

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter is devoted to explicitly state the methodology. A method is adopted for carrying out the study, addressing the objectives and resolving the research questions. The exploration of the research problem is essentially of an expository nature. The study involves critical-analytical method of research. The research project took up four Hindi films belonging to romantic drama genre which has got an adequate presence of male body exposure.

The films are identified as *Desi Boys* (2011), the film revolves around two gigolos who objectify their body to woo females and earn their bread and butter. *Jism-2*(2012), the film did a good business for the sensuous scenes depicting the want of a female to be in a man's life. *Aiyyaa*(2012),this film personifies female thought and changes the trend of Indian film making by showing a female fanaticizing about a man in her dreams. The fourth film studied is *Race 2*(2013), where the machos can strip, dance, do stunts to entertain the females and the film also narrates the greed which every female in the neo-liberal economy have to fulfill their dreams.

The chapter is divided into three sections that deal with the study method, signs, codes and measurement instrument, and the sampling and its justification in our study.

3.1. Study Method: Semiotic and Paradigmatic Analysis

The films are selected by purposive sampling method of research. Burn and Parker defines (2005) that an analysis of any media text require three basic things. The first is a "systematic order of signification"(2005, p.30) implying how texts produce meanings through a number of communicative forms like language, image, sound or text.

Secondly, the integration of textual analysis with an analysis of the audience and how they get engaged in meaning production of the text under scanner and lastly, the ability to connect the textual analysis with the political, economic and social contexts in which the text is produced.

So the films are analyzed with reference to the relevant political discourse and how it is shaping up and being shaped by the film text as any social narrative is. The films under consideration have been exposed to semiotic analysis since the presence of bare body serves as signifier and what they signify is loaded with a host of possibilities.

Propp (1928/1968) had argued that the best possible way to understand narrative is to understand in terms of the actions of the main protagonist. The films are exposed to paradigmatic analysis. The paradigmatic analysis is used to find out the meaning arising out of oppositional forces operating within the text and between the environment within which the text is produced and consumed.

Daniel Chandler, (2002/2007) states 'paradigmatic relations' are the oppositions and contrasts between the signifiers that belong to the same set from which those used in the text were drawn.

A paradigmatic analysis usually involves comparing and contrasting each of the signifiers present in the text with absent signifiers which in similar circumstances might have been chosen, and considering the significance of the choices made. It can be applied at any semiotic level, from the choice of a particular word, image or sound to the level of the choice of style, genre or medium.

The use of one signifier rather than another from the same paradigm is based on factors such as technical constraints, code (e.g. genre), convention, connotation, style, rhetorical purpose and the limitations of the individual's own repertoire.

It has already been mentioned that the findings from the analysis of the narrative followed critical-analytical approach and this is essentially with reference to discourse pattern and the design of the text as proposed by Kress and Van Lewen (2001).

Burn and Parker (2005) argues that any communicative act serves a representational function as well as an orientational function. So the analysis of these films took semiotic as well as social semiotic analysis to find out the operational design existing behind the use of bare male body in contemporary Hindi films.

After the execution of the analysis, with the help of the proposed approaches, supplementary evidences are explored on the basis of a structured questionnaire administered purposively among young female filmgoers in a metro city of Northeast India to examine whether the pleasure of viewing (Ang,1989) for the sake of viewing is experienced by these young female viewers or it is a conscious exploration of voyeuristic tendencies leading to the possibility of the beginning of the formation of a female gaze within the hetero-normative tradition.

Semiotic Analysis

Semiotics as theorized by Saussure (1959) is a ‘science of signs’ that contains a material signifier and the rational concept or signified which it instantaneously evokes. Within the Saussurean tradition, the responsibility of the semiotician is to look beyond the specific texts or practices to the systems of functional differences working within them.

The primary goal is to establish the underlying conventions; identifying noteworthy differences and oppositions in an effort to model the system of categories, relations (syntagmatic and paradigmatic), connotations, distinctions and combination rules employed. It is now a convention to apply linguistic structure to cinema to develop our understanding of how films can create meaning. With unlimited possibilities of meanings or connotations for a specific signifier in films, films worked as a compound artistic language, using array of codes and systems to create meaning.

The film, as an art form, like many other art forms, manifests a plurality of codes. In films, numerous codes remain constant across all or most films; unlike language, however, films have no master code shared by all films. Filmic texts, form an organized network produced by interlacing of specific cinematic codes, i.e. codes shared by languages other than films (Metz, 1974).

According to semiotics, signs are everywhere and everything is a sign – words, images, sounds, and absence of them, in short anything from which some meanings may be generated.

Paradigmatic Analysis

The researcher opted for paradigmatic analysis as the syntagmatic analysis of a text involves studying its structure and the relationships between each of the syntagms of a text. In case of visual narratives like film and television, the standard levels of syntagmatic analysis normally involves an analysis of how each frame, shot, scene or sequence are related to the others. It all starts at the lowest level as the individual frame.

