

Development of Animation Films and An Analysis of Three Mythological Animation Films of India in Terms of Modernity

Sudarshan Yadav*

Abstract

This article deals with the animation films being produced these days in India, mostly portraying mythological characters like Lord Ganesha, Hanumana, Krishna, Arjuna, etc. In this age of industrialisation and globalised world, these characters are put in modern context, i.e., riding a bike, dressed in modern day clothes, and using modern day phrases and words in the dialogue. Also different modern day issues of the society are shown being tackled by the Gods, like environmental issues, terrorism, unity in diversity, etc. So these films are putting forward the modern day issues which are important for the human existence and societal development among the children and teenagers who are the future of the world. At the same time these films reflect and comment on the different socio-cultural issues of present times. While discussing this aspect of the animation films a background on the development of this genre is being considered.

Keywords: Animation films, Mythological characters, Industrialisation, Environmental issues, Terrorism

1. Introduction

Animation which literally means liveliness is an art of film making wherein the static pictures and objects were put as such and photographed so that the pictures appeared moving. In this case the still dead pictures came alive. Although in the initial years of this genre there was very blur difference in between the animation films and the other short films/ actualities. But with time as the film making became an industry this difference became vivid in terms of technique, genre, themes and industry.

Animation films as it has been defined is a kind of motion picture made by arranging drawings or objects in a manner that when photographed and projected sequentially on movie film, produces the illusion of controlled motion.

These controlled motion films have made a long journey of more than a century in the world as well as in the context of India too. This journey has brought animation films to the 21st century and to an era where the audiences are greatly exposed to cinema and visuals through multiplexes and TV. So, the great exposure to the cinema and almost having dealt with all the issues possible in the cinema, as it has already travelled a century led to a dearth of issues to be covered in the films. The impact of this on animation films has been great, as first it has to compete with the

mainstream cinema (with live characters) and secondly it is thought to be a genre of children. In order to sustain as an industry it has to broaden its ambit in terms of audience, i.e., audience of all age groups. In this regard mythology came to the rescue of animation industry in India, already much exploited theme of cinema. But, after the initial success to Hanuman and Bal Ganesha, the audience didn't give a hid to the other films. To tackle this and to make greater profits by increasing its reach to the global audience, the mythological stories and the characters were modified according to the modern context. So this paper discusses this modern trend in the animation films having mythological characters with respect to three films, Ramayana - The Epic, Hanuman Returns and My Friend Ganesha – 2. But, before moving on to this aspect, it is necessary to discuss the development of animation films in the context of world and India too. This discussion would largely deal with the content of animation films in the last century since its inception. It is necessary as it would help in building a foundation and understanding the context of this recent trend.

Development of Animation Films in Global Context

The history of animation has been quiet old with sequence of pictures showing movement were put in murals and other places. Also, the puppet shows, where the shadows of the objects were portrayed from behind the white cloth depicting animal fights and the stories of the kings, the queens and the knights. But, the animation in terms of theatrical films came into being in the 1890s. It is said that the animation film making started in the year 1898. But, actually who started this is not clear. As it is put in the Oxford Dictionary of World Cinema, 'the animation technique might have been discovered independently by J. Stuart Blackton in the United States and by Arthur Melbourne-Cooper in England but there is no acceptable evidence to verify either of the claims'.

The first appearance of animation in the films was in the form of a special effects insert into a live-action film with Georges Melies's animation of the moon - which he achieved through stop - motion and trick photography - in Voyage a la lune (1902). Since then, the animation industry has come a long way, from the comic strip films of Emile Cohl to clay films to the present day 3D computer animated films. From the very simple Humorous Phases of the Funny Faces to the first fully computer animated film, Toy Story (1995). From Gertie the Dinosaur, the first animated short (1914) to full length feature films of Jurassic Park series combining live-action and animation in the 1990s. From the much adorable Felix the Cat to Nemo the fish of Oscar winning film, Finding Nemo in terms of anthropomorphic stars; or from Steamboat Willie (Mickey Mouse) the first colour and sound cartoon to computer generated multiple lively effects of Spiderman, Stuart Little series or Ratatouille.

