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Multi-Semiotic Communications in the Spatio-Temporal Making of Vijayendra Prasad's *Bahubali*

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Abstract

Film has made popular several visual forms of culture across the globe, one of which is Indian anthropology. The objectives behind this study are to inform Indian movies' audience on what some of their iconic, indexical, symbolic images and visual representations as well as actors' verbal and non-verbal actions could be interpreted to mean in their various spaces and times of occurrences. Therefore, the researchers are also interested in exploring the socio-cultural complexities that unfold between the spatio-temporal makings of the event series in the film – *Bahubali*. This paves a way for discerning what motivates many non-Hindi speakers world-wide to watch their films, translated or not translated. The concept of visual grammar, designed by Kress and van Leeuwen in *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (1996; 2006) from the theoretical basis of Halliday's 'metafunction' and O'Toole's *The Language of Displayed Art* (1994; 2011) which focus on art works like architecture and sculpture in addition to painting, were employed for data analysis. Hence, this qualitative research of ten (10) randomly select paired-

samples from *Bahubali*, analytically rely on these two foundational books that both contain and capture crucial semiotic resources with non-verbal communication for data analysis. It was found that semiotic spaces of sacrifices, such as that of Shivagami until Shivudu, (the protagonist), was given to his foster father and that of Ballaladeva on the battle field against Kalakenya are spiritual as well as religious. Also, scenarios of promises and fulfillment, bows and respect, songs and festivities, and oath taking and steadfastness are all parts of Indian culture. The paper concludes that the film exudes more of Indian's cultural, spiritual, religious and conventional attachment through different verbal and non-verbal modes to fulfill semiotic obligations.
Keywords: Semiotics, multimodal(ity), social semiotics, visual grammar, film making

Introduction

Film making is a global phenomenon as influenced by global technological advancements. To corroborate this, Thompson and Bordwell (2010) note that this particular century saw the spread of several visual forms of popular culture across the globe. The industrial revolution gave way to the invention of lantern slides, photographs, and visual fiction in mass production. This, not withstanding, does not hinder the showcasing and promotion of socio-cultural believes of different ethnics, tribes and languages through films by the producers and makers of such films in different dimensions. Before the advent of film making in the United States, numerous theatre and dramatic troupes used to tour different towns and cities to perform in theatres and opera buildings for cohorts of people of varied classes and circuses to see.

Later on, the movement of theatre productions around different localities became expensive for producers and viewers, who had to travel from far distances to visit major places of entertainment. As a result, film became an alternative that provided a simpler and low-priced way of entertaining the masses. The filmmaker could

record actors performing via the use of three-dimensional images that could show past events, and with this possibility, filmmaking began to evolve. In fact, Lumiere Brothers, who were the two pioneer filmmakers based their inventions on *persistence of vision* and *phi phenomenon*, the two terms which are explained by Cook (2016) as the two phenomena that enable human beings to view the succession of still images together as a whole and not fragmented; it is what permit the sense of motion as the root of cinematography.

As a result of the fact that the films of the Lumière brothers were mostly recorded from exterior scenes and audience were getting bored of viewing statically positioned films, another eminent filmmaker, George Méliès, came to the fore to contribute to the visual narrative storytelling which earned him the name, the "magician" in film history. In his narrative experiments, he made use of several camera tricks such as stop motion and other special effects to create difficult scenes and fantasy to surprise his audience. Without gainsaying, it was his film titled, *A Trip to the Moon* in 1902 that marked the first science fiction film in history. Though, he built-up his style from what the Lumière brothers had started, he incorporated diverse genres such as comedies and pantomimes filmed in his own studio and several other locations as well as constructing several sets in telling his stories. It was understood that the main reason for constructing his studio was to be able to handle the *mise en scène* of his films (Thompson and Bordwell, 2010).

To explain the concept of *mis en scene*, one needs to fathom other pivotal audio-visual concepts that are cardinal to interpretation of actions and inactions in films and movies. They include: *settings* (time and location) which reveal characters' identity, create their believability in the narrative world, and serve as symbolism representing other meanings (Petrie and Boggs, 2018); *sets* refers to real environs and physically constructed sets in films to tell a story that is complimented by the lighting design and style

provided (McClellan, 2020); *props* represents items or objects handled by characters or placed in films to ignite a performance. In furtherance to this, Corrigan and White (2009) aver that, 'a prop, also known as "property", is an item placed in films based on functional purposes and as objects handled by characters in executing their roles on screen.' In summary, Brako (2022) notes, 'Thus, settings, sets, and props in films play pivotal roles in achieving the aforementioned visually to the viewer on screen. These visual elements are known as aspects of Production Design in filmmaking.'

