television across different states of the Union of India, cultural variations play a key role in gaining wider acceptance among audiences that not only ensure the box office success of the films, but also set the cash registers ringing for the producers of the remakes.

The present article, therefore, is the first attempt to develop a theoretical construct at the intersection of cross-culturalism and industry, and posits that a cinema industry with more cultural diversity has higher chances of producing remakes for wider audiences. For the first time in Indian context, the study identifies the cross-cultural indices that would offer the necessary environment to produce the best and largest number of remakes in terms of the industry and inter-textuality. While emphasis is placed on the cross-cultural significance of the Indian film remakes, which previous studies on Hollywood remakes have neglected, the present study aims to explore the contribution of the Telugu film industry, considered the second largest film industry in India, as a cross-cultural connection between North and South India. The present study also reflects on how the identified cross-cultural indices have enabled the Telugu film industry to produce the largest number of remakes every year in many other languages.

For example, film versions of the Bengali novel *Devdas* (written by Sarat chandra Chatopadhyaya) in Hindi, Bengali, Telugu and Tamil have contained some scenes of syntactic and semantic elements that are common (hypotexts) in the form of Proppian elements (Propp 1968) and Levi-Strauss's binary oppositions (1978), sets, costumes and lighting with Bimal Roy's Hindi *Devdas* (1955) and Raghavaiah's Telugu and Tamil *Devdas* (1953), in contrast with later films such as Bhansali's *Devdas* (2002) or Anurag Kashyap's *Dev D* (2009), which display wide divergence in both the language and the culture, in addition to the depiction or portrayal of the characters (hyper-textuality as quoted by Gerard Genette in Verevis 2006, p.20). Whereas the Bombay film industry was originally begun as cross-cultural during the early years of the film industry where actors, technicians, directors, singers and musicians from different linguistic regional backgrounds converged in Bombay film industry, after the 1990s, the cultural pattern of its films was gradually transformed from native (Indian) cross-culturalism to trans-national culturalism (or crossover films).

The present study, however, confines itself to the native cross-culturalism (local) that remakes have reflected across the country. We also posit that of the two major film industries – Hindi and Telugu – the latter has been producing more remakes annually than the former. Moreover, we posit that the production of considerable numbers of remakes (or dubbing productions into other regional languages) in Telugu can be explained by the regional industry's cross-cultural base, which it acquired from the Bombay film industry after the beginning of the talkie era (Tables 1–4).

*Sawan Ka Mahina Pawan Kare Sor . . .* (click here to listen to the tune: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFwNA790Viv>) is a song that is as loved today as much it was in 1967, when the Sunil Dutt and Nutan starring film, *Milan* (1967), was first released. Many viewers were blissfully unaware of the fact that the film *Milan* was a remake (a re-adaptation) of the

**Table 1 – CBFC-India: Details Showing the Dubbing of Films from One Language to the Other During 2010.**

Language	Mum	Kol	Chen	Ban	Thi	Hyd	Del	Cut	Guw	Total
Hindi	3	–	7	4	–	3	–	–	–	17
Tamil	16	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	18
Telugu	18	–	32	7	–	11	–	–	–	68
Bhojpuri	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
Chhatishgarhi	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
English	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
Oriya	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
Malayalam	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
Bengali	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	4
Total	46	2	39	13		14		3		117

super hit Telugu film *Mooga Manasulu* (1963), starring A. Nageshwara Rao and Savithri and directed by Adurti Subba Rao. The Telugu equivalent of the song was *Naa Paata Nee Nota Palakala Silaka...* (Click here to listen to the tune: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0pyWUZ99as>). Unlike the release of *Milan*, today everyone knows that Salman Khan's recent action-packed film, *Wanted* (2009), was a remake (re-adaptation) of the Telugu action film *Pokiri* (2006), starring Mahesh Babu and written, directed and produced by Puri Jagannath (who directed the latest Hindi film, *Budda hoga tera baap*, 2011, starring Amitab Bacchan). *Pokiri* (mischievous lad) was released on 28 April 2006. Because the film proved to be a major hit at the box office, the film was remade as re-adaptation in multiple languages: in Tamil as *Pokkiri* (2007), directed by Prabhu Deva, in Hindi as *Wanted* (Prabhu Deva, 2009), and in Kannada as *Porki* (Sridhar M.D., 2010). The film was screened at the India International Film Festival in Dubai in 2006. The film ultimately was said to be the second-highest-grossing Telugu film of all time (until 2006).

## 2. THE TELUGU FILM INDUSTRY AS A CASE STUDY

Telugu is a Dravidian language spoken by more than 100 million people in the State of Andhra Pradesh, which is considered the fourth largest state in India. The Telugu film-making history parallels that of the Hindi film industry since the silent era. Although Telugu film shooting first began in Bombay and later shifted to Calcutta (now called Kolkata), the industry settled for a period of time at Madras (now called Chennai). In the 1970s, the activities of the Telugu film industry began to shift from Chennai to Hyderabad, which today hosts the world's largest film studio, Ramoji Film City (RFC). With the presence of a number of studios on lots that are thousands of acres in size, such as Ramanaidu Studios, Annapurna Studios, Padmalaya Studios and Prasad Laboratories, the area is busy with shooting activities throughout the year. In terms of film production, the Telugu film industry produces almost

**Table 2 – Telugu Film Genres.**

<i>Telugu film genres of narratives</i>	<i>Some popular Telugu films</i>
<b>Mythologicals</b> (based on <i>Ramayan</i> , <i>Mahabharat</i> , <i>Bhagavatam</i> , <i>Puranas</i> , etc.)	<i>Bhakta Prahalada (1931)</i> <i>Lavakusa (1934) Immediate Post-talkie</i> <i>Lavakusa (Telugu) 1963</i>
<b>Kings &amp; Folks</b> – <i>Janapad</i> (dealing with kings vs their people) hundreds of examples from Telugu/Tamil than Hindi.	<i>Pandava Vanavasam (Telugu) 1965</i> <i>Suvarna Sundari (Hindi and Telugu) 1957–58</i> <i>Bandipotu (Telugu) 1963</i> <i>Aggibarata (Telugu) 1966</i>
<b>Socials (fiction)</b> -human relations vs Indian ethos – Melodrama, comedies, tragedies etc.	<i>Devadas (Telugu) 1953</i> <i>Devadas(Hindi) 1955</i> <i>Missamma (Telugu) 1955</i> <i>Gundamma Katha (Telugu) 1962</i> <i>Pandanti Kaapuram (Telugu) 1972</i> <i>Ghatotkachudu, 1995</i>
<b>Socio-fantasies</b> (mixed genre of social and mythological) etc.	<i>Yamagola, 1977</i> <i>Yamadonga, 2007</i>
<b>Spirituals:</b> Lives of saints/eminent devotees of God	<i>Bhakta Tukaram (Hindi) 1936</i> <i>Bhakta Tukaram (Telugu) 1973</i> <i>Bhakta Jayadev (Telugu) 1961</i>
<b>Westerns</b> (Cowboy films)	<i>Goodachari 116, Avekallu, etc.</i>

the same number of films as Hindi films produced each year (Tables 5 and 6). From 2005 to 2010, the Telugu film industry produced more films (1439) than the number of Hindi films produced (1424). In terms of viewership, Telugu films were simultaneously dubbed and shown in Hindi on majority national television channels (e.g., Sony TV, Zee TV and Star TV) with viewers spread even in North-East where the influence of Hollywood and the Western lifestyles is more than rest of India.

