



FILM: **RRR (Rise Roar Revolt)**

FDG RATING: 3.0 ☺☺☺○○

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

S.S. Rajamouli: *director/writer*
N.T. Rama Rao Jr.: *actor, Bheem*
Ram Charan: *actor, Raju*

DATE: February 19, 2023

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **RRR (Rise Roar Revolt)**

Winning the 2023 Golden Globe for best foreign language film, RRR (Rise Roar Revolt) is an epic Indian film inspired by two revolutionaries, Komaram Bheem and Alluri Sitarama Raju, who led uprisings against the British colonialists in the 1920s. Director S. S. Rajamouli imagines the two men, who in reality did not know each other, as legendary super warriors who join forces to crusade against the British invading their country and mistreating the inhabitants.

In the film, Raju has ingratiated himself into the British military as a fearless fighter but he is actually keeping tabs on weapons shipments so at the right time he will steal the weapons shipment and deliver it to his tribe. He remembers as a child, his father used wooden shaped rifles to train the tribal men how to use real rifles to defend against the British and promised a weapon for each of them. Raju is carrying out his father's promise.

Bheem is from a small tribe known for their tight loyalty and protection of each member of the tribe. After a little girl, Malli, sings a beautiful song to the British Governor's wife, Lady Buxton, as the tribe all sit in front of the woman listening, Lady Buxton requests that the girl be taken to the British compound for own personal amusement. Malli's mother thinks Lady Buxton is offering her coins because her daughter sang so beautifully, but she is actually paying her a few coins to take her daughter. The mother is then severely beaten when she tries to keep them from taking her daughter. Bheem is the designated "shepherd" of the tribe so he begins his quest to find Malli and bring her back.

We recognize that each of the men are super warriors as the film uses dazzling digitized fantasy scenes showing off the prowess of Raju and Bheem. At first it might seem jarring, but after accepting the unique style of story-telling, and suspending any disbelief at the exaggerated, terrific special effects action sequences, it's a blast to see Bheem using his bare hands to fight a fierce tiger, and later see hundreds of digitized wild animals unleashed from their cages to attack the British in their compound as the two super heroes perform impossible feats battling the British super villains.

Raju and Bheem first meet each other when a young boy needs to be rescued from the river. Raju, standing on the bridge above, instinctively aids Bheem, who is on the sand at the water's edge. Together they save the boy. This launches the film into a jaunty series of scenes showing the two men becoming best buddies in friendly competitions of strength, endurance, and agility.

A lot of action and intrigue happens during the three hour saga as Bheem journeys to the compound, keeping a low profile, not wanting to be identified as the warrior in search of Mali. At the same time Raju is on a mission find the rebellious tribal man who led a mass of protesters to overtake the military guarding the compound. Lady Buxton will reward him if he captures this man but there are no pictures or descriptions of him so Raju does not realize the man he is looking for is actually Bheem.

Somewhat oddly, but typically Bollywood, one of the most enjoyable scenes is watching the two men challenge each other in an energetic Bollywood dance to the catchy tune, Naatu-Naatu (Oscar winning best song). Bheem has been invited by Jennifer (the only British person who is not racist) to a lavish party on the grounds of the compound. A pompous British young man resents that Bheem is there and shows off his British style of dancing fast tricky steps when Raju and Bheem launch into their Bollywood fancy footwork, clearly outperforming their challenger. We relished these breaks from the battle scenes.

Some discussion participants didn't like that the British were depicted as pure evil but that is the style of Marvel Super Hero movies, and the film maker was a great admirer of Marvel films – super heroes versus super villains. Were the British really that awful? We were fortunate to have two discussion participants who grew up in India provide the insight we needed. Evidently, the British could be very cruel since they didn't think of the Indian people as equal beings. The sign on the Bombay Hotel says: No Indians and No Dogs. But the British did bring order and enabled women to study and be educated. We wondered how Jenny could befriend Bheem and bring him to the British palatial house. Bheem, however, was stopped as they start to enter and the guard instructs him to use the servant quarters in the back. Jenny replies that Bheem is her friend. We thought it was unrealistic that Jenny would be bringing an Indian man as a friend-visitor. But we were wrong. Historically, British men were first to arrive so some of them married Indian women

Evidently, Indian history is documented completely from the British perspective so there is actually no history of India in schools. But this film is a sign that change is coming. "It's pay back" was one comment, noting a completely Indian perspective is presented in the film. Another comment was that this film is retaliation, even if exaggerated.

For some discussion participants, the plot was difficult to accept. Another thought the film was like playing a violent video game. And another described the film as ridiculous but loved all the color and beauty. Understanding India's culture of supernatural gods, Bheem and Raju fit right in as super natural warriors. We loved seeing their strong friendship. An interesting side note is that Raju's quest could seem more noble since it was for country while Bheem's quest was for family.

A mash up of Bollywood and Marvel with eye catching magical realism, many participants enjoyed the film for pure entertainment although some thought it was a bit too violent and a bit too long. We rated RRR a less than super 3.0 on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best.)



See you at the movies!

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