In the category of films with social content too, animation films has changed a lot; from the Warner Brothers' feature films with social content or criticism at core like Clean Pastures, and Coal Black and De Sebben Dwarves to the issue of global warming as presented in the film Happy Feet. Fantasy films too have changed, from Wizard of Oz (1939) having some special effects to present day highly sophisticated computer generated fantasy films like Jumanji, Narnia or the much popular worldwide, The

Harry Potter series. Last but not the least the latest high-tech science fiction films like Terminator, Avatar or Transformers.

The tradition is long with ever expanding horizon. Nowadays animations are used to increase the impact of certain issues or scenes in the live-action films. In this one thing is common; apart from the technological development, animation films have always strived hard to renew itself in terms of content. In this regard it has been largely successful from shifting to a kid's genre to a medium answerable to audience of all age groups. But same is not the case in the context of India.

In the Context of India

India too has a long tradition of films, since the screening of the first film by chance in the then Bombay by Lumeire Brothers in 1896. But, there is a lack of definite account of animation films in early days of Indian Cinema except that the initial experimentation by Dada Sahab Phalke. In the late 1910, Dada Sahab Phalke – the Father of Indian Cinema attempted to make the first animation short film of India with matchsticks. The first animated film in India was Agkadyanchi Mouj (Matchstick's fun) followed by Laxmicha Galicha (1916) and Vichitra Shilpa (1925). Later on some other attempts were also made, like The Pea Brothers (1934) directed by Gunamoy Banerjee, On a Moonlit Night (film with a soundtrack), Lefanga Langoor (1935), Superman Myth (1939) and Cinema Kadampam (1947).

Animation films in India got the real start in the 1950s, when on the invitation of Films Division of India, Clair H. Weeks came to Bombay and trained a core group of animators. Claire Weeks was an animator in the Disney Studio. One of his trained professionals is Ram Mohan, who is one of the pioneers of animation films in India. Ram Mohan made the first full length animation film of India - Ramayana: The Legend of Prince Rama (1992) with the Japanese collaboration. Here, the very first full length film is a mythological film that too with the international collaboration.

Under the supervision of Clair Weeks and G K Gokhale, an animated film Banyan Deer was produced in the year 1957 followed by another film Radha Krishna (1958). Both the films were produced by Cartoon Film Unit. The other film was directed by Shanti Verma and Jehangir S. Bhowmory using miniature Pahari paintings. Both these films belong to mythology; first Banyan Deer is a Jataka story from Buddhist tradition while the other one is related to famous duo from Hindu tradition, Radha and Krishna.

But, it was in the year 1974, the first traditionally animated film of India having social message of 'Unity in Diversity' was made by National Films Division. It was "Ek, Anek aur Ekta" most popularly known as Ek Chidiya Anek Chidiya – a 7 minute film telecast on Doordarshan (DD). Since then, animation films started to gain its roots in India but to a very limited extent. This can be attributed to the cost involved in its making and comparatively less return from these films because of the culturally different society of India which liked the real performances along with songs and dances based on the Nautanki. Also, there was a lack of children cinema, even if it was present, those films were mostly imported films shown as series

on Doordarshan. Some notable ones are Jungle Book, Alice in Wonderland, Mickey Mouse, Adventures of HeMan, Danasur, Pingu and many more. But, there were some films produced in India; those are Meena, Purush and Gayab Aaya (first indigenous animated series of India) on DD. Some of the series telecast on TV, having special effects are The Great Experiments (used special effects of spaceship in this series) and Captain Vyom (science fiction series). The films, Chhota Chetan, Ta Ra Rum Pum, Hum Tum, Abra Ka Dabra and Jajantaram Mamantaram are the live-action full-length feature films using animation as a tool to make the story more interesting.

Some of the full length animated feature films produced in India are Ramayana: The Legend of Prince Rama (1992), Pandavas – The Five Warriors (2000), Hanuman (2005), Kittu (2006), Krishna - The Birth (2006), Krishna - The Makhanchor (2007), Return of Hanuman (2007), Roadside Romeo (2008), Dashavatar (2008), Ghatothkach (2008), Cheenti Cheenti Bang Bang (2008), Jumbo (2008), Arjun- The Warrior Prince (2009), Bal Ganesh (2009), Luv Kush- The Warrior Twins (2010), Toonpur ka Superrhero (2010), Ramayana The Epic (2010), Kochie Koochie Hota Hain (2011), Alibaba Aur 41 Chor (2011). Most of them are the mythological films. With the success of Hanuman, a trend of reintroducing mythological characters as animated characters in the films started to gain momentum for luring children as well as the larger section of the society.