Thus, the Telugu film industry’s combined output, both in original films as well as remakes, has earned it a reputation as the world’s largest exporter of films to more than 100 countries with a number of individual Guinness book of records of producers/directors and actors also (See Table 7). Nearly 80% of the world’s countries have lower populations than that of Telugu. Most of the Telugu films today target global markets, such as the USA, the UK and Europe, to garner the highest grosses in the first week of their release. Today, the Telugu film industry and its films – whether original films or remakes – can no longer be considered as regional in the wake of globalisation that renders local as glocal (Murthy, Bedajit, & Baruah 2011, Unpublished Thesis). The discussion below offers relevant proof of this statement.

**Table 3 – Cross-Cultural/Inter-Textual Indices in the Telugu Film Industry.**

<i>Cross-cultural indices</i>	<i>Other Languages (Cross Culture)</i>	<i>Films/Technicians/Actors, etc.</i>
Singers from other languages	Bollywood, Marathi, Malayalam	Lata Mangeshkar, Mohd Rafi, Ghulam Ali, Talat Mohammad, K.J.Yesudas, Vani Jayaram, Udit Narayan, Sonu Nigam, etc.
Actors from other languages	Tamil Malayalam Marathi-Kannada Bengali	Shivaji Ganesan, Kamal Haasan, J. Jayalalitha Ashish Vidyarthi, Mammootti Rajnikanth Sarvadaman Banerjee, Kamalinee Mukherjee, Smantha, Rachana, etc.
Film remakes from other languages	Bengali-Telugu Hindi-Telugu	<i>Devdas</i> (1935) – <i>Devdasu</i> (1953), <i>Bhabhi</i> (1957) – <i>Kuladaivam</i> (1960), etc.
Films on lives of Spiritual saints	Based on the life of Sanskrit poet Jayadeva from Orissa Based on the life of Saint Tukaram of Maharashtra	<i>Bhakta Jayadev</i> (1961) <i>Bhakta Tukaram</i> (1973)
	Based on the lives of saints of Telugu	<i>Bhakta Potana</i> <i>Bhakta Ramadas</i>
Film on sculptors/artists' biography	Based on the life of a Kannada sculptor who designed Konark temple	<i>Amara Silpi Jakkanna</i> (1964)
Stories/Novels adaptations from other languages	Bengali French English	<i>Devdas, Misamma</i> (1955) <i>Aggi Pidugu</i> (1964) <i>Palletoori Pilla</i> (1950)
Music directors from other languages	Tamil Hindi	Ilaiyaraaja, A.R. Rahman, M.S. Viswanathan, K.V. Mahadevan, etc. Shankar-Jaikishan, Bappi Lahiri
Establishing standards of culture and life styles for North India based – <i>Ramayana, Mahabharata,</i> <i>Bhagavatam-related</i> film scripts	Culture, Costume designing; Character designing, Ornament designing; Prescribing mannerisms; etc.	<i>Bhakta Prahlad</i> (1931), <i>Lava Kusha</i> (1963), <i>Mayabazar</i> (1957), <i>Pandava</i> <i>Vanavasam</i> (1965), etc.

**Table 4 – Cross-Cultural Film Production—Some Prominent Telugu Film-Makers/ Directors (only indicative not exhaustive).**

Name	Roles performed in Industry	Hindi/Telugu/Tamil	Period
1. Adurti Subba Rao	Director-37	Hindi-10; Telugu-27	1912–1975
2. AV Subba Rao	Producer-26	Hindi-5; Telugu-20	1925–
3. B Nagi Reddy	Producer-20; Director-1	Hindi-6; Telugu-15; Tamil-1	1912–2004
4. HM Reddy	Director- 19; Producer-3	Hindi-5; Telugu-11; Tamil-3	1892–1960
5. KV Reddy	Director-16; Producer-4; Writer-5	Telugu-14; Tamil-2	1912–1972
6. LV Prasad	Actor-8, Director-30, Producer-30	Hindi-27; Telugu-21; Tamil-14; Bengali-4; Kannada- 1; Malayalam-1; Oriya-1	1930–1990
7. Rama Naidu	Producer (130)	Hindi-17; Telugu- 84; Tamil-10; Kannada-2; Oriya-1; Malayalam-1; Bengali-2, Assamese-1 (excluding dubbing)	1936-

### 3. DISTINCTIONS OF TELUGU FILM REMAKE INDUSTRY

Although the Telugu film industry has been producing remakes for decades, almost from the beginning of the talkie era (1931), how the industry is able to impart or offer the highest cross-cultural significance to the remakes has not been studied at length, and the present study is a pilot effort to bridge this gap.

A review of the history of the Telugu film industry since the beginning of the talkie era reveals that it is easy to discern the efforts the Telugu industry has made to be cross-cultural (Tables 2 and 3). Many early prominent Telugu directors, such as HM Reddy (1892–1960), L.V. Prasad (1908–1994), K.V. Reddy (1912–1972), A. Subba Rao (1912–1975), T. Praskasa Rao and T. Rama Rao, had produced or directed films simultaneously in both Telugu and Tamil, as well as Hindi either from Bombay or from Chennai till 1970s. After 1970s, the Telugu film industry shifted to Hyderabad the capital of Andhra Pradesh and had eventually become a hub of film-making/remaking activity with such giant film studios like RFC, Annapoorna Studios, Saaradhi Studios, Ramanaidu Studios, Padmalaya Studios, Prasad Eye-max (the biggest multiplex theatre in Asia) and Prasad Film Processing laboratories, etc (See Table 7 for individual Guinness book of records of producers, directors and actors).

Because many of these directors had been associated with the Bombay film industry since the beginning of their film careers, they were more likely to acquire the characteristics of



**Table 5 – CBFC-India: Details of Films Released after Censor: 2000–2010.**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Hindi</i>	<i>Telugu</i>	<i>Tamil</i>
2000	243	143	157
2001	230	206	196
2002	218	167	178
2003	222	155	151
2004	244	203	130
2005	245	268	136
2006	223	245	162
2007	258	241	148
2008	248	286	175
2009	235	218	190
2010	215	181	202
Total	2581 (38.41%)	2313 (34.42%)	1825 (27.17%)

Courtesy: CBFC Annual Reports 2000–2010 (compiled from the data for Hindi, Telugu and Tamil films only)

cross-culturalism than the Tamil directors and producers. This historical connection between the Telugu and Bombay film industries has continued unhindered ever since, whereas the Tamil industry has largely confined itself to its region and Tamil-speaking areas and populations.

**Table 6 – CBFC-No of Films Released between 2005 and 2010: Hindi, Telugu and Tamil.**

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Hindi</i>	<i>Telugu</i>	<i>Tamil</i>
1	2005	245	268	136
2	2006	223	245	162
3	2007	258	241	148
4	2008	248	286	175
5	2009	235	218	190
6	2010	215	181	202
Total		1424	1439	1013

Courtesy: CBFC Annual Reports 2000–2010 (compiled from the data for Hindi, Telugu and Tamil films only).

