



SATYAJIT RAY: THE LANGUAGE OF FILM

The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha

Ray on 'The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha'

In your fairytale The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha, did American musicals provide you with any models?

No, I don't think so. *Goopy Gyne* was completely original. I had no models in mind at all, so far as I can recall, certainly not American musicals. The film grew from the story – which was adapted from an original story by my grandfather – and the songs grew from the situations...

In the *Goopy Gyne* script-books, first I drew the outline of the plot as it would be developed for the screen, and along with that, on the left-hand side of the page, were written the words for the songs; I was scribbling ideas. And so the songs came once I'd got the story structure in my mind. When the situations presented themselves, I stopped writing the story and began working on the songs. In most cases they were more or less retained as they came.

So the music of the songs was not drawn from any Indian styles?

It does draw on Indian folk songs and classical songs, and there are even Western touches – the orchestration is certainly very Western.

And there are parodies of certain singing styles. One song comes straight from South India. The accompaniment is South Indian; I used a vina [Indian stringed instrument] and percussion as played in the South Indian manner. It's the song where Goopy and Bagha are really caught, but Goopy suddenly bursts into song and that's how they escape. They do the neck movement while running away – that's also a South Indian dance thing.

But overall, in *Goopy Gyne* and its sequel *The Kingdom of Diamonds* [*Hirak Rajar Deshe*, 1980], the songs are my songs if you come to think about it. I have definitely set a style of singing which doesn't come from Rabindranath Tagore, doesn't come from Western music, but which is essentially me.

Extracts from interviews by Andrew Robinson (reprinted in *Sight & Sound*, September 2013)

A contemporary review

Based on a Bengali fairy-tale written by his grandfather, *The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha* is a picturesque departure from Ray's traditional style of work. The film is rather ominously subtitled 'A Fairy-tale for Adults', and for children one suspects it will have its longueurs, especially in the later part where picaresque narrative gives way to overt *Gulliver's Travels*-type satire on the inanities of war. But the first part of the film not only affirms Ray's

instinctive story-telling ability (with a satisfying use of the wipe to cut the narrative into chapters), but reveals an unexpected flair for surrealist detail. The King of the Ghosts materialises modernistically in front of a giant triangle of flashing neon lights, and addresses the heroes in the harsh electronic tones of a science-fiction creature. Both here and in the ensuing sequences where Goopy and Bagha discover the possibilities of their three wishes (a banquet miraculously appearing in the desert, Goopy bursting into lyrical song as he walks by the river at dawn), the film captures the irresistible mixture of comedy and surprise that belongs to the best fairy stories.

While laughing at Goopy and Bagha as a comic duo – one tall, the other short; one benign and simple, the other quick-witted and startled-looking – we still share their amazed responses to the happenings around them. Indeed, interest lapses precisely when Goopy and Bagha fade into the background during the Halla section and leave the stage to a trio of stock pantomime figures – demented wizard, evil prime minister, manipulated king – whom all Ray's inventive details of mannerism and costume (the wizard's speeded-up walk, the long swaying antennae on his magic hat) cannot quite bring to life.

In a film so obtrusively divided down the middle, the one harmonising factor is the role of music. Goopy and Bagha's songs are not merely musical interludes, but mark the four pivotal stages in the development of the story – Goopy's banishment, the appearance of the King of the Ghosts, the boys' acceptance at court, the prevention of the war. Exquisitely sung and staged, the songs are a persuasive metaphor for harmony in a divided world, and the kingdom of Shundi clearly owes its peaceful nature to the fact that its subjects cannot talk but can only make music. Perhaps we shouldn't be too pleased when, at the end of the film, the joy of victory restores their power of speech.