Mythology in Cinema and on TV

Mythology has always been a major subject for film making if we see the history of Indian Cinema. Raja Harishchandra, Mohini Bhasmasur, Satyawati, Lanka Dahan, Shri Krishna Janma, Kaliya Mardan, Setu Bandhan, Gangavataram are the notable ones produced by Dada Sahab Phalke.

Same was the case with the television as Mahabharat and Ramayana made great impact on the masses in the initial years of the commercial TV broadcasting in India. Later on, many other programmes related to different deities were telecast on DD like Jai Hanuman of Sanjay Khan, Om Namah Shivay by Creative Eye Production (Dheeraj Kumar), or Shri Krishna, Jai Ganga Maiya, etc. by Ramanand Sagar. Among the different producers, Ramanand Sagar played a key role in popularising mythology among the masses. One can see the same trends in the animation films too in the initial years as it used mythological plots to appeal to the larger section of movie watchers as discussed earlier.

Reasons for Exploiting Mythology as a Plot

The reason for exploiting mythology as a plot for film making is that the animation films are confined to a niche market, i.e., children, so to attract people of all age groups the industry needed a plot that interests all. In this regard mythology is the easy option giving high return as lot of mythological stories are available free of cost. This is signified in the Nasscom report of 2005, which says that the animation is facing a great loss in India as it only complies to a niche market (i.e., children) in order to make the larger profits, industry has to think in terms of a plot that appeals equally to adults and elderly as it appeals to children. In this regard mythology can be the best option. In this context after the permission of Government of India for Foreign

Direct Investment (FDI) in media and entertainment many international companies have come up with joint ventures along with Indian film production companies, like Walt Disney with Yashraj, and Pixar, Warner Bros., etc., investing in the Indian films. This in turn have effect in modification of the plots in terms of global audience, so that these production companies can generate larger profits.

Affirming the Nasscom report, N. R Panicker (Chairman of Accel Animation Studios) puts, 'if you produce an animated series with a given amount, generally you recover only a part of your investment through the sale of broadcasting rights. We need to find more ways of getting revenues, as the Indian Animation Industry is struggling to survive'. Seeing this situation Panicker emphasized on foreign investment, 'We need to look more on co-production treaties, which will help us in getting the content picked up for the universal market'. This statement is relevant in the light of the fact that indigenous animation content broadcasting never really took off in the Indian context. Animation films have also failed to earn decent revenues at the box-office.

This effect of getting content for global audience is evident in the animation films even the ones showing mythological characters. The mythology which once considered being sacrosanct is now adapted and modified in terms of modern days, where different gods wear modern day clothes, Lord Ganesha is shown riding a scooter, Hanumana addressing the issue of pollution menace or the refreshing elements of comedy sequences are put to make the plot light. Even songs and dances are put to present the story in modern terms.

So, this paper discusses about these recent trends in the mythological animated films with respect to three films, Ramayana - The Epic, Hanuman Returns and My Friend Ganesha - 2. But, before proceeding further it is necessary to understand the concept of mythology and modernity (or modernism in broader sense).

Mythology and Modernism

Mythology is the ancient myths in general or the ancient myths of a particular culture, society, etc. In other terms the mythologies are the ideas that many people think are true but that do not exist or are false. Also, a myth often includes notions, cultural ideological or other implications underscoring the identity or cohesiveness of family, kin, class, race, folks, society, culture, state, government, party or religion.

While modernity comes from the word modern which according to Merriam Webster dictionary means, of, relating to, or characteristic of a period extending from a relevant remote past to the present time. According to Richard Hooker, Faculty at Washington State University in the past, Modernity is simply the sense or the idea that the present is discontinuous with the past; that through a process of social and cultural change (either through improvement, that is, progress, or through decline) life in the present is fundamentally different from life in the past.

So, modernity can be viewed as something which is of recent origin and was not present in the past that is forwarded from generations to generations, what we call tradition. In this regard

the mythology is from the past and is carried on in the form of tradition with each of its part to be as sacrosanct; as it tells the history of gods and origin of particular culture. And how one interprets those stories and put it according to the needs of present day using different socio-cultural issues and technologies can be termed as modern. Its interpretation and presentation can be put in different forms of arts, painting, songs, dance, literature or films. When there is a discussion about art and film being considered an art, then we need to look into modernism movement of arts that came in the 19th century.