**Table 7 – Telugu Film Industry in Guinness Book of Records: Individuals.**

<i>Serial no.</i>	<i>Prominent film-makers/directors</i>	<i>Hindi/Telugu/Tamil</i>	<i>Period</i>
1.	Dr. D Narayana Rao	Directed 150 movies	1947–
2.	Vijay Nirmala (women director/producer) in post-independent era	Directed 47 movies, highest among women directors	1950–
3.	Rama Naidu	Producer of 130 movies	1936–
4.	Dr. Brahmanandam	Best comedian who acted in more than 650 movies	1956–
5.	Ch. Ramoji Rao	Ramoji film city	1936–

With the exception of Mani Ratnam (who directed box office hit films like *Bombay* 1995; *Roja*, 1992; and *Dil Se* 1998) and K. Balachander (*Marocharitra*, Telugu original 1978 and *Ek Dujhe Keliyae* is its Hindi remake, 1981), there are not many popular names from the Tamil industry to cite for their cross-cultural/inter-textual film productions or remakes. Most of the Tamil originals were later dubbed into Hindi, rather than being remade in Hindi starring actors from the Hindi belt. Directors such as Murugadas and Shankar produced Tamil films that were major hits and that were later dubbed into Telugu/Hindi. For instance, Shankar's latest major hit films, *Rajnikant Sivaji* (2007) and *Endhiran* (2010, dubbed as *Robo* in Telugu and Hindi), were dubbed into other languages. However, Shankar's film *Nanban* (2012), which was a remake of *3 Idiots* (Rajkumar Hirani, 2009) as a re-adaptation, was simultaneously dubbed into Telugu as *Snehitudu* (2012).

In contrast, the Telugu film industry stayed busy producing hundreds of films, either originals or as re-adaptations/updates from many languages, even its own language, along with adaptations of films from Hollywood, Bollywood and Collywood (the Tamil film industry). For example, a film such as *Pushpak* (1987), performed simultaneously in both Telugu (*Pushpak Vimanamu*, 1987) and Hindi, was the only silent film in post-talkie era with a degree of innovation and creativity directed by Singitam Sreenivasa Rao. The film was a major hit in both languages.

A significant number of films have also been made and remade within the larger Indian film industry of Hindi, Telugu and Tamil languages. Mahesh Bhatt directed *Criminal* (in both Hindi and Telugu, 1994), inspired by the Hollywood film starring Harrison Ford, *The Fugitive* (Andrew Davis, 1993). Both *Munna Bhai MBBS* (Rajkumar Hirani, Hindi, 2003) and *Stalin* (Telugu, 2006) have conceptual foundations in Western films. *Patch Adams* (Tom Shadyac, 1998) was acknowledged as inspiration for making of *Munna Bhai MBBS* (Rajkumar Hirani, 2003) in Hindi and as *Sankaradada MBBS* (Jayant C Paranjee, 2004) in Telugu. Similarly, *Pay It Forward* (Mimi Leder, 2000) offered inspiration for the Telugu film *Stalin* (A.R. Muruga Das, 2006) starring Chiranjeevi. Both of these films were instant successes in both languages. *Lage Raho Munnabhai* (Rajumar Hirani, 2006) was remade in Telugu as *Sankardada Zinadabad* (Prabhu Deva, 2007) with Chiranjeevi as a Gandhian protagonist.

As early as the 1970s, veteran Telugu hero Krishna had brought to Telugu film culture what has been uniquely hailed abroad as Westerns (cowboy-genre films). He produced James Bond-genre spy series in Telugu, such as *Goodachari 116* (M. Mallikarjuna Rao, 1967) and *Avekallu* (1967). Krishna's film *Mosagaallaku Mosagaadu* (K.S.R. Das, 1971), directed by KSR Das (produced by his brother-in-law, Seshagiri Rao), was the first cowboy film in India and was inspired by Hollywood films such as *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (Sergio Leone, 1966); *For a Few Dollars More* (Sergio Leone, 1965); and *Mackenna's Gold* (J. Lee Thompson, 1969). The film was a major hit and was later dubbed into English as *Treasure Hunt* and distributed in as many as 142 countries. Such films are exceptions and it is very difficult to put such films under any systematic classification as what is followed in this paper.

#### 4. DEFINITION OF REMAKE(S)

We could paraphrase Branigan (1992) to say the remake is a "special pattern which re-represents and explains at a different time and through varying perceptions, previous narratives and experiences", write Horton and McDougal (1998, p. 2). Shklovsky (1988) argued in the early decades of this century that the function of art was to de-familiarise the familiar-to make us experience the commonplace in new ways. One way of achieving this, he noted, was to create a repetition with a difference (p.6). In one sense, remakes exemplify this process. Remakes provoke a double pleasure in that they offer what we have known previously but with novel or at least different interpretations, representations, twists, developments and resolutions (Horton & McDougal 1998, p.6; Forrest 2002).

Although there has been a considerable amount of recent work in film as an inter-textual medium, to date, the remake has received relatively little critical attention (Horton & McDougal 1998). The remake, in its various forms, is not unfamiliar territory in Indian cinema (Gulzar and Saibal 2003; Wright 2009). The cultural flow through remakes has also been acknowledged by Stephen Mandiberg in his work, *Remakes as Translation* (2008). He notes that late modernity's interactions have allowed a more fluid flow of ideas in the globalised world. Horton and McDougal observed that:

Beyond simple remakes of one film to another with the same title and story, we are also interested in extending the definition of remake to include a variety of other inter-textual types. What dynamics and dimensions are involved in cross-cultural remakes in which language, cultural traditions, psychology, and even narrative sense may differ greatly. (1998, p.4)

##### 4.1. Types of remakes

For the purpose this study, Leitch's (1990) classification of remakes together with the classification of remakes as documented by Verevis (2006) in his book *Film Remakes* has been adopted. Whereas Leitch (1990) classification was based on film as a 'text', Verevis (2006) classified the remakes as a 'culture' with connotation for 'industry', which could be interpreted from media economy point of view. In foreword, Verevis writes: Drawing upon recent theories of genre and inter-textuality, *Film Remakes* describes remaking as both elastic concept and complex situation, one enabled and limited by the inter-related roles and practices of industry, critics and audiences (p.vii).

He, therefore, classified 'remakes' into three broad categories: Industry (production, commerce and authors), Textual (genres, plots and structures) and Critical (reception of audiences and institutions). Therefore, the present study has used the Leitch's types of remakes as sub-categories within the broad conceptual parameters of Verevis classification.

In relation to 'remakes as textual and cinematic categories', Leitch had considered four types of remakes: (1) Re-adaptations (textual), (2) Updates (textual), (3) Homages (cinematic) and (4) True Remakes (cinematic). This aspect of the Western classification of remakes focuses on American or British films, both of which are based on English literature or texts involving translations from other languages into English films. Furthermore, Leitch's classification was based on the assumption that 'remakes compete with earlier versions' and his belief that 'successful remakes' supersede and thus 'typically threaten the economic viability of their originals' (Leitch 1990, pp.37–62).

In this study the classification of Leitch (1990) is limited to tracing the remakes to their corresponding original as texts – literary or film.