It is noteworthy, at this juncture, that this work takes another dimension from previous studies on *Bahubali* which includes: Subhaijit's (2016) *Depiction of Adivasis in Bahubali and Magadheera: A Study on the Creation/Shaping of Public Opinion by Mainstream Cinema*, where he studies specific frames from the films Bahubali and Magdheera in order to outline the creation and consolidation of the stereotypical depiction of indigenous people in contemporary Indian cinema; Ankit and Neha's (2018) *A feminist reading of Bahubali (Franchise)*, where they unravel how women are given equal recognition and same responsibility as men through the three major female actresses in the film and how gender equality and women rights are promoted; and Aishawarya's (2019) *A Comparative Study of Bahubali with Shakespear's Othello*, where she establishes a relationship between the epic movie Bahubali and Shakespeare's tragedy Othello to bring out ample number of lessons that the women characters of the film have to teach today's feminism.

Based on the foregoing, this work examines Indian film iconic, indexical, symbolic images and visual representations of actions. It further researches into how actors' verbal and non-verbal actions could be interpreted to mean in their various spaces and times of occurrences. The interest of this research in exploring the socio-cultural complexities that unfolds between the spatio-temporal

makings of the event series in the film – *Bahubali*, is therefore, expected to pave a way for discerning what motivates many non-Hindi speakers world-wide to watch their films, translated or not translated.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives behind this study are:

- to inform Indian movies' audience on what some iconic, indexical and symbolic visual representations together with actors' actions may mean in *Bahubali*;
- to analytically explore the socio-cultural complexities that unfold between the spatial and temporal makings of the event series in *Bahubali;* and
- to discern what motivates many non-Hindi speakers world-wide to watch Indian films, neither by understanding their language nor with translated versions of most of their films.

Methodology for the Study

Owing to the need to dissect meaning, the concept of visual grammar designed by Kress and van Leeuwen shall, to certain extent, be useful in the data analysis of this work. For detailed analysis, O'Toole's focus on art works, which includes architecture and sculpture in addition to painting, will also be employed to do the analysis. Hence, this qualitative research comprises ten (10) randomly selected paired-samples from *Bahubali*; and it will analytically rely on two foundational books that both contain and capture crucial semiotic resources with non-verbal communication, O'Toole's *The Language of Displayed Art* (1994; 2011), and Kress and van Leeuwen's *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (1996; 2006).

Synopsis of *Bahubali*

Bahubali is an Indian film that was released in parts; part one (the Beginning) was released in 2015 while part 2 (the Conclusion) was released in 2017. In Kuntala village, Shivudu (the Bahubali Junior

and the protagonist, also called Shivu) repeatedly attempts to scale a waterfall mountain to explore what lies on the side of it. His wish becomes a reality with his adventurous search of illusionary love for Avantika – the heroin of a tribe fighting for emancipation of their daughter, Devasena, from the 25-year captivity of Bhalladeva, the antagonist. Avantika, the rebellious warrior, initially wages war against Shivudu before she discovers that his intention is to return her long-lost mask. The two of them fall in love and Shivudu pledges to single-handedly help her accomplish her mission. After his sneak into Mahishmati kingdom to rescue Devasena, he gets caught and engages in a fierce battle with the King's head of armory, Katappa, who later realizes that Shivudu is the late Mahendra Bahubali's son; they enter into truce before all the warriors bow for the second coming of Bahubahi, their beloved king, in the body of his son, Shivudu.

Katappa makes him learn his past as the story goes into flashback where we are told how Mahendra Bahubali was a noble king and Bhalladeva, his cousin brother, stands as his stern villain until he sees his downfall. Shivagami, Bhajjala's wife and the Royal Queen of Mahishmati, is fair and feisty as she dedicatedly and dutifully raises both Bhalladeva (her own son) and Bahubali (the former King's son) together as her own sons. She even proclaims that the wiser and more deserving of the both will be crowned the new king of Mahishmati Kingdom. Katappa narrates the story of Mahendra Bahubali to Shivudu, who learns his lineage as the prince of Mahishmati and the son of Mahendra Bahubali. He decides to dethrone and punish Bhalladeva for all his past travesty of justice with the help of Katappa, the leader of Mahishmati armory. However, Shivudu must first achieve the impossible by defeating 'the mighty King Bhalladeva' to avenge the death of his father, Mahendra Bahubali, free his mother from 25-year long bondage and emancipate his people from Bhalladeva's injustice before he claims the rightful heir to the throne of Mahishmati Kingdom.