Modernism Movement of Art

Modernism finds its roots in the Enlightenment period of the eighteenth century and man's (sic) belief in the supremacy of human reason over all other considerations. It was a period that marked the end or rather decline, in western society of a theocratic (God centred) interpretation of the world. As evidence of this belief in the power of human reasoning to understand the world, this age was also termed the Age of Reason. This belief in human reason meant that man (sic) could achieve clarity or enlightenment in the scientific thought and natural philosophy (that is, natural science, maths, astronomy and physics); he would come to understand the way things really are in the Universe and thereby be able to have control over nature and make the world a better place.

The Enlightenment represented an optimistic belief in progress. Science and technology were man's tools whereby he could implement change. Science or scientific thought was the only valid thought, and facts the only possible objects of knowledge. This modern thought got prominence during the industrial age.

The industrial age of the 19th century was a logical continuance of the Enlightenment's belief in Science and technology and represents the optimistic strain of belief in progress. Modernism perpetuates the belief in scientific research and the pursuit of knowledge. It believes in the positing of universal truths such as progress of which science and technology were its major proponents.

Taking modernity in the functional terms which will be applied to analyse the three films for the portrayal of the mythological characters and their stories with reference to the present day scenario are: (i) the appearances and dressing style and language of the characters; (ii) scientific approach behind their existence; and (iii) the different socio-cultural-political issues of present times being portrayed in those films. Also, affirming time and again that it is the human endeavour that gives result rather than only depending on God. So, here is the analysis of the films.

Modernity in Three Films

The three films which has been analysed based on the elements of modernity present in them are Ramayana: The Epic, Return of Hanuman and My Friend Ganesha 2. The film, Ramayana: The Epic deals with the youth of Rama, his marriage with Sita, the phase of his life in exile, the abduction of Sita leading to Rama and Ravana war, and return of Rama to Ayodhya followed by killing of Ravana.

While the story of the film, Return of Hanuman is about a fight in between the Gods (Devta) and Demons (Danav) in the past, leading into the exile of demons to the far away planet of Venus. When the asuras (demons) were defeated, their Guru (teacher) Shukracharya cursed that in the future (Kaliyuga, present times) humans will become asura, whom the gods are trying to protect. Then, in the future, Lord Hanumana wants to come on the earth in the human form and seeks permission from Lord Brahma. It has been shown that Hanumana in human form helps a kid Minku and the people living on the earth from the menace of pollution.

The Return of Hanuman can be put totally in the category of films which are modernist films. This film comments on the present socio-cultural-political conditions of the world. Even as a satire to the present degradation in the behaviour of humans, it presents the impact of the present times on the behaviour and language of the gods. The issues of pollution, superstition, casteism including other issues are portrayed in the film. The scientific ways or tools are used to present different activities of the gods which were earlier considered to be divine, i.e., which happened on its own by the mere wish of the gods. Also, how even gods adapted to the scientific and technological development of present times has been put in this film.

Lastly the film, My Friend Ganesha 2 deals with a story of a school going kid (Vasu) who is depressed in his life because of his parents' quarrel. This led to disturbances in his studies, extra-curricular activities and his behaviour. One day, a maid named Gangu Tai comes to his house and asks him to make Ganesha his friend. The Ganesha comes on Vasu's call and how he helps Vasu in different aspects of his life is shown in this film. Being a composite animation film, My Friend Ganesha 2 cannot be put totally under the animation films category but it has mythological character of Ganesha in it. In terms of modernism this film has some aspects which are mostly related to clothing, music, properties used in the film and language. Apart from these the questioning of Lord Shiva by Ganesha gives strength to the notion of questioning in modern scientific world of reasoning.

So the analysis of the three films based on the earlier mentioned points is as follows:

1. Appearances, Dressing Style and Language of The Characters

When it comes to appearances and dressing style of the mythological characters as presented in these films, one gets a lot of influence of modernity on it. First to start in the list is Six-Pack Abs. The body built of the characters in the film Ramayana: The Epic resembled the modern day trend in the mainstream films and in the society, i.e., a well maintained six-pack abs or eight pack abs with a V shaped upper body. The characters of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharat, Hanuman, Angad, Nal, Neel, Jatayu and Sampati had the body shape resembling to this modern trend.