4.1.1. *Re-adaptations* – This term describes the producing of a film from a source, such as a novel or a story, as many times as possible with particular directorial ingenuity. *Devadas*, a Bengali novel, was produced in Telugu as many as three times, the first time as Nageswara Rao starring Savitri (1955), which followed closely the text of the novel as a hypotext. Similarly, Bimal Roy's *Devdas* (1955) was also a hypotext. Compared with Telugu *Devdas*, Bimal Roy's *Devdas* is a better hypotext of the novel and can be considered as a true re-adaptation. However, subsequent films using the *Devdas* formula would not fall into this category. Similarly *Bhakta Prahlada* (1931, 1942, 1946 and 1967), a *Bhagavatam*-based epic story dealing with a child called *Prahlad* born to a demon king *Hiranya Kasyap*, turned into devotee of *Lord Vishnu*, and would ultimately show his demon father the presence of *Lord Vishnu* in a pillar leading to a fierce fight between both the demon and the Vishnu (in the form of Lion head). In the process the *Lord Vishnu* killed demon king. The film was produced as many as four times each one tried to be a hypotext given the margin of technological transformations that swept into film-making since the time of first making of *Bhakta Prahlad* as first ever talkie movie by H.M. Reddy (1931) in Telugu. If conformity with the text is taken as criteria this is true but in terms of film production development H.M. Reddy's version is more like a filming of theatre performance of *Bhakta Prahlad* compared to Chirtrapu Narayanamurthy's *Bhakta Prahlad* of 1967 (AVM Production), which was not only shot in Eastman color, but also produced with advanced trick photography, screen play, and editing besides, *mise-en-scene* which may also be considered as per Robert Stam as extratextual (Verevis 2006, p.34).

4.1.2. *Updates* – This term refers to improvised versions of adaptations. For instance, *Lavakusa* (C. Pullaiah, 1934; C.S. Rao, 1963), a *Ramayana*-based film, in which the film story dwells on how Lord Rama adhered to the rule of fair governance for gaining the trust of the people and in the process had suffered personal ignominy including sending away his holy consort Sita to forest who was pregnant then. By the time, the public repented for their utterings against Rama, Sita who was given shelter by the very author of the epic Valmiki, gave birth to two children-*Lav* (small hay stalk) and *Kus* (main hay stalk), who in turn not only sing Rama's

greatness in the form of ballads, but also challenge Rama not knowing that he was their biological father. The film was produced in Telugu twice, and more recently, Bapu directed another such update, *Sri Ramarajyam* (Bapu, 2012).

4.1.3. *Homages* – The term relates to films produced again to remind the audience of the original, usually a classic, as a tribute. One such homage, Bhanasali's *Devdas* (2002), credits the original novel but comprises innumerable transpositions and deviations, sometimes causing the audience to question whether the film was truly based on Saratchand's novel *Devdas*. In terms of Robert Stam, such transformations of several reproductions/remakes of the original text would mean it was extratextual, and indeed, Stern (1995) considers that in such a series of remakes of one novel or text, the immediate earlier version (anterior) should be considered to be the original, rather than the actual novel or text. Primarily, these films fall into the category of homage. In that sense Bimal Roy's *Devdas* (1955) should be hypotext for Bhanasali's *Devdas* (2002). But strictly speaking even this definition is not quite apt to interpret it as it is completely deviant from the original text. It is post-modern and is not the one conceived by either Saratchand (the original author of the novel) or Bimal Roy.

4.1.4. *True remakes* – A true remake is one that is as good as the original or that challenges the original by making improvements in aspects such as acting, direction or technique. The Telugu film industry is known for this category of film-making since the talkie era. Earlier example of Hindi *Milan* (1967) was one such which was a remake of Telugu *Moogamanasulu* (1963) both directed by A Subba Rao. For example, *Siva* (1989) by Ram Gopal Varma was produced first in Telugu and was later remade in Hindi with Nagarjuna as the hero. Both films were remade as good as originals.

Regarding remakes in Telugu either from other languages or *vice-versa*, the study offers an impressive variations and deviations from the definitions of Leitch's (1990) classification. While some remakes of same text/film would fall into re-adaptations, the others may fall under updates (textual categories) or homages (cinematic). The examples given above in the Indian context would tend to offer this 'blurring picture' or 'scenario' though Verevis (2006) also draws similar conclusions on many English/Hollywood remakes. He also expressed difficulty in classifying the films which are said to be inspirations-acknowledged or unacknowledged (p.20).

## 5. METHODOLOGY

The present study is primarily descriptive and analytical. Grounded in heuristic practices and based on hermeneutics coupled with the moving image analysis by Kracauer (1960), this study intended to explore how cross-culturalism in the Telugu film industry inspired and underpinned profit-making remakes from Telugu to Hindi and vice versa and/or in other languages.

Gupta (1998, pp.45–7) was the first to document some of the indicators of cross-cultural communication in India. However, Gupta neglected to relate these indicators to media such as film, television and radio, and trace its ontological developments over decades in diffusing cross-cultural flows. For the purpose of this study, a few cross-cultural indices using popular works and scholarly articles, in addition to heuristic methods (see Table 3) have been developed to explain the inter-textuality or cross-culturalism in the films discussed in this article.

5.1. Cross-cultural indices that exemplify inter-textuality and connection between film industries

- (1) Cross-cultural indices, by default, imply inter-textuality in the form of flow of one culture to another culture (here, culture refers to a set of pre-determined values/beliefs/traditions of a region/state/society) by adaptation of the text/novel/genre of one culture to another culture. For instance, in the Telugu version of *Devdas* film (1953 directed by Vedantam Raghavaiah), the character Devdas was not referred to as Mukherji; he was simply addressed as a Telugu Devdas only. However, in two subsequent Hindi films of *Devdas* (1955 by Bimal Roy, 2002 by Bhansali) starred by Dilip Kumar (1955) and Shah Rukh Khan (2002), Devdas was referred to as Mukherjee, the original Bengali name given to the character in the novel.
- (2) Cross-culturalism becomes a broader concept for an industry when it allows the engagement of other industry actors, singers, musicians, dances and directors who would bring a new cultural dimension (such as mutual appreciation of other cultures) to the films. (See Figures 1 and 2: Asit Sen's *Dweep Jale Jai* (1959) and *Khamoshi* (1969) and Gutta Ramineedu's *Chivarakumigilindi*, 1960); the last two are remakes of *Dweep Jale Jai* and *Devdas* last scene enacted by three different stars in India.)
- (3) Cross-culturalism can occur in a variety of forms, both technical and symbolic (*mise-en-scene*) native to each culture/industry. For example, the remaking of select songs and their musical scoring from one language to another language either in relation to the same context or for a different context is also inter-textuality/cross-culturalism. The following is a classic example of this category. No one knows from where the tune was adopted for the song *Dukh Bhare Din Bitere Bhaiya Ab Sukh Aayore* (*Bad days have gone and good days have come*) in *Mother India* (Mahaboob Khan, 1957). The original song was Ghon *Borosun Pisol Mati Lahe Lahe Diba Khoj* (*The heavy downpour has left the earth slippery, put your footsteps steady*) from the Assamese film *Piyali Phukan* (1955: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jxQODOsYt0>). The root of the song is an Assamese folk song called *Kamrupia lokogeet* (sung by the general population).