Review of Related Literature

Overview of Semiotics

Anything that can be taken as sign is studied in semiotics where recognition and interpretation of sign informed the term 'semiology' attached to the linguistic field of study by de Saussure (1966) in one of his early works on semiotics. Sebeok (1994, pp. 17-38) sees semiotics as science of signs that is conceivable from six species, namely: signal, symptom, icon, index, symbol and name. Sless (1986, p. 179) opines that 'Semiotics occurs whenever we stand back from our ways of understanding and communicating and ask how these ways of understanding and communicating arise, what form they take, and why.' It is so much socially inclined that its basis focuses on the agency of sign maker which refers to a person who makes and interprets sign; that is, a way of being engaged with sign making. This is the reason for Jeowitt et.al.'s (2016, p. 59) argument that 'sign systems are shaped through social usage; they are not prior or given or abstract; it is not possible to separate a sign system from society and its contexts of use by people'. Based on this belief, Gillian (2016, p. 137) as referenced by Ugagu-Dominic (2021, p. 88) concurs that sign system 'explores the theoretical semiotic potential of particular kind of semiotic resources and what kinds of meanings could potentially be made by what particular resources'.

In the midst of considering the ground-breaking efforts of the two founding fathers of semiotics, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), a French linguist, and Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), an American philosopher, Sless (1986, p. 180) affirms that 'semiotics is a multidisciplinary platform on which many stands without realising that they share the stage with others or knowing where the script or the plot comes from.' Charles Sanders Peirce, an American philosopher, who is considered as the father of pragmatism, conceptualises semiotics as a sign that focuses on three structures or classifications known as representatum, referent and interpretant. The first one, representatum, depicts the meaning

of physical things. The second, referent, refers to the representation of something by a sign while the third, known as interpretant shows the sense made out of explaining physical things as divergent from their physical meaning. In short, Peirce focus was to engage human beings/interpreters to attach critical thinking to any sign they come across (Chandler 2002).

On the other hand, Ferdinand de Saussure (1976), the Swiss linguist sees semiotics beyond linguistics, but as a scientific way of analysing and teaching the characteristics of signs and their roles in our socio-cultural terrains. Therefore, Saussure's understanding of signs considers a sign as Signifier and the Signified. While Signifier represents the physical appearance of a sign, the Signified stands for the idea the signifier symbolises. Simply put, his idea of dual-dimensional basis of semiotic interpretation encapsulates how human beings understand or make meanings of what they see or hear. To Saussure, a sign becomes a sign when it is deliberately explained with a meaning by someone. That is to say, a sign can be viewed as a sign when it is explained as such through the interpreter's possible and valid understanding.

In short, the two proponents have made their marks in their positive contributions towards the postulation and development of the field of semiotics. Both of them tend to view semiotics as reader/viewer/interpreter dependent field, hence they both give recourse to cultural background to any apt and accurate interpretation. However, as Charles Sanders' triadic theory tilts towards the propagation of psychological imports for interpretations of signs and semiotic systems, de Saussure's dyadic theory favours application of humans' sociological understanding and meaning-making imports to interpretation of signs.

Multimodality at a Glance

Numberless researchers have varied their explanation on the claim that multimode of discourse is inherent in words, speeches and

non-verbal phenomena across global languages, ethnicities, societies and cultures. Hence, O' Halloran (2011, p. 1) concludes that 'Multimodal discourse analysis is an emerging paradigm in discourse studies which extends the study of language to the study of language in combination with other resources, such as images, colours, scientific symbolism, gestures, actions, music and sound'. This assertion forms part of the valid basis of Abdullahi-Idiagbon to describe Multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) as the linguistic field that aids our need to focus on paralanguage, multimedia and modes of communication such as voice quality, motion and still pictures and signs (Abdullahi-Idiagbon 2014, p. 5). Bearing this in mind, multiple aspects of language come to play in doing Multimodal Analysis because, according to Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 31), 'all choices will serve to draw attention to certain aspects of identity that will be associated with certain kind of discourses.' This means that both iconographical and iconological analysis in MDA assists in exploring the way that individual elements in images, such as objects and settings are able to signify discourses in ways that might not be obvious at first sight; this makes them more suggestive and open to various interpretations (Machin and Mayr 2012, p. 43).

