



ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND MAGICAL REALISM IN AVASAVYUHAM

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Abstract: The movie *Avasavyuham: The Arbit Documentation of an Amphibian Hunt* exhibits a great deal of care for the ecosystem's wellbeing and its significance for the survival of the human race, to the point that this work is suitable study material for eco-critical analysis. The Deep Ecology concept is prominently featured in the movie. As a result, the current study evaluates the movie from an ecological standpoint while also talking about the author's initiatives to raise viewers' awareness of environmental issues. In *Avasavyuham* Krishand uses a magical realist narrative approach in his film to give an all-encompassing eco-critical critique that reveals the interaction between the natural world and humans. He draws attention to a wide range of subjects, many of which have to do with the media, religion, or the general state of affairs that this nation is in at the moment. The story follows the life of a mysterious man named Joy and his relationship with nature. This paper intends to show how popular culture addresses ecological issues and anthropocentric ideas. This paper further analyses the aspects of fantasy and supernatural elements in the movie.

IndexTerms – Deep ecology, anthropocene, fantasy, nature

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between humanity and the environment has clearly been in conflict and upheaval in recent years, and the drama surrounding this topic is becoming increasingly prominent in popular culture, particularly in movies. We constantly encounter narratives pertaining to nature, sustainability, and climate change in contemporary society. Whether we are reading the news or simply engaging in common leisure activities such as reading books and watching movies, the theme of nature and human interaction with it appears to be gaining traction. Scientists, politicians, and journalists are discussing the Anthropocene age, the era dominated and forever changed by us humans. This could be an indicator of society's increased knowledge of environmental challenges in the twenty-first century. One of the newest subfields in eco-critical studies is deep ecology. The term was created by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess to develop ecological awareness and a sense of common identity between people and the environment. Research on Deep Ecology suggests that the human person is only one more species among the diverse ones found in nature, rather than the Supreme Being the idea that mankind in some way stands apart is rapidly moving us towards the environmental degradation caused by humans.

Cinema has evolved over time, not just in terms of technology but also in the method used to approach a subject before putting it on screen. *Avasavyuham* presents a fundamentally different approach to managing and presenting the subject matter. The director offers a story that blends documentary, interview, fiction, docu-fiction, and other elements. We see a portion of the earth with seas, lakes, land, and people. We also learn about the biological richness of the world and certain species that are vanishing from it. If we explore the film's back-story, it begins with the story of a group of four students who went to study in the Western Ghats. The sights then move on to Puthuvype. There is a mention of the world of biodiversity and certain creatures that are disappearing from this planet as we are shown a region of the globe filled with sea, lake, land, and humans. With a sea devoid of humans and land without of whales, the world of the ecosystem unfolds before us in the form of a character named Joy. The movie has been split into four sections: Prologue: Western Ghats-2015, an expedition to the Western Ghats in search of a tropical frog named *Mysteillus Joy*. Chapter 1: *Lizzy Azhikode 2017* is about Joy, and the mysteries of his origin and their life. It follows the voyage of Joy, an unidentified man with a unique talent who can call in marine life by making a few noises. Strangely, he doesn't consume fish. Joy is a great asset to the family's fishing operation and lives with them. Their daughter Lissy receives a marriage proposal from Valsan, a prominent local. Lissy, however, is uninterested because Valsan is a violent man with a history of criminal activity. He and his brother are about to confront her after feeling rejected, when Joy stops them in their tracks. When the brothers are about to leave, they become intrigued about him and find out that he is having an affair with Lissy after doing a little investigation. The couple is being followed by Valsan, his brother, and Plank while they are having one of their rendezvous. Joy and Lissy both manage to get away, but not before killing Valsan. We can infer from these circumstances that this individual possesses superhuman power. Chapter 2 : *Vava Puthuvype 2018*, It covers the land of Susheelan Vava as well as various other instances in their lives. He is a destitute fisherman who has run out of money. He comes across a body on the shore one day. Joy, who is barely alive, is the owner. When Vava brings him to the hospital, the staff startles him by removing insects from his leg. Those are submitted for testing, and Vava is taking care of Joy in the meanwhile. Vava, however, asks him to leave because she doesn't want him to stay for too long. But when Joy exhibits his talent for luring marine life, Vava recognizes a big opportunity for profit. He restarts his fishing operation with Joy's assistance and begins to make a profit from the catch. Not only that, but he can also pay back

his debts. Chapter 3: Murali Puthuvype 2020, The plot progresses through the incidents that occur at Madhusmithas house. Conclusion: A Museum in Paris in 2023.

