

A Semiotic Approach to the Construction of Classical Identity in Indian Classical Music Videos

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Abstract : Indian classical (Karnatik) music videos across various media platforms have followed an audio-visual pattern that conforms to its socio-cultural and quasi-religious identity. The present paper analyzes the semiotic variations between 'pure Karnatik music videos' and 'independent/contemporary-collaborative music videos' posted on social media by young professional Karnatik musicians. The paper analyzes these media texts by comparing their various structural sememes namely, the title, artists, music, narrative schemata, visuals, lighting, sound, and costumes. The paper argues that the pure Karnatik music videos are marked by the presence of certain recurring mythological or third level signifiers and that these signifiers and codes are marked by their conspicuous absence in the independent music videos produced by the same musicians. While the music and the musical instruments used in both these sets of music videos remain similar, the meaning that is abducted by the beholder in each case is entirely different. The paper also attempts to study the identity conflicts that are projected through these music videos and the extent to which the cultural connotations of Karnatik music govern the production of its music videos.

Keywords : abduction, identity, media semiotics, music video

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