**Figure 1 – Telugu-Hindi Showing the effective expression of Nageswara Rao in his last stage of life over the other Hindi actors. (a) Nageshwara Rao (*Devdas*, Telugu, 1953), (b) Dilip Kumar (*Devdas*, Hindi, 1955), (c) Shahrukh Khan, (*Devdas* Hindi, 2002).**



a) Suchitra Sen in  
Deep Jweley Jai (1959)

b) Savithri in  
Chivareku Migilendi (1960)

c) Waheeda Rahman  
Khamoshi (1969)

**Figure 2 – Comparative Frames of *Deep Jweley Jai* (Bengali) with remakes of Telugu *Chivaraku Migilindi* (Telugu) and *Khamoshi* (Hindi) showing the histrionics of Savithri. (a) Suchitra Sen in *Deep Jweley Jai* (1959), (b) Savithri in *Chivareku Migilendi* (1960), (c) Waheeda Rahman *Khamoshi* (1969). Courtesy: MAA TV (Program title: *Vendivennela Jabili of Savithri*).**

## 5.2. Hypotheses

Based on the above cultural indices, I would like to present the following hypotheses here:

- (1) The Telugu film industry currently has more cross-cultural/inter-textual tendencies than the Tamil or Hindi film industries.
- (2) Investment-oriented remakes of Telugu films from the silent era to the talkie era to post-globalisation have always been profitable, paralleling the investments in Hollywood.
- (3) The number of remakes from the Telugu film industry to other language film industries and *vice-versa* is higher than any other language.
- (4) Remaking techniques in the Telugu industry exhibit greater extra-textuality or hyper-textuality than those for other languages in form and content (used as a replacement to the term 'text').
- (5) Remaking as inter-textuality in Telugu films displays a high incidence of text within text or inter-texts in divergent forms (sometimes as inspirations, or as adaptations, and sometimes in partly as remakes of songs/tunes from other languages).
- (6) A high incidence of remaking in Telugu film industry serves as an important inter-textual/cross-cultural connection between North and South India.

The remainder of the discussion in this article is based on these assumptions.

## 6. TELUGU REMAKES: INDUSTRY AND INTER-TEXTUALITY (AS CROSS-CULTURALISM)

### 6.1. Industry

In the Telugu film industry, as mentioned earlier, many eminent directors H.M. Reddy (1892–1960), L.V. Prasad (1908–1994), Adurti Subba Rao (1912–1975), K.V. Reddy

(1912–1972), T. Rama Rao and T. Prakasa Rao were pioneers who had directed films in Telugu, Tamil, Bengali and Hindi sometimes separately and simultaneously. In fact, all of these directors began their careers as Mumbai-based film-makers in the early silent/talkie era (1931). L.V. Prasad produced and directed films not only in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi, but also in Bengali/Oriya. This noted film-maker's career took off when he made his debut as an actor in the first Indian talkie, *Alam Ara* (Ardheshir Irani, 1931). L.V. Prasad directed the film *Manohara* in (1954), starring the legendary Shivaji Ganesan, in Tamil, Telugu and Hindi. Noted film producer D Rama Naidu (1936-until date) produced films in as many as 13 regional languages, including Assamese (*Koina Mor Dhuniya*, 2001).

In addition, Telugu film industry hosted a number of film actors such as Nageswara Rao, N.T. Rama Rao, Sivaji Ganeshan, Gemini Ganeshan, M.G. Ramachandran, Savitri, Jamuna, Waheeda Rahman, B. Saroja Devi, Pandari Bai, Girija, Hemamalini, Jayaprada and Sri Devi who contributed their artistic expertise both for the Telugu industry as well as Tamil, Kannada and Hindi enriching the cross-culturalism in film industries across India. At the same time, there was a reverse flow from the Northern India to the Southern Indian Telugu film industry. Jeetendra was christened as the 'Andhra hero' for Telugu remakes in Hindi. A number of heroines from the Mumbai industry have spent time acting in the Telugu industry, including Rati Agnihotri, Twinkle Khanna, Rinke Khanna, Rajani, Rachana (Bengali), Anjala Jhaveri, Preeti Zinghania, Preeti Zinta and Sonali Bendre. Although such actors as Chiranjeevi and Nagarjuna, the later generation of prominent actors, acted in Hindi films produced by the Telugu industry, their contemporaries such as Aamir Khan, Shahrukh and Salman Khan never acted in any of the remakes or other Telugu films produced by the Hindi film industry. However, Amresh Puri, Anil Kapoor, Sanjay Dutt, Paresh Rawal, Mukherji, Pradeep Rathod, Sonu Sood, Ashutosh Rana, Shiyaji Shinde and Ashish Vidyarthi, etc. have acted/have been yet acting in Telugu films.

One clear observation arising out of this study is that the Hindi film industry has never produced a Telugu film (or a Tamil or a Bengali film, for that matter), either as a remake or as an original film involving cross-cultural actors/technicians/singers. Since the talkie era, it has always been the Telugu industry that has directly produced films in Hindi, either in the form of Telugu remakes in Hindi or as Hindi originals. The remakes of films by the Telugu industry, however, have thus paved the way for the flow of inter-cultural indices and cross-cultural elements (such as music and music directors, dances and singers) between the two cultures of North and South India.

When films are remade, the culture depicted in the original novel or story also influences its making. At the same time, the place where the remake is produced also influences the depiction of the story. Thus, two types of cultural inter-mingling provide people with knowledge about both cultures, thus facilitating a harmonious feeling between the two cultures. The South Indian influence on Hindi cinema was slow at the beginning but has progressively grown in extent and impact (Yukta 2009; Somaaya 2011). This influence brought a string of family dramas and musical spectaculars such as *Sargam* (K. Viswaanath 1979, A Jayaprada's debut film in Hindi) into the Bombay movie mainstream. These films have assumed multifaceted forms over the years, and Viswanath's films laid the ground for the revival of cross-cultural arts, such as dance (*Bharatanatyam*, *Kuchipudi*, *Burrakatha*, etc.),



music (*Carnatic and Hindustrani*) and ancient traditions of art in India (Murthy, Bedajit, & Baruah 2011, Unpublished Thesis).

In the remaking of films, an amalgamation takes place of various cultural ethos of India: its linguistic diversities, customs and traditions. The Hindi film *Tere Naam* (Satish Kaushik, 2003) was a remake of the 1999 Tamil film *Sethu* by first-time director Bala. *Sethu* (1999), which was also remade into Telugu as *Seshu* (Jeevita Rajasekhar, 2002). Both belonged to Re-adaptations.

## 6.2. Inter-textuality

A number of directors from the Telugu cinema industry have directed films in Hindi and other languages with inter-textual significance (See Table 4). L.V. Prasad has directed films of equal excellence in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi. Prasad has also produced films in Bengali (*Bidaai*, 1990), Kannada (*Mane Belagida Sose*, 1973) and Malayalam (*Ardhana*, 1993). Prasad directed the Telugu film *Missamma* (1955) and also its remakes (Re-adaptations) in Tamil (*Missamma*, 1955) and Hindi (*Miss Mary*, 1957). The film *Missamma* was based on a Bengali stage comedy, *Monmoyee Girls' School*, which was earlier filmed by Bengali director Jyotish Banerjee, who directed the Hindi remake (Re-adaptation), *Chhoti Bahen* (1952), of the Tamil film *En Thangai* (1952). Prasad also produced *Ek Duje Ke Liye* (1981), the Hindi remake of the Telugu film *Maro Charitra* (1978); both, however, were directed by Balachander simultaneously and hence were re-adaptations. Adurti Subba Rao directed one of the biggest all-time hits in Telugu, *Mooga Manasulu* (1963), based on the concept of reincarnation. Rao also went on to direct the Hindi remake of the same film as re-adaptation titled *Milan* (1967), which also achieved a box office success (see Table 4). Rama Naidu produced the film *Ramudu Bheedu* (Tapi Chanakya, 1964), which was a box office hit in Telugu, and was remade (as re-adaptation) into Hindi as *Ram Aur Shyam* (Tapi Chanakya, 1967). Similarly, Gautam Ghosh directed *Maa Bhoomi* (1979). Likewise, Shyam Benegal, born in Hyderabad and raised as a Bengali, produced more films in Hindi than in Bengali and Telugu.