A bid to amalgamate and cater for many, if not all, of these multiple properties of language has led to various theoretical postulations on the field of MDA such as Kress and Leeuwen, who, according to Chen (2016, p. 91), point out that 'visual communication has resources for representation, interaction and composition, which are analogous to the three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual in Hallidayan systemic-functional grammar. Representational meaning can be classified into two subtypes, namely narrative representation and conceptual representation.' In 1994, the other pioneer in MDA, Michael O'Toole, published in his book, *The Language of Displayed Art*, which focuses more on art works and including architecture and sculpture, in addition to painting. The core of this book is on the

contention that semiotics can assist in the search for a language, and people's perceptions of a work of art can be shared. And also, this book explores the grammar of the visual arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture, proposing that viewers simultaneously read three different kinds of meanings: what is represented (representational meaning), how it engages us (modal meaning) and how it is composed (compositional meaning).

Interface between Semiotics and Multimodality

Since this work is dedicated to semiotic ex-ray of multimodal ways of effective communication of meaning, literature in the fields of Multimodality and Semiotics are bound to be reviewed. This fact does not jettison the need to explain the various spatio-temoral elements of *mis en scene* (such as setting, sets and prop within which we can identify diverse icons, indices and symbols) as socio-culturally used in *Bahubali* to help viewers discern the critically in-depth meaning embellished in each of the considered scene pictures.

In essence, doing semiotics is doing multimodal discourse and vice versa; and to a very large extent, we could say that multimodal study is a form of social semiotics as explained by Gillian (2016, p. 137) thus: 'Social semiotics analysis identifies and describes the available modes and the semiotic resources and how they are used in a given situation. It also considers the choices that are made, the motivation and how they are patterned.' To get the whole picture of the interwoven relationship that exists between multimodality and semiotics more clearly, it should be noted that there is now a movement towards the operation of a common semiotic principles in and across the view of multimodality of different modes; this gives a huge opportunity to genres, like music used to encode action, or images use to encode emotion to be extensively researched in linguistics. This is basically done to come up with a semiotics theory that could be appropriately used to meet the demand of contemporary semiotic practice.

From the past till today in many contexts, texts of many modes, including films or newspapers specially take hierarchical organization with integrated editing process. However, the modern age of digitalization has made the different modes to be technically treated the same way at certain level of representation with the possibility of being operated by one multi-skilled person with the aid of one interface, one mode of physical manipulation. Hence, Kress and van Leeuwen's approach is a new development that seeks to provide the missing element from the equation: a way of doing the core semiotics rather than studying just the technical elements of semiotic imports; their concern is vested around how we might have, not only a unified and unifying technology and semiotics (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001, p. 2).

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data Extracts 1



Fig. 1a: Shivagami's hand stuck until she delivers Bahubali (Junior)



Fig. 1b: Devasena assured of Bahu's return

In figure 1a, the space of non-verbal semiotic communication is that of a sea containing icons (images) of two live humans and a hand of a drowned one. The hand is a visual representation of royalty with some royal anklets around the wrists of the drowned Queen Shivagami, who died in her quest to save the baby (the

anchorage of all the icons) in fulfillment of her promise to his mother; her non-verbal communication with finger-pointing indicates the direction of Mahishmati where the child comes from. The Indian supernatural evidence is proven with the floating of Shivagami's hand from dawn till sun rise when she calls on the God of Mahishmati to preserve the boy to set her mother free. In relation to this, figure 1b reveals Indian's cultural attachment to vow through the non-verbal iconic representation of the baby's hand on her mother's; this as well signifies a promise which made the baby persevere to stay alive till his foster father from Quora village came to take him from the mysteriously floating hand. The baby later did fulfill his promise against all odds.