Throughout this voyage, the film focuses on the man known as Joy and nature. While the first two chapters resemble docu-fiction in nature, the filmmaker renders most of the fiction perspective in the third chapter. The director succeeds in transposing Joy's presence and mystery to the screen with the possibilities of magical realism. It is noteworthy in the writing that the characters were able to make an impression on the audience by bringing documentary nature into the film. Even in that limited space, the film was able to bring imaginary events to life and narrate stories with distinction. Even as the story proceeds with the addition of laughs, the severity of the matter is maintained at all times.

When combined, two seemingly incompatible natures create a truly unusual genre. Similar to how photos started to show things as they were and not as people hoped they were, realism was an artistic movement in the 19th century where the world started to be portrayed truthfully rather than in a romanticized or idealized fashion. Early 20th-century German art critic Franz Roh is credited with coining the term "magical realism" as a critique of realism. In the 1950s, the literary subgenre gained prominence, particularly in Latin America. One of the most well-known and renowned books in the category is *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The story is situated in the actual world and just so happens to contain supernatural components, which is a significant recurring theme. The stories that come from this subgenre are based on real-world laws that we follow and incorporate aspects of fantasy. The second movie by Krishand RK *Avasavyuham: The Arbit Documentation of An Amphibian Hunt* is a mockumentary that tells a poignant tale about society, the environment, and how people connect with one another. In addition, the film received the Kerala State Film Award for Best Film in 2021 as well as the Kerala State Film Award for Best Screenplay in 2021. The film begins with a hefty comment by Mortican Adams, "What is normal for a spider is chaos for the fly". The movie deftly blends elements from the mainstream with worries about ecology in general, notably the environmentally vulnerable mangroves in Kerala. The result is surrealistic and humorous at the same time. The movie is set in the mangrove-forested areas of Puthuvype, and Azhikode. Notably, protests by locals and environmentalists opposing the construction of an LNG port in Puthuvype made headlines. In *Avasavyuham* Krishand uses a magical realist narrative approach in his film to give an all-encompassing ecocritical critique that reveals the interaction between the natural world and humans. He draws attention to a wide range of subjects, many of which have to do with the media, religion, or the general state of affairs that this nation is in at the moment.

DOCUFICTION NARRATION AND DEEP ECOLOGY

"Avasavyuham" follows the path of a dark comedy, in part due to the plot and in part owing to the ridiculous pairing of facts and myth. Beginning with a quest for an endangered frog found in the Western Ghats. It gradually becomes organic and biological. It is about our intertwined and interconnected genetic, physical, human, and non-human natures. There are numerous permutations, perversions, transpositions, and abominations of living things, including those that pertain to people, animals, plants, objects that are contained in the atmosphere, and the environment. The movie depicts our ecology as being within the process that contains all of these factors—their combination, interactions, varied combinations, and the confusion they cause. History and evolution are intertwined in this scene, with the movie's suggestion that man is just one living thing among many others, and that his presence has a disastrous impact on the natural order of all other biological and inorganic occurrences. Multiple layers are used to disseminate the habitat narrative. It follows the investigation of a frog species that are endangered and its ecosystem, the enigmatic man Joy who acts as a guide, his subsequent interactions with various people and means of subsistence, his travels through various constellations, the conflicts he encounters, his hunting and killing, and finally his evolution into a glass object in a foreign natural history museum.

A thread about scientists looking for a species of frog in the Western Ghats runs parallel to Joy's story. These segments are separate from the interviews with people who knew Joy, but both are shot in a documentary-style meant to perplex the audience by standing in stark contrast to the remainder of the movie's fictitious tone. *Avasavyuham* is both fascinating and baffling, and it is open-ended in the greatest possible way that abstract film can be, where the two come together in an ambiguous, frequently hilarious, occasionally melancholy, and always intriguing combination. In patriarchy, it is common to hear the argument that "but women are worshipped in our culture, so how can you say we treat women poorly?" In *Avasavyuham*, malicious rumors are first spread to vilify Joy, portray the assaults against him as acts of self-defense, and conceal the true intentions of his attackers. Things quickly fall out of his control, as is expected, and the greater community creates amazing stories about him based on human imagination.