One can also see the impact of globalisation on the characters. Since, this film is a joint venture of Warner Brothers and Maya Digital Media Productions, there is an impact of this collaboration, as this film has been made for the global audience. Like, the character of the Sursa (Goddess Mansa, Mother of All Snakes) from Hindu mythology is portrayed very similar to the character of Medusa from Greek mythology whose hair turned

into snakes and her gaze could turn any man into stone due to the curse of the Goddess Athena.

Also, Jatayu and Sampati, the two Bird kings (Gidh Raj) from the Hindu mythology are portrayed with reference to the Griffin of the Greek mythology having bird's head, ears, feathers and talons while the body of a lion with a tail. Here one difference was there and it was that the bird king had the body like a human as is the case with Sphinx. But Sphinx had female body and face. The body of a male human has been taken from the South-east Asia (like example of Narsimha). So, an amalgamation of two cultures has been done to suit the ends of the producers (profits) and attract a global audience.

While in the case of the film, Return of Hanuman, the gods are shown using modern day language and adapting to the present times. They used English words in their conversations. Like in different conversations they used the words, main, general knowledge, detachable, contract, transfer, time, divine, emotional drama, graphs, etc. In terms of adaptation to technologies, this film has a lot of examples, showing gods adapting to modern technologies. Some of them are put here: Lord Brahma used laptops to get information about the world; well furnished hospitals in the Swarga (heaven); lord Vishnu using watch; Hanuman scanning the earth as if working on a touch screen system; and Chitragupta working on computers putting all the relevant information there and when need be shows the charts through projectors. Fire Alarms and the traffic light systems were also available in Swarga. Even the Garuda (the bird) is shown to be adapted to present day aviation facility. Narad using microphones to hear others' conversation is also shown in the film.

Along with the Gods, the demons (Asura) also adapted to the technological development of the modern times like Rahu and Ketu watching TV on their planet. The eagle of Rahu-Ketu had sensors in its eyes with in-built camera and headphone which sends pictures to Rahu-Ketu to be scanned and printed there.

When one sees the film, My Friend Ganesha 2, a lot of scenes and incidents are there showing the effect of modern days on god's appearance and in their behaviour. Like in the scene sequence of the older times (mythological era) it has been shown that Mushak Raj (Mouse) the Vahana of Lord Ganesha plays Ice Hockey with his friends. They used the hockey sticks to ski in the ice as well as to fly in the sky as if it was a magical broom of Harry Potter. There were mouse cheer leaders for cheering on each goal and the commentators to give their special commentaries about the game.

Even to appeal to the kids of this global era, Lord Ganesha has been shown as Santa Claus who wears red woollen cap just like Santa and rides on a sleigh but in this case its not a sleigh of reindeers but of the mouses. Also, in the film, Vasu and his friend Tanya watches Tom and Jerry on T.V., but instead of the usual Cat and the Mouse there were Lord Ganesha as Tom and Mushakraj as Jerry.

Also, Lord Ganesha is shown using present day properties, clothes and language. Ganesha is shown to wear T-shirts, three-quarter pants, caps and casual shoes. He rides a scooter to commute instead of the mouse and hears song on a headphone.

Also in a scene where Vasu needed to practice for the dance competition, Lord Ganesha is shown to play different instruments that include congo, guitar, piano, violin and casio (all western musical instruments) to produce the rock music of modern times.

The English words and sentences were used by Ganesha to talk to Vasu like Promise, Beautiful, You don't take tension, I'm sorry, and Friendship mein no sorry, no thank you. Mushakraj, the vahana of lord Ganesha is also shown to wear tapori clothes of Mumbai and then to fly with parachutes in the commando suit to rescue the hijacked students. Here Lord Ganesha too in commando suit drives the bus and punishes the terrorists, later on holding the tricolour of India in his hands. Terrorism a modern day menace is shown to be tackled by Lord Ganesha and his holding of tricolour signifies that the country is safe in his (divine) hands.

2. Scientific Approach behind Their Existence

In the film, Ramayana: The Epic, the phenomenon or objects of those days (mythological story) have been depicted in scientific (modern) terms putting it with reasoning or logics, i.e., with scientific and technological explanation of present times. Like in the Pushpak Vimana, the large wind turbines are shown within the Vimana (aircraft) due to which the aircraft could fly. Also, it tried to show a telescope of those days giving a supposed explanation for the Divya Netra (Divine Vision) which helped persons to see far away things sitting at one place. So, a modern approach to the past phenomenon is used. Then, wheel and pulley mechanisms were shown for the opening of the doors of the Lanka.