Remakes are a spectacular illustration of how of one culture melds with another and thereby produces something new and refreshing for audiences to enjoy. Some of these remakes are transformations and trans-textual adaptations, as noted by Robert Stam (Verevis 2006, p.30,147). Robert Stam takes up the concept of inter-textuality in film drawing upon Gérard Genette's description of trans-textuality as 'all that which puts one text into a relation, manifest or secret, with other texts' to describe several types of textual transcendence. One of Rama Naidu's notable remakes was *Prem Nagar* (T. Prakasha Rao, 1971), which was remade as a re-adaptation into Tamil under the title *Vasantha Maligai* (T. Prakasha Rao, 1972). The film was also made into Hindi (re-adaptation) in 1974, keeping the original Telugu title. All three of these remakes were directed by T. Prakash Rao, which is another indication of the cross-cultural aspect of film remakes. The 1999 Hindi film *Hum Aapke Dil Mein Rehte Hain* (directed by Satish Kaushik) was a remake of the Telugu film, *Pavithra Bandham* (Muthyala Subbaiah 1996) but was an update not re-adaptation. Films which were produced and directed after a period of gap usually tended in Telugu/Hindi to be up-dates than re-adaptations. But this is not a thumb rule always.

Apart from direction and production, the Telugu film industry has also facilitated the flow of many actors between Hindi and Telugu films, which has helped develop a strong connection of shared beliefs and culture between South and North India through remakes. When the Telugu classic, *Suvarna Sundari* (Vedantam Raghavaiah, 1957), was remade in Hindi with the same title in the same year, A. Nageshwara Rao and Anjali Devi played the lead roles and earned recognition on a national level. In *Milan* (1967), a remake (re-adaptation) of *Mooga Manasulu* (1963), Telugu actress Jamuna played the identical role of a lively village belle in both films. The versatile Telugu actor Savithiri has performed easily in many films in Telugu, as well as in Tamil and Hindi. In later years, Kamal Hassan, who is a Tamil actor, played the hero in the original Telugu film, *Maro Charithra* (K. Balachander, 1978), as well as in the Hindi remake (re-adaptation), *Ek Dujhe Ke Liye* (K. Balachander, 1981). Hassan has performed in many Telugu films, including *Saaqara Sangamam* (1983) and *Swathi Muthyam* (1986), demonstrating remarkable acting skills.

Recently, Kamal Hassan produced *Dasavatarm* (K.S. Ravikumar, 2008) in Tamil, which was also dubbed into the Telugu and Hindi languages. *Matrudevobhava* (K. Ajay Kumar, 1993) is another film that was first performed in Malayalam as *Akshadhoodu* (Sibi Malayil, 1993) and later remade as a re-adaptation in Telugu. It was also remade as a re-adaptation in Hindi as *Tulsi – Mathru Devobhava* (K. Ajay Kumar, 2008). This culture of dubbing a film in one language into another has familiarised the audience with other actors who speak other languages and at the same time allowed them to appreciate the cultural elements in those original films. For dubbing into other languages, the Telugu film industry occupied the top position in the Indian film industry (see Table 1). Today, there are more film heroines/technicians from other languages, especially from Kannada, Bengali and Tamil, in the Telugu film industry, in both remakes and original films. Moreover, Telugu cinema has attracted many young actors, singers and musicians from across India.

The films *Padamati Sandhya Ragam* (*The Western Sunset Music*; Jandhyala, 1986) and *America Ammayi* (*The American Girl*; Singeetham Srinivasa Rao, 1976) went beyond national boundaries and illustrated the inter-mingling of trans-national cultures. In *Padamati Sandhya Ragam* (1986), the daughter of an orthodox Telugu Brahmin marries a white American, who had been depicted in the film as a person who respects and understands the traditional Indian way of life. The film remains outstanding and unique, even today, for it is blending of Western and Eastern music and instruments (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVoVqzNwMBo>) in the song, *Pibare Ramarasam*. In *America Ammayi* (1976), a Telugu boy marries an American girl, who not only admires Indian traditions, but also gives a stage performance praising the rich culture of Telugu in a Telugu song (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsbrBHDZXOE>). In these films, two American actors play the two central characters. Such an interchange of actors in films with rich cultural inputs as mentioned above is an important aspect of inter-cultural exchange that happens in film.

### 6.3. Intra-textuality and inter-textuality in remaking of songs

With the remakes came the intermixing and adoption of different music traditions. Thus, one finds Hindustani music tradition making its way into the South Indian and Carnatic traditions, taking a proud place in the films of Bollywood. For instance, Shahnai in the

northern tradition has been adopted as Karnai (click here to listen to the trans-cultural music in the Tamil film *Konjum Salangai* directed by M.V. Raman, 1962 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDRgGpEwSYw>) in the South Indian tradition. The song *Sringara Velane Deva* offers the best example of this cross-cultural flow of music. The film was simultaneously made as a re-adaptation in Telugu as *Muripinche Muvvalu* (M.V. Raman, 1962), and the same song and musician were used for the remake as well.

In the film *Suvarna Sundari* (1957, Hindi), Lata Mangeshkar (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7t3YNCyNm6o>) and Mohammad Rafi (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7t3YNCyNm6o>) performed lyrical renditions of the songs based on Carnatic music. World-renowned singers, such as S.P. Balasubramaniam, have popularised Carnatic music in Hindi films – especially those films that were remade from Telugu. Balasubramaniam has also adopted Hindustani music into Telugu films. All of the songs in the Telugu film *Anarkali* (Vedantam Raghavaiah, 1955) were based on the Hindustani music tradition.

Starting with the Telugu film *Santhanam* (C.V. Ranganatha Dasu, 1955 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hv16i2uAuL0>), in which Lata Mangeshkar first performed, Telugu films have been a platform for the exchange of such singers as Mohammad Rafi, Jesudas, Sharada, Chitra, Vani Jayaram, Kavita Krishnamoorthi, Hariharan, Udit Narayan, Shankar Mahadevan and Sonu Nigam. The older generation, including A.M. Raja, Jikki, Bhanumathi, S. Varalakshmi, G. Varalakshmi, Jamuna, Janaki, Susheela, Leela and Nagaiah had offered playback singing in several South Indian languages. Remakes have diversified this exchange of singers and thereby facilitated an inter-cultural exchange.

Film songs have been made and remade from Telugu to other languages and vice versa, both intra-textually and inter-textually for songs in Indian films representing extended narratives. There is a long list of Hindi film songs that have been incorporated into Telugu, either in the similar context of the earlier film or in a different context, depending on the director's perception of the use of the song. The song *chal ud ja re panchi* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30eBpYBDvig>) from the Hindi film *Bhabi* (R. Krishnan Raju, 1957) was incorporated into the Telugu remake *Kuladaivam* (Kabir Das, 1960) as *payaninche o chiluka* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvO3MYzdOqA>), retaining the same music, tune and context. Each version was sung by an excellent singer: the Hindi version by Md. Rafi and the Telugu version by Ghantashala Venkateswara Rao. In contrast, the Hindi song *khilte hai gul yahan* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GOYwUfyQN0>) from the film *Sharmeeli* (Sameer Ganguly, 1971) was adopted for the 1973 Telugu film *Dhanama Daivama* (C.S. Rao, 1973) in the song *nee madhi challaga* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cVlegTZYU4>) in a completely different context. Similarly a number of Telugu songs have been re-made into Hindi.