As films are projected at a rate of 24 frames a second, the viewer is never conscious of individual frame. While syntagmatic analysis attempts to study surface structure of a text, paradigmatic seeks to identify the various paradigms or underlying signifiers in the manifest content of texts. Involving a consideration of the positive or negative connotations of each signifier and the significance of their selections, it also brings to front the existence of underlying thematic paradigms.

Paradigmatic relations which refer to the oppositions and contrasts between the signifiers that belong to the same set from which those used in the text were drawn, their analysis also involves comparing and contrasting each of the signifiers present in the text with absent signifiers that could have been chosen in similar situations. Paradigmatic analysis can be applied in any semiotic level, from the choice of a particular word, image or sound to the level of the choice of style, genre or medium.

3.2. Signs, Codes and Measurement Instrument

The researcher while paradigmatically analyzing the films very carefully read the signs in the texts. Convention is necessary to the understanding of any sign, however iconic or indexical it is.

Convention is the social dimension of signs. It is the agreement amongst the users about the appropriate uses of responses to a sign. In old movies when they need to show the passing of time, they may typically show the sheets bearing the days of the month being torn of the calendar, and that is iconic, because it looks like sheet being torn off a calendar, the numbers 1, 2, 3 etc, the names January, February etc, are symbols and

purely arbitrary; the whole sequence is indexical of the passing of time – we associate the removal of the sheets with the passing of time.

The researcher during the analyses of the films under consideration carefully identified the signs which had signifiers and derived the signified meaning from the signifiers. The codes of the signs were also analyzed.

Codes

The concept of code is fundamental in semiotics. Since the meaning of the sign depends on the code within which it is situated, codes provide a framework within which signs make sense. We cannot grant something the status of a sign if it does not function within a code. If the relationship between a signifier and its signified is relatively arbitrary, then it is clear that interpreting the conventional meaning of signs requires familiarity with appropriate sets of conventions. Reading a text involves relating it to relevant codes and the conventions of codes represent a social dimension in semiotics. A code is a set of practices familiar to users of the medium operating within a broad cultural framework.

Codes are not simply conventions of communication but rather procedural systems of related conventions which operate in certain domains. Codes are considered as interpretative frameworks which are used by both producers and interpreters of texts. While creating texts we select and combine signs in relation to the codes with which we are familiar in order to limit the range of possible meanings they are likely to generate when read by others.

The researcher based on the importance of codes, identified signs and then the signifier to derive the signified meaning of the texts. There researcher used the following codes for the paradigmatic analysis of the films:-

- Verbal language (phonological, syntactical, lexical, prosodic and paralinguistic subcodes)
- Bodily codes (bodily contact, proximity, physical orientation, appearance, facial expression, gaze, head nods, gestures and posture)
- Commodity codes (fashions, clothing, cars etc)
- Behavioral codes (protocols, rituals, role-playing, games)
- Aesthetic codes (poetry, drama, painting, sculpture, music, classicism, romanticism, realism)
- Genre, rhetorical and stylistic codes (plot, character, action, dialogue, setting, etc)

Measuring Instrument

The researcher has used structured questionnaire with mostly close ended standard questions. It has served as tool for getting responses from the respondents and to relate it the findings of the semiotic analysis done of four films (Race 2, Desi Boyz, Aiyaa and Jism 2). The questionnaire was administered on cinema viewing young women of one of the metro cities in Northeastern India to find out the views of the spectators on gaze, male gaze and voyeuristic pleasure derived by female spectators after seeing bare male body on-screen. Survey research was conducted among the cinema viewing women of Guwahati from the age of 20 to 45 with the help of a generalized measuring instrument called questionnaire.

3.3. Sampling and Sample Justification

The researcher has taken 200 respondents as his sample. The universe for the research was the cinema going young women of Guwahati.

The respondents, who were aged between 20 years to 45 years, were included in the sample.

Four commercially successful Hindi films, produced in the last part of the first decade and first part of the second decade of twenty first century were chosen on the basis of adequate male body exposure in these films.

These films were also chosen as these films sparked off a debate in the media with regard to their supposed appeal to women through male body exposure.

Sampling

The researcher has used multistage stratified random sampling method to collect the responses as all the respondents were cinema going women from a particular age group. Multistage sampling was used in identifying the films also for textual analysis.

Study universe constituted of all Hindi commercial films, then films were identified on the basis of male body exposure as well as their commercial success. The Hindi films which are contemporary, with adequate male body exposure were sampled for the purpose of the work.

Time in Data Collection

The response of the viewers was collected by the researcher over a period of 1 month after having analyzed the films and generalizing the questionnaire.

Reliability

The questionnaire was generalized through test-retest method.

Data Interpretation

The data collected from questionnaires were interpreted with the help of frequency tables. The text was analysed with the help of semiotics.