In the film, Return of Hanuman, when Lord Vishnu fights with Rahu-Ketu, it is shown that Rahu-Ketu blew fire on Vishnu and to tackle this, Vishnu takes out small fire extinguisher and sprays it on the fire. Then the Sudarshan Chakra of Lord Vishnu is shown as a Frisbee which worked when Vishnu stretched a thread attached to it, thereby helping it to do a revolving movement. Vishnu also used a concave plate to reflect the fire on the Rahu-Ketu.

3. Socio-Cultural-Political issues of Present Times

Impact of Humans on Gods

The effect of Kaliyuga (modern times) and humans on the gods have been depicted in the film, Return of Hanuman. Lord Brahma instead of three (3) conditions which he agreed to initially put 5-6 conditions in front of Hanumana. When Narada questions that, Brahma says, 'Yahan Brahma Kaun hai?' (Who is Brahma here?). It implies to the modern day issue where the powerful decides the rules and regulations to be followed by others and according to their wish amend and distort the rules.

In another instance Chitragupta, one who keeps record of all the good (Punya) and bad (Paap) deeds of all the creatures of this Universe (including humans and gods) couldn't resist himself from watching pornography (www.maneka.com) on the internet. Then Hanumana blackmails Narada to get his work done. There were innumerable instances of this effect shown in the film.

Socio-Political Statements

There were many socio-political statements made in the film but in a very subtle way. Some of them are discussed as below:

Everything that has the word 'bajrang' doesn't mean it belongs to lord Hanumana. It is shown in one scene that a squirrel asks Hanumana, 'does this village belong to you, as it has your name, i.e., Bajrangpur'. Then, Hanumana replies everything that has the word Bajrang in it, doesn't mean it belongs to me. This statement without any ambiguity referred to several right wing saffron outfits of India with a distinct indication towards the Bajrang Dal.

Dominance of US in the World. In a song in the film it has been shown that Hanumana while coming on earth goes all around the world, from Egypt, UK, India, Italy, Australia, US to other countries. In that song sequence only, US have been shown as a dictator of the world; a big shark which is eating all the smaller fishes (countries) of the world and Hanumana comes to tackle that shark. When that shark has been taken into control, other countries (leaders of those countries) of the world which are making their separate identity are shown, that they come out of the sea (who are considered as pirates of the world by the US). This has been represented by the sign of the Olodum Band (a ring with an inverted trident).

Olodum is a cultural group based in the Afro Brazilian community of Salvador, the capital city of the state of Bahia, Brazil. It was founded by percussionist, Neguinho do Samba. It offers cultural activities to young people, largely centred on music including theatrical productions and other activities. This group was founded in 1979 and its stated aims are to combat racism, to encourage self-esteem and pride among Afro Brazilians, and to fight for civil rights for all marginalized groups. This group mainly worked for propagating equality in the society. In the famous song of Michael Jackson, 'They don't care about us', this group forms the part of the band. The problem of racism or the dominance of the dominant (here US society and Brazil) in terms of resources or technologies is shown in this song.

Further, when that big shark is caught in the net, it is shown that the Statue of Liberty of US also gets liberated along with the people and dances with a kid (who is representing the future). Although the statue which represents the freedom and liberty in the states of US and is a symbol of freedom of US (which has broken chains at its feet) has become only a statue i.e., a frozen object which has lost the meaning associated with it since its establishment.

The use of Statue of Liberty for making political statements is not new. Earlier Michael Jackson (MJ) has used Statue of Liberty in his song 'Black and White' and danced over it to put forward the issue of racism in US. In this song too, a white boy danced in his room on loud music of MJ and his father scolds him but later on this boy says (in the song), 'I am not gonna live my life based on the skin colour'. Later on, an advertisement has also been made for a music system whereby a kid dances in his room with the loud sound, and listening to the loud and clear sound on the system the statue also dances. When the boy realises that the statue is dancing, he mutes the song and the statue also freezes,

again to dance with the music. This concept has been used in similar terms in this movie (Return of Hanuman).