Data Extracts 2



Fig. 2a: Balladeva guards on Mahishmati's subjects



Fig. 2b: Shivudu's trait of compassion and power

The two icons in figures 2a and 2b communicate scenarios of suffering and severe torment in the hands of Ballaladeva, the antagonist of the film. The verbal text contained in figure 2a is an irony of the visual representation where many Mahishmati subjects are whipped while some bow in fear despite the beautiful and colourful storey-buildings around them. The only individuals with free and flourishing life, as could be seen in figure 2a are

Ballaladeva's guards - one on a horse and the other walking through the slaves who are in great trepidation at their sight. However, in figure 2b, the masked figure is the icon of freedom and strength for the subjects; he holds the rope to prevent the falling of a 1000-feet golden statue of Ballaladeva and save the subjects from being massacred; his firm grip and pull up of a fallen man also restored the half-dead spirit of the enslaved subjects to stand the statue. The mask on his face is a symbol of secrecy and identity prevention so as for him to carry out his mission – to free his yet to be known enslaved mother, Devasena.

Data Extracts 3



Fig. 3a: Avantika joyful for regaining her mask



Fig. 3b: Shivu and Avantika tying nuptial knot in a waterfall shrine

Figures 3a and 3b above are symbolic in a snowy waterfall setting. Figure 3a is that of a rebel fighter lady – Avantika, who realises that the man she took as her foe is ironically her helper for bringing back her valuable and long-lost mask. After affirming her ownership of the symbolic mask, her identity-shielding battle tool, she carefully glares at it and hugged Shivu affectionately as her indices of joy. Figure 3b is a spacio-temporal agreement with the experience in figure 3a as Avantika falls in love; she couldn't keep her elation to Shivu who made her realize how beautiful she is by painting her lips, dressing her hair, painting her forehead and

inscribing tattoos on her body parts. Two of the tattoo inscriptions are the wine-and-black-coloured symbolic ones on Avantika and Shivu's hands which connect effortlessly. It shows that Avantika has culturally consented to marrying Shivu by placing her hand upon his, facing up her bridal ring in colours red and yellow to him and affirming it with the text - 'I made pact with my heart'.

Data Extracts 4



Fig. 4a: Jubilation on the presence of Shivu



Fig. 4b: Ridiculous square-up of Balladeva's statue with Shivu's stature

Figure 4a depicts the indices of jubilation upon Bahubali's coronation as the Commander-in-chief of Armed Forces of Mahishmati. With images of different architectural decorations around the space and drummers including the ones locking their symbolic ceremonial horns, coupled with Mahishmati subject's exclamatory shouting of 'Bahubali! Bahubali!', the occasion turned sour for the king, Ballaladeva, in favour of the Army Chief, Bahubali who is the loved and accepted king-figure by the people of Mahishmati. On the other side, figure 4b illuminates the ridiculous spacio-temporal capturing of the square-up of Balladeva's statue with Shivudu (Bahubali Senior's son). Multiple iconic architectural edifices and symbolic Mahismati's flags are meant to be a befitting setting for immortalization of Ballaladeva in gold. The sculptural work of 1000-feet tall golden statue

iconizes the Royal appearance of the King, Ballaladeva, wearing a crown and holding an imperial staff. Upon all, Bahubali's son stole the day just like his father (Mahendra Bahubali) did.

Data Extracts 5



Fig. 5a: Katappa recognizes Shivu as Bahubali Jr.



Fig. 5b: Katappa fulfilling Devasena's promise

Figures 5a and 5b work hand in hand as iconic captures of cultural demand and gladiator respect. The space in figure 5a depicts torrential rain in rocky forest where a fierce battle had happened between Mahishmati soldiers and the then unknown Shivudu (son of Mahendra Bahubali). After cutting off the head of Mahishmati's price, Kattapa was going with full force to bring down Shivu, only for him to discover a pure resemblance of their dear demi-god (Bahubali) in Shivu's physic, look and valour; hence, he declared the second coming of Manhendra by exclaiming 'Bahubali!' before he retrospected his birthday that he put his leg upon his forehead (as Devasena requested him to fulfill her ancestral cultural rights). Figure 5b reveals the interior space of trepidation and horror, the day Kattapa sadly fulfilled his promise to Devasena on her childbirth despite the fact he was the villain for her husband's demise; the indices of which could be seen in his head and his hand stained with blood.