Nigel Andrews, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, March 1972

**THE ADVENTURES OF GOOPY AND BAGHA
(GOOPY GYNE BAGHA BYNE)**

Director: Satyajit Ray

Production Company: Purnima Pictures

Producers: Nepal Dutta, Asim Dutta

Screenplay: Satyajit Ray

From the story by: Upendrakisore Ray

Photography: Soumendu Roy

Editor: Dulal Dutta

Art Director: Bansi Chandragupta

Costumes: Satyajit Ray

Music: Satyajit Ray

Goopy's Songs Sung by: Anup Kumar Ghosal

Choreography: Sambhunath Bhattacharya

Sound: Nripen Paul, Atul Chatterjee, Sujit Sarkar

Cast

Tapen Chatterjee (*Goopy*)

Rabi Ghosh (*Bagha*)

Santosh Dutta (*King of Halla/King of Shundi*)

Jahar Roy (*Prime Minister of Halla*)

Santi Chatterjee (*Commander-in-Chief of Halla*)

Harindranath Chatterjee (*Barfi, the magician*)

Chinmoy Roy (*spy of Halla*)

Durgadas Bannerjee (*King of Amloki*)

Gobinda Chakravarti (*Goopy's father*)

Prasad Mukherjee (*King of Ghosts*)

Haridhan Mukherjee, Abani Chatterjee, Khagen Pathak,

Binoy Bose, Prasad Mukherjee (*village elders*)

Joykrishna Sanyal, Tarun Mitra, Ratan Banerjee, Kartik Chatterjee
(*singers at the court of Shundi*)

Gopal Dey (*executioner*)

Ajoy Banerjee, Sailen Ganguli, Moni Srimani,

Binoy Bose, Kartik Chatterjee (*visitors to Halla*)

India 1968

132 mins

Restored by the Satyajit Ray Preservation Project
at the Academy Film Archive

SATYAJIT RAY

THE LANGUAGE OF FILM

The Philosopher's Stone (Parash Pathar)

Fri 1 Jul 20:35; Sun 10 Jul 18:20

The Zoo Chiriyakhana

Sat 2 Jul 12:00; Sun 10 Jul 12:20

The Adversary (Pratidwandi)

Sat 2 Jul 15:10; Sun 10 Jul 15:30

Pather Panchali (Song of the Little Road)

Sun 3 Jul 18:20; Sat 9 Jul 12:00; Sat 30 Jul 14:30

The Film Language of Satyajit Ray

Wed 6 Jul 18:00

The Middleman (Jana Aranya)

Wed 6 Jul 20:20; Sun 24 Jul 18:10

Two Daughters: The Postmaster and Samapti (The Conclusion)

+ intro by Aparna Sen

Thu 7 Jul 17:50

The Unvanquished (Aparajito)

Sat 9 Jul 15:00; Thu 14 Jul 18:15; Sat 30 Jul 17:40

The World of Apu (Apu Sansar)

Sat 9 Jul 17:50; Sat 16 Jul 20:45; Sat 30 Jul 20:30

+ pre-recorded intro

Raahgir (The Wayfarers)

Mon 11 Jul 18:00

Company Limited (Seemabaddha)

Wed 13 Jul 18:20; Tue 26 Jul 20:45

Satyajit Ray: His Home and the World

Sat 16 Jul 12:00-17:00

Satyajit Ray Documentaries Programme 1: Rabindranath Tagore

+ **The Inner Eye** + **Sukumar Ray**

Sat 16 Jul 18:30; Sun 31 Jul 12:00

The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha Goopy (Gyne ar Bagha Byne)

Sun 17 Jul 13:00; Sat 23 Jul 12:10

The Golden Fortress (Sonar Kella)

Sun 17 Jul 15:40; Wed 27 Jul 18:00

Branches of the Tree (Shakha Proshakha)

Sun 17 Jul 18:10; Sat 30 Jul 12:20

The Kingdom of Diamonds (Hirak Rajar Deshe)

Mon 18 Jul 18:10; Sat 23 Jul 14:50

Joi Baba Felunath (The Elephant God)

Tue 19 Jul 18:10; Mon 25 Jul 20:40

The Stranger (Agantuk)

Thu 21 Jul 20:40; Sun 31 Jul 18:20

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Programme notes and credits compiled by the BFI Documentation Unit

Notes may be edited or abridged. Questions/comments? Email prognotes@bfi.org.uk

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