Gandhiji: Bharat Chhodo (Quit India). One of the scenes in the climax of the film shows that when the Pralaya (disaster) comes due to the pollution, two Indian scientists hide themselves inside the basement. They see Mahatma Gandhi is sitting there who starts chanting slogan, 'Bharat Chhodo' after seeing the two scientists. This scene makes a very cult statement that the modern Western education (particularly the western influence on the lifestyles) is responsible for the disasters in the world due to the over-exploitation of Mother Nature. It tries to emphasize that there is a need to think in Swadeshi (Nationalist) terms.

George W. Bush, Laden and Dawood were shown altogether, thereby putting them in one league, i.e., terrorists (anti-social elements).

Social Issues. In the film, Return of Hanuman, a squirrel falls in love with Hanumana. Seeing this squirrel's mother says, 'Brahmachari hai, Jaat ka Bandar hai, kyun dil dukhati hai apna'. (In English: Hanumana is celibate and a monkey by caste, why you are hurting yourself by falling in love with him). Here the reference about 'Jaat' (caste) has been made. In India traditionally falling in love with the other caste person and marrying is considered a great social sin. This issue of caste has been dealt with in this scene.

Also the fight between Rahu and Ketu for a small piece of food resulting in losing the magical stick of their guru reflects the fight between brothers and family relatives of present times (among humans) for their living. In this fight among themselves humans are losing everything that they have got as a gift from their ancestors.

In one of the scenes, the usage of the famous scene of Gabbar from the film Sholay where he asks, 'kitne aadmi the' has been done. In Return of Hanuman it is shown that Gabbar turns into Thakur (character from the same film) and asks his gang of people to get rid of the boy Hanumana. In this regard the disappearance of the dividing line between the 'Good' and the 'Bad' in the present times is shown in this scene. Now everyone belongs to one category falling into different shades of gray.

The reference to traffic safety has also been put in the film. It is shown that even the gods (Indra) are not safe if they don't follow the traffic rules.

4. Modern Issues, Events and Persons

Issues related to environment such as water pollution, air pollution, cutting and burning of trees in the forests and the effects of plastic usage are shown. During the fight between Rahu-Ketu and Hanumana, the space debris (pollution) are shown, where Rahu throws satellites on Hanumana. Even, Rahu sticks to the Sun as if it is a plastic sheet (but mainly represented the dust and smoke which is enveloping our atmosphere, thereby enveloping the Earth so less Sun rays are reaching the earth). Meanwhile Ketu takes all the air of the atmosphere inside his mouth, which presented the issue of increasing pollutants in the air. Thus, lessening of the oxygen leads to people dying of suffocation.

The events like Twin Tower attack, cricket match, etc. are shown. Also the reference of Afghanistan bombing and Mumbai train blasts are put.

Persons like Spiderman (film character), George W. Bush, Osama Bin Laden, Dawood Ibrahim, Sachin Tendulkar and others were shown. Also different monkeys while helping the kid Hanumana in the film imitated different personalities of the present times. Like a monkey is shown waving his shirt just like Saurav Ganguly, another imitating Amitabh Bachchan as Sarkar, Jai Veeru of Sholay, Rajnikant, Himesh Reshammiya, King Kong and others were depicted in the film through the imitations of the monkeys.

5. Other Elements

The entertainment elements like music, songs and comedy are put in the story to make it more sellable. The song 'Masti Hai Sasti' and 'Haiya Ho', uses words of day to day life of present world.

6. Modernistic Thought

Ganesha questioning Shiva in the film, My Friend Ganesha 2. Strikingly, abiding by the concept of modern thought that is to question everything even your parents, Lord Ganesha is shown to question his own father Lord Shiva. But, instead Lord Ganesha is a very humble son for his parents and never questioned them as put in the Hindu mythology. In the film when Vasu's friend Tanya become severely ill and no one can rescue her except god, Vasu asks for Ganesha's help. Initially, Ganesha turn down the demand but for his friend (Vasu) decides to seek Shiva's help. But Shiva too turns down the demand and says it's a life cycle, he cannot help. Reacting to it, Lord Ganesha asks his father, 'why did you give me life when I was dead? It was because I am the son of Mother Parvati and you?' Give me answer as no one in the universe has the answer for this question. On hearing this argument Lord Shiva gives back the life of the Tanya.

Conclusions and Discussion

Animation films have travelled now for more than a century and in the course of time it evolved with the development of the techniques and technologies. In that sense so as to sustain for long, from time to time it has to come up with new ideas and ways of presentation in order to attract larger audience. Since human tendency is to get bored with the same object, thought and ideas, therefore to appeal to them animation industry had to continuously renew itself in terms of plot, treatment and portrayal. Being an industry it has to generate profits too to meet the requirements of those associated with it.