Data Extracts 6



Fig. 6a: Bahubali's traits of care to Mahishmati slaves



Fig. 6b: Balladeva's recklessness against Mahishmati's sacrificial bull

Figure 6a represents an exterior space of tranquility and respect while figure 6b depicts a battle field space/setting. Props which include symbolic war clothing like helmets and armours are seen on Mahishmati soldiers in figure 6b. It displays when Ballaladev callously massacred the sacrificial bull, which he presumes would metaphysically metamorphose to victory for their armory; however, it was a sheer heart of bravery and an art of convincing leadership from Bahubali, who didn't sacrifice a bull, that energized the weak bodies and souls of the people of Mahishmati to defeat the mighty Kalakenya and his dare-devil soldiers. In contrast, figure 6a takes us back to the teen age of Bahuabli; the spatio-temporal representation shows how humble and caring Bahubali is to Mahishmati's slaves, by offering to eat with Katappa, the head of slaves. As culture demands, all the slaves (in black turbans) bowed in honour of Bahubali's (in brown turban, marking him as royal and special from others) presence but he instructs them to raise their heads. Such are the qualities that make him well loved by Mahishmati subjects.

Data Extracts 7



Fig. 7a: Mysterious bird's message for Bahubali



Fig. 7b: Bow for demigod, Bahubali, aftermath the victory against alien invaders

In figure 7a, the outer open space is that of an aftermath victory over unknown fighters which happens early in the morning as suggested by the bluish colour of the setting. A picture of a mysterious bird (an owl that iconizes Indian supernatural power) comes with a paper message from Shivagami, Mahishmati Queen, ordering Bahubali to bring Princess Devasena as a slave for disgracing her emissary in their request for her love with an unknown Ballaldeva; the people of Kuntala Kingdom all stand still, expectant of what Bahubahi has to say after reading the message. In furtherance, figure 7b is an outer space that displays the reminiscence of burning Bahubali's outer attire after Devasena's fury and curiosity to know who he actually is. Devasena uses the fire-wood in her hand to burn him before they got to see his real warrior appearance with armor and symbolic Mahishmati sword; they all kneel as a legisign of respect to Bahubali, whom they consider a demi-god, after he and Katappa saved them from the alien fighters. In fact, Devasena agrees to follow Bahubali in any condition as she confesses her love for him.

Data Extracts 8



Fig. 8a: Balla and Bahu's coronation turns battle-defining



Fig. 8b: Balladeva blaming his refusal by the crown of Mahishmati Kingdom

Figure 8a is an exterior space that captures the climax of animosity between the two main characters, Bahubali and Bhallaldev. Here, Bhallaladev gets crowned as the King, as proven with his sitting on a mighty golden-colour royal chair, wearing Mahishmati golden-crown on his head, having Mahishmati's symbolic flag by his right side, appearing in specially made imperial attires like golden necklace and golden ring among others, compared to the crude war-mongering appearance of Bahubali; all still make him unpopular. It's the man of the people, Bahubali, whose coronation was met with too much jubilation by Mahishmati subjects; elephants trumpet, horses dance and objects fall to welcome a King-like Army Commander. Hence, his scornful look at Bahubali is an index of the cruelest war against his existence. Figure 8b is an interior space, a testament to Balladeva's sadness, verbally blaming the crown for refusing him to rule Mahishmati Kingdom, and accepting Bahubali instead. His puncture of his hand with the pin-pointed part of the crown and shedding of blood on it to show

his dissatisfaction are indices of his melancholy; all in the presence of his father right in his royal bedroom.

Data Extracts 9



Fig. 9a: Bahubali's last respect to Mahishmati



Fig. 9b: The death of one Bahubali begets Another

Figure 9a displays an outer space of fierce battle ground. The indices of this are severely burning fire, two swords crossing each other like **X** shape, an arrow firmly sunk on the ground, and a sword held by the anchorage of the picture, Bahubali as he pays his last homage to Mahishmati kingdom before dropping his head, after being unavoidably stabbed at the back on the order of Shivagami by Kattapa. He sees himself as a powerless foil, thus kneeling down in front of Mahishmati's beloved savior as a legisign of respect. Figure 9b is an outer royal space where Shivagami announces the birth of another Bahubali to the people of Mahishmati via verbal communication as in – 'Mahendra Bahubali!' She pronounces him as their new king (a semiotic resource that suggests the death of one Bahubali leads to the birth of another) when she understands that Bhalladeva and his father only apply cunning mode in making her get Bahubali (Senior) killed. She knows her life is seriously in danger, but she tries to

save the child after her courageous destruction of Bhalladeva's soldiers. Despite being weak and brutally injured with Balladeva's arrow on her back, she persevered gallantly and spiritually to deliver the baby into the save hands in Quora village.

