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Title: “Folklore as Visual Imaging: A Study of Legends
of Childhoods of Krishna, Ganesh and Hanuman
in Contemporary India (2000-2010)”

Abstract Findings:

This thesis discusses the contemporary visualisations of the childhood stories of gods Krishna, Ganesha and Hanuman as done in the animation films *Bal Ganesh*, *Bal Hanuman* and *Bal Krishna*, as vehicles that not only narrate folklore but also transmit an understanding and interpretation of the contemporary world that is uncritically accepted by the viewers. It is obvious that this new mode of dissemination of folklore in terms of visual imaging in these animation films, in terms of the subject chosen, the form adopted and the language and narrative structure used create a new world in the imagination of the viewer, both the adult and the child. The world created is fluid in which cultural constructions and transactions can occur seamlessly across political and social geography, just as products of multinational companies seek and find global acceptance.

In my research I was able to identify some specific ideas that determine the content of these films and help in fulfilling the intention for which these films being made. A retelling of epics, mythology and folklore for the target audience of children is for the purpose of transmitting the popularly accepted value systems and a conception of the past associated with such narration through a medium that would make such reception entertaining. The adult

interest is sustained and even enhanced by the novelty of re-negotiating a known narrative through a different medium, technology and imagery. The idea of the warrior/hero and the celebration of the extra-ordinary, the beyond human abilities; the super human, the super man marks the characteristic features of the protagonist and his deeds forms the core of such narratives and the grand, often cosmic scale of the drama making the viewing a spectacle where breathtaking images keep the viewer engrossed in a visual sensation. The idea and ideal of the innocent and the good is juxtaposed with the idea of evil emphasizing the need for the good to overcome the evil. The animation films highlight with pride that the narratives belong to India and is a part of its glorious heritage, tradition and that this heritage and tradition should be made known to the modern contemporary audience not only within India but internationally, because the narrative contains moral and ethical lessons that have universal value.

The above mentioned ideas are wonderfully visualized and craftily constructed on the wings of the latest state of the art technology employing the creative talents of a large number of professionals from various fields of art and culture and a new folklore is created. That these visualizations and its accompanying narratives are shaping and influencing the consciousness of young children surely has a deep effect on how the urban culture of this society is going to be formed. The uniformity of thoughts that is imposed by such narrations, the effortless manner in which the mind is made to absorb these narrations diluting and negating imaginative exercises and the slow but sure disappearance of oral narratives in urban homes coupled with falling reading habits of young children takes us to the evolving of a culture that has all the dangers of being one dimensional.