Not only have these songs been made and remade in and from Telugu, a flow of singers and music directors from the Telugu cinema/music industry has facilitated the cultural flow. Mohammad Rafi served as the voice of the legendary N.T. Rama Rao in the song *naa madi ninnu pilichindi ganamai venu ganamai* (my heart has called for you as a flute music). Not only singers from Bombay have made their way into Telugu cinema. Singers from other languages have also contributed to the Telugu film industry. One of the earliest was the Tamil singer Sharada, who sang both Telugu and Hindi songs. Sharada sang the song *kanti choopu*

*chebutondi* (the direction of your looks convey to me) in the Telugu film *Jeevitha Chakram* (C.S. Rao, 1971) and *titli udi ud Jo chali* in Hindi film *Suraj* (T. Prakasha Rao, 1966). Complementing this inter-cultural flow of singers was the Telugu singer P. Susheela, who has performed songs in multiple Indian languages, including Tamil, Hindi and Kannada.

Additionally, there are music directors and composers whose music has been used and adopted in Telugu, as well as Hindi. Well-known music director Shankar-Jaikishan, who has provided popular music in Hindi cinema, has been adopted in the Telugu cinema industry. The song *teri pyari pyari surat* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbReJSt056U>) from the film *Sasuraal* (T. Prakasha Rao, 1961) was adapted in the Telugu song *tiya-tiyani* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmeiyk3OfPQ>) from the film *Quaidi Kannayya* (B. Vittalacharya, 1962). Most recently, the singer and music director S.P. Balasubramaniam has earned accolades for his singing in as many as six or seven regional languages including Hindi. At the same time, this singer has also performed in as many as eight Indian languages.

The Telugu film industry has borrowed texts (literary or film) from other industries such as the Bengali, Hindi, Tamil and Kannada, and has also provided scripts to other industries for remaking films. Films *Milan* (1967) from *Moogamasulu* (1963) and *Insaniyat* (S.S. Vasan, 1955) from *Palletoori Pilla* (B.A. Subba Rao, 1950) are just a few examples of the significant number of films of inter-textuality from the Telugu film industry to others. The celebrated Telugu classic *Mayabazar* (K.V. Reddy, 1957) was also remade in Tamil and released a month later as a re-adaptation. The Hindi film *Bhabhi* (R. Krishnam Raju, 1957) was one of the earliest films from Bombay to be remade into Telugu, as *Kuladaivam* (Kabir Das, 1960) as a re-adaptation. At the same time, the Telugu film industry acquired a number of films for remakes in Telugu from Tamil as well. The film *Preminchi Choodu* (P. Pullaiah, 1956) was remade from the Tamil film *Kaadalikka Neramillai* (C.V. Sridhar, 1964) as a re-adaptation and *Gudi Gantalu* (V. Madhusudan Rao, 1964) was remade as re-adaptation from *Aalayamani* (1962).

#### 6.4. Inter-textuality within the Telugu film industry

The Telugu cinema industry has also remade its own films. Most of these are re-adaptations or updates. There are very few homages or true-remakes in Telugu film industry. Especially, when novels were rendered into films, Telugu industry has resorted to homages or true remakes falling under cinematic categories as film-makers in Telugu industry believe that film texts are different from literary texts, and their production techniques based on literary visualisations are not the same, an argument which Metz (Stam 1999, p.112) and Derrida (Stam 1999, p.181) held long ago while explaining *grand-syntagmatique*. To quote Metz: Literary language, for example, is the set of messages whose matter of expression is writing; cinematic language is the set of messages whose matter of expression consists of five tracks or channels-moving photographic images, recorded phonetic sound, recorded noises, recorded musical sound and writing (Stam 1999, p.112). According to Stam, cinema is a language, in sum, not only in a broadly metaphorical sense, but also as a set of messages grounded in a given matter of expression, and as an artistic language, a discourse or signifying practice characterised by specific codifications and ordering procedures (p.112).

The first Telugu talkie film, *Bhakta Prahalada* (1931), was produced by H.M. Reddy and C.S.R. Anjaneyulu simultaneously with *Alam Ara* (Ardeshir Irani, 1931) on the same sets in Bombay (Thoraval 2000) was remade twice as re-adaptations by the same director Chitrapu Narayana Murthy in Telugu – first in 1942, and later in 1967; both films, however, differed in terms of *grand-syntagmatique* (*mise-en-scene*) radically, though they fell under re-adaptation in terms of adherence to the original *Bhagavatam* text. Similarly, *Bhakta Ramadas* (one version starring and directed by Nagaiah, 1964) and another starring Nagarjuna and directed by K. Raghavendra Rao, 2006) and *Bhakta Potana* (Nagaiah, starring and directed by K.V. Reddy, 1942; later Gummadi, starring and directed by Gutta Raminedu, 1966) were films on the lives of holy saints, which were remade several times in Telugu as homages/true-remakes.

Another classic example is *Panduranga Mahatmyam* (K. Kameswara Rao, 1957; K. Raghavendra Rao, 2008), a story that revolves round the life of a devotee of Lord Krishna called Panduranga, which was produced three times; one starring N.T. Rama Rao and a later one with Balakrishna, the son of N.T. Rama Rao were homages.

Most of the popular novels of Yaddanpudi Sulochana Rani, Arikepudi (Koduri) Kousalya Devi, Yandamuri Veerendranath, and Malladi Venkatakrishnamurthy have been produced by producers like Rama Naidu, Krishna and others have been homages not re-adaptations as one would have loved them to be. But, Telugu film production techniques often reinforced the contention that films differently visualise the texts in the form of *mise-en-scene* and that film text and literary text cannot be the same for interpretation and application of literary theories.

## 7. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF INTER-TEXTUALITY AND INDUSTRY

Clifford Geertz (1973) advocates 'a cutting of the culture concept down to size therefore actually insuring its continual importance and defines a semiotic concept of culture' as webs of significance. He distinguishes analytically between 'the cultural and social aspects of human life' and sees culture as an 'ordered system of meaning and of symbols, in terms of which social interaction takes place, while social system is the pattern of social interaction itself' (1973, p.144). Therefore, 'cultural structure and social structure are not mere reflexes of one another but independent and interdependent variables' (1973, p.169). The modern hermeneutic-semiotic concept of culture has been created in a dialogue between the humanities and the social sciences in which the narrow and the broader concepts have met and modified each other (Fornas 1995, p.137). The concept both divides and connects aesthetic and ethnographic traditions by being of intermediary specificity and by emphasising the interplay among action, consciousness, inter-subjective communication, symbolic forms and social institutions, writes Fornas (1995, p.138). According to Fornas, culture is the necessary interplay between contextualised creative practices and ordered sets of symbolic forms (Kristeva 1974/1984, p.19) and he distinguishes between two main aspects of texts: 'Genotext' and 'Phenotext'. The former relates to the semiotic and proto-symbolic procedural aspect of the practices in which subjects channel drive energy and generate texts, whereas the latter denotes the structural aspect of textual products within transmission chains of communication (Kristeva 1974/1984, p.86).