Data Extracts 10

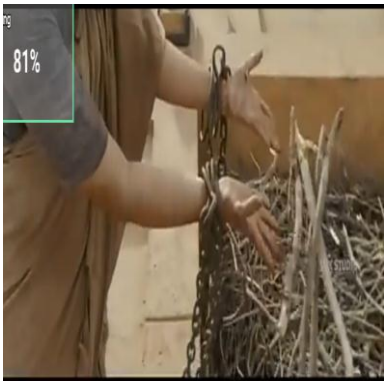


Fig.10a: Chained Devasena packs wood for a reason



Fig. 10b: Indeed, Devasena had been packing Balladeva's funeral pyre

The icon in Figure 10a depicts captivity and callousness through the picture of the two chained-hands of Devasena, Bahubali Junior's mother. She makes picking of dried wood her routine task throughout her 25-year merciless stay with Ballaladeva. She comes out of her insecure and tight dungeon shelter to pick with huge chains around her hands and legs until they all get swollen; she still persisted without anyone knowing her mission. Nonetheless, figure 10b is an outer space proving why Devasena persisted in picking wood. It is a disrespectful space to a king as it serves as an index of downfall and horror for Bhalladeva due to his brutality on all his Mahishamati subjects. Behind him is the fallen leg of his 1000-feet statue, another index of his nothingness. Indeed, Devasena had been picking his funeral pyre all these while. She

believes that Bahubali would definitely come back to defeat the beast and take over the kingdom because of the (non-verbal) affirmative hand-shake vow he had with her. Her spirit guides her aright as she later pours a fire pot to set Ballaladeva ablaze, this is after her completion of trial by fire right to set herself and Mahishmati's subjects free forever.

Findings

It was revealed that India film serves as a means through which Indians display an array of their cultural, religious and spiritual beliefs. Instances of sacrifices, such as that of Shivagami until Shivudu, (the protagonist), was given to his foster father and that of Ballaladeva on the battle field against Kalakenya (as in figures 1a and 6b) are spiritual as well as religious. Scenarios of promises and fulfillment (as in figures 1b, 3b and 5b) bows and respect (as in figures 5a, 6a, 7b and 9a); songs and festivities (as in 4a); oath taking and steadfastness (as in 8a and 10a); and careful colour-combination (as in figures 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b) are all parts of India cultures being propagated through their films.

It was also seen that due to complexities of power tussle and revenge mission as the main conflicting issues in *Bahubali*, eighteen (18) pieces of the extracted data occupy outer spaces such as battle grounds (as in figures 5a, 7b, 9a and 10b); sacrificial or superstitious grounds (as in figures 5b, 6b and 7a); compassion scenes (as in figures 2b, 3a, 3b and 6a); ceremonial settings (as in figures 4a, 8a and 9b) etc. However, just two pieces – figures 1b and 8b – occupy inner spaces (indoors, including a room and a palace).

It was also found that the film *Bahubali* contains certain extraordinary film-tricks that make one to ask the question – 'how is this possible?' An instance of this, out of many, is in fig. 1a, where Shivagami's hand holds up from dawn till sun rise with a baby on her hand. The surprising act that makes it trickery lies in the ability of the hand of the assumed dead body to point her finger

towards the direction of Mahishmati to communicate the origin of the baby - Bahubali to his saviours. However, the tricks contribute immensely to what gave the film big sale, great viewership, particularly by the youth, and won it notable awards among other India films of the period.

Ultimately, it was discovered that most Indians are defiant and courageous when they are to seek revenge or freedom from captivity. Examples of this are in the characterization of many of the actors like Shivagami, Devasena, Bahubali, Shivudu, Avantika and indeed, the leader of Mahishmati armory, Kattappa; all among others are full of energy and vigor in playing their roles as key figures in the making of the film.

Conclusion

Bahubali, is without doubt one of the most interest-sustaining films from start to finish based on the technological advancement embellished in its making. It exudes more of Indian's cultural, spiritual, religious and conventional attachment through different verbal and non-verbal modes. The crux of this study from the angles of multimodal and semiotic interactions of the pictures and captions makes this study come across all these facts from *Bahubali*. It actually embodies how evolving Indian films are, compared to their contemporaries from other races in the global market of film making, and why they gain huge number of viewership, whether with translated or non-translated versions of their films.

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