In case of India, it is already discussed in this paper that the animation films appeals to only a limited section of audience. In order to attract a larger audience, industry needs a plot that appeals to greater audience. In that sense mythology became an easy option as well as tough one; easy as India is deeply rooted in religion and there are diverse variety of religious texts available which can provide innumerable characters and stories for the films while at the same time it is tough option as mythology has already been exploited a lot in the mainstream Bollywood cinema and Television. Now there is nothing left to tell the audience in terms of story. So, there comes treatment of the film as a rescue. To achieve this, the mythological characters are put in modern terms wearing modern day clothes, using automobiles,

addressing issues of present times for which humans have no solution.

Due to the recession in the global market and seeing the limited audience for this genre, it is highly risky to put money in the animation films. It is already evident that animation films requires a lot of money for its productions, so in order to get larger share of profit international collaborations have come up. As discussed earlier Warner Brothers, Pixar, Disney, etc. are investing money in Indian animation industry. Being a production of joint ventures of Indian and international production houses, the plot is also modified accordingly to make it appealing for the global audience, not that is confined to a particular region, state, religion or country.

This effect is clearly seen in the context of the three films which have been discussed in this paper. The gods adapting to scientific and technological development of present times, and making cult statements about certain issues which are presented by the directors of these films, as if it has annoyed gods too. The gods are singing and dancing to the modern music. Even different properties of modern world are used in the film to generate curiosity. But in all these, the basic story should not be distorted when the producer is totally confining to the story from the past as is the case with Ramayana: The Epic. It was totally a story from the past with modern treatment but the way Griffin- Jatayu and Medusa- Mansa linkages (similar appearances) were shown it totally misguides the young minds about the mythology of which they know little.

Mythology although is a false notion from the past but it reflects the socio-cultural milieu of the time when those were written (or made). So a wrong impression about the socio-cultural milieu of that era can go in with the children of the present times. These things must be taken into consideration while adapting a film from past to present times. So, the treatment of the film will only do well when it doesn't distort the main story, character and the social cultural milieu of those times.

Reference

Books

1. Crafton Donald. *The Silent Film: Trick and Animation*, In Nowell-Smith Geoffrey (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of World Cinema*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2005.
2. Hayward Susan. *Animation*, In *Key Concepts in Cinema Studies*, 2nd edition, Routledge, New York, 2004.

Websites

1. www.arenamalleswaram.com/animation_facts.html. (Downloaded on 18 August 2011)
2. Lent John A. Ram Mohan and RM-USL: *India's Change Agents of Animation*. Available from: <http://www.awn.com/articles/profiles/ram-mohan-and-rm-usl-indias-change-agents-animation/page/3>. (Downloaded on 25 August 2011)
3. *Indian Animation: Overview*. Available from: <http://www.indiananimation.com/indianimantra/overview.html>. (Downloaded on 4 August 2011)
4. *Animation Films, Indian Cinema*. Available from: http://www.indianetzone.com/28/animation_films_indian_cinema.htm. (Downloaded on 26 July 2011)

5. *Dada Sahab Phalke*, Available from: <http://www.wikipedia.org/Dadasahabphalke>. (Downloaded on 21 July 2011)
6. www.oxfordadvancedlearnersdictionary.com/dictionary/mythology. (Downloaded on 4 August 2011).
7. *Myth Mythic. Word Ideas*, Available from: <http://www.consultsos.com/pandora/myth.htm>. (Downloaded on 4 August 2011).
8. www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/modernity. (Downloaded on 4 August 2011).
9. *World Civilization Internet Classroom and Anthology. Washington State University*. Available from: <http://public.wsu.edu/~dee/GLOSSARY/MODERN.HTM>. (Downloaded on 4 August 2011).
10. *Olodum*. Available from: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/olodum. (Downloaded on 22 August 2011)
11. *Indian Animation industry is struggling to survive* - N. R. Panicker. (He was speaking at a panel discussion on the inaugural day of India's biggest media and entertainment convention, FICCI Frames 2011). Available from: <http://www.bollywoodhungama.com/features/2011/03/23/7217/index.html>. (Downloaded on 20 September 2011)