Given these complex views on cross-cultural communication and mediated processes of meanings of symbols, signs, codes, conventions and social practices in the foreground, the

mythologicals of early Indian cinema produced in Bombay could not offer signs, symbols, codes and conventions for the characters of *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavatam* that are acceptable on a national level to all cultures of India. Lack of attention to costume designs, sets, features of characters (for instance, Krishna always adorns his head with a feather of a peacock, and Shiva always wears a cobra around his neck) has resulted in each character being portrayed in a different way for each remake in Bombay films. Further lack of serious study of these characters as described in the texts of *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavatam* with reference to their specific signs, symbols, codes and conventions has even made some characters somewhat humorous to observe.

These gaps have been filled by the serious study of characters of *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana* and *Bhagavatam* by the Telugu film industry. This industry has produced a number of films, more than the Hindi and Tamil industries since the advent of talkies, in the mythological genre and narrative based on the two lengthy Indian epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Although film-making in India started with mythological themes (Dada Saheb Phalke directed *Raja Harichandra* in 1912), the Telugu film industry was the first to develop cross-cultural indices that defined the dress, living styles and symbolic crowns to adorn each mythological godhead (such as Rama, Sri Krishna, Devendra, Yamadharama Raj, Sani, Bheema, Naarada, Shiva, Brahma and Vishnu), as well as the sets and the lighting of the palaces, which were later followed in Bollywood and in the twin television serials, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* in the 1980s. However, why are we calling the development of these indices cross-cultural?

First, historians consider both *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* as essentially related to an Aryan culture, and, therefore, they are considered North Indian also (Gupta 1998). Historians also suggest the regions of India south of the Vindhya mountain ranges are South Indian and are essentially Dravidian (Gokulsing & Dissanayake 1998). Many authors consider the abovementioned classification to be genuine.

Therefore, we have compared the films produced in the Bombay industry on the subject of these two epics with films produced in the Telugu industry. In terms of production – technical as well as symbolic – the Telugu film industry provides a well-researched depiction of each mythological character in these two epic texts. For instance, the Telugu actor N.T. Rama Rao (see NTR's histrionics as Lord Krishna <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lznnReaaR-M&feature=related>) set a record for the number of times he played the roles of Lord Srikrishna and Lord Rama in films. His portrayal of these characters set a standard for the depiction of these two lords of ancient epics in Indian film and television. When Arun Govil played Lord Rama in the television series *Ramayan* and when Nithish Bharadwaj played Srikrishna in the television series *Mahabharat*, their similarities to those roles as earlier immortalised by N.T. Rama Rao in Telugu films could not be missed in terms of dress, ornaments, body language and dialogue delivery. On a similar note, the depictions of S.V. Ranga Rao as *Ghatotkacha* in *Mayabazar* (1957), *Hirnyakashyap* in *Bhakta Pahlada* (1967) and *Duryodhan* in *Pandava Vanavasam* (K. Kameswara Rao, 1965) have proved to be touchstones for conceiving these roles in a mythological framework in later versions in cinema or on television.

In depicting the traditional arts through social arts, K. Vishwanath has been prominent in conveying native Indian ethos, music, culture and dance in films. His films *Sankarabharnam*

(K. Viswanath, 1979), *Saagara Sangamam* (watch the dance by Kamal Hassan; K. Viswanath, 1983 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckuYaGGkqjw>), *Sirivennela* (K. Viswanath, 1986) and *Swarna Kamalam* (K. Viswanath, 1988) not only have inspired intense discussions about Indian culture, music and dance forms among the youth, but also have contributed to the revival of interest in Indian fine arts among them. In the film *Sankarabharnam* (K. Viswanath, 1979), Shankar Shastri, the main protagonist, is an exponent of Carnatic music. In a scene in the film in which pseudo-enthusiasts of Western music mock Indian classical Carnatic music, Shankar Shastri reprimands the youths by telling them that music is divine, regardless of whether it is Indian or Western. In Viswanath's other film, *Swarna Kamalam* (1988), the noted American exponent of Indian dance forms, Sharon Lowen, makes an appearance. In the film, she delivers a well-structured dialogue to the heroine, Bhanupriya, explaining the importance of Indian culture and traditions and insisting that it should be practiced with respect and conviction. Although films on Indian ways of life and values have been produced earlier, the conviction with which Viswanath has presented these aspects in his films cannot be over emphasised.

As mentioned earlier, the business of remakes has brought significant financial gain to the Telugu and the Hindi film industries. Although the Telugu film producers initially bought the rights for remakes from the Hindi industry, more recently, the Hindi film industry has been buying Telugu film remake rights and spending large sums of money. Because of the globalisation and high export market for both Telugu and Hindi films, the stakes involved in remakes have also become high. Although the data in Table 1 indicate that a number of remakes from the Telugu film industry are in demand in other film industries, in the last year and a half, as many as 40–50 films from the Telugu film industry have been chosen for production as remakes in the Hindi film industry – a fact that highlights the growth of the Telugu film industry in offering films for remakes in other languages. Hindi film stars Salman Khan, Aameer Khan and Akshay Kumar have been especially keen on remaking successful films starring Mahesh Babu.

As a result, Salman Khan produced *Wanted* (Prabhu Deva, 2009), and Akki plays the lead in *Rowdy Rathore* (Prabhu Deva, 2012), a remake of the Telugu film *Vikramarkudu* (S.S. Rajamouli), which was released in 2006. The film was remade in Tamil as *Siruthai* (Siva, 2008) and in Kannada as *Veera Madakari* (Sudeep, 2009) both as re-adaptations. In this sense, the other film industries are apparently far behind the Telugu film industry. One important reason for the strong position of the Telugu film industry in remake production is its wider cross-cultural indices, which we identified at the beginning of this article and discussed throughout. The greater leverage that Telugu films offer in terms of easy application or modification of local cultures through their scripts and screenplays, sets, locales, and compositions of shots has positioned the industry at an all-time high in profits through remakes.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

This article discusses the significance of remaking films from a cross-cultural/inter-textual perspective in India. The study further assigns the relative positions of Telugu and Hindi as the dominant film industries in India offering the highest number of remakes from one to another and thereby creating a cross-cultural connection between North and South India.

With great dexterity, since the beginning of the talkie era, the Telugu film industry has created a cross-cultural base that has allowed more flexibility (hyper-textuality) for the industry to emerge as a leader in remakes in India. The cross-cultural indices identified as strong areas in the Telugu film industry have indeed offered a greater ambience for film remakes not only from Telugu to other languages, but also from other languages to Telugu. Thus, the Telugu film industry compared with others has had more cross-cultural influences in terms of making inter-textual films/film songs in a diverse country such as India. Film remakes have been one major area of achievement for the Telugu film industry. Stories, scripts and subjects from different linguistic cultures (Bengali, Tamil, Malayalam and Hindi) have been widely used by the industry to make and remake films. The Telugu film industry has also remade several of its own films. Furthermore, our study found that the cross-cultural character of the Telugu film industry has become stronger by involving actors, singers and technicians from other languages and cultures. A number of Telugu cinema directors, actors and singers have also worked for other language industries, such as Hindi, Bengali, Tamil and Malayalam. This study showed how the Telugu industry has set the standard for Indian mythological films, which are essentially Aryan in terms of anthropological studies, by prescribing the appropriate technical and symbolic elements, such as dress codes for individual mythological characters and lifestyles in such aspects as speech, body language and mannerisms in addition to designing specific sets, lighting and ornamentation. The present study elucidates, albeit in small measure, the complex process that the Telugu film industry follows in evolving as a cross-cultural base.

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