In many ways, it serves as a reminder to look about and take notice of the life that is all around us and the mysteries that it conceals from those who think they are superior to even the source of life, the environment that protects and sustains it. The human tendency to either use what he understands (in the name of development) or chain that which he fears (for the protection of mankind) is expertly explored in this mockumentary, as opposed to simply being intrigued by the soft yet fierce beauty that surrounds it. The movie continues to discuss numerous ethical, social, ideological, political, philosophical, and even religious conflicts/concepts while fusing its surrealistic sensibilities with scientific truths. Like its lead character, it gradually wins you over and continues to elude you long after the movie has ended. It is astounding how dejected we, as humans, can become in our quest to control and rule everything in our environment. The phrase "there is no point in calling ourselves men if we don't confront him" appears frequently throughout the entire movie, indicating that toxic masculinity is still very much alive and well. Some subplots have been adhered to, without dominating the main plot of the movie, such as the discussion of the geopolitical realities of Puthuvype or the construction of an Indian Oil Plant. While bravely casting a wide net with its social and political critique, *Avasavyuham* never comes across as overly dense or preachy. The government, police, business, the religious right, and law enforcement are some of its objectives. The appearance of priests chanting is just one example of the movie's twisted sense of humor being played out at the most ludicrous moments of intimacy. A montage of animals interrupts a person's depressing recollection. Perhaps the director is asking the audience to feel and express the same outrage for animals as they do for people by asking them to do this.

METAMORPHOSIS OF JOY

The figure of Joy first serves as a bridge between man and nature, but later on, we witness Joy's helplessness as he is forced to catch every fish out of greed and desperation. In one scene Joy is helplessly saying to other character that "there is no more fish's brother".

With his unique voice, Joy appears to have a ghostly ability for drawing out fish and crabs. Even if he is everyone else's favorite person, the same Joy is in the habit of making people afraid. They are the ones who try to discredit him by calling him a Bengali and a refugee. In the film's conclusion, there is also a view of what is being changed in the human-made legal system. The main theme of the movie *Avasavyuham* is how man abuses nature. Joy, a creature, a frogman, and a seaman on their quest of survival, returns to the seas where the metamorphosis first took place. When *Avasavyuham* focuses on its main character, business is ruthlessly destroying the fragile natural balance in the growing industrial sector of the Ernakulam district. Joy, a giant of a guy, arrives out of nowhere. As one crucial character notes, he lacks a government-issued ID, a passport, or an Aadhar card. The movie skillfully reminds us here that we live in a period where certain identifying documents have come to determine whether a person can be trusted or even be considered to exist. He is compared to a frog, a veil, or perhaps nature in general to reflect the complexities it deals with. How people abuse him and the comparisons made show how people abuse nature as well. Only when joy responds to abuse can mankind realize, or worse still, they do not even understand and continue to blame nature for everything. So, there we have the environmental anecdote. He has a unique bond with the natural world. All people who are associated with Joy experience happiness. With his presence they will be able to improve their standard of living in a good way. He has a special gift that enables him to attract marine and aquatic creatures, which benefits local fishermen or the individuals he works for. His compassion for those who have been kind to him frequently puts him in fatal danger. When things go wrong, he is forced to seek refuge a couple of times, but as others around him begin to understand him, his past, skills, and very existence become cloaked in additional secrets. In the second chapter Joy is arrested for fishing after curfew. At the police station, he is beaten up and tortured as he does not reveal his identity and also at the behest of Valsan's brother, who tells the officers about Joy's past. From this scene the director throws light to the police brutality that is happening in our society. After that Joy ends up in Madhusmitha's house. She is a kudumbasree worker. When she returns home, she doesn't recognize Joy as a man. She observes a being that is a hybrid of a man and a marine creature. It is illegal to murder some species of water life, as Joy is being perceived to be, so the police are called as she runs outside and warns others. The entire situation is simultaneously depressing, perplexing, and humorous. The situation outside Madhusmita's home is being watched by the police. There has been talk of a creature living there that is half human and half frog. Joy's skin has changed, and he does have webbed hands. He is certainly no longer just a regular human. Many theories have been proposed regarding him; one is that he might be a mutation brought on by pollution. Some speculate that he must be the devil himself, while others think he might be an avatar. People from his past, including Vava, Lissy, and Valsan's brother, recognize him in the commotion and attempt to contact him, but are unsuccessful. It's a sad circus indeed going on around a fearful man. Eventually, Valsan's brother decides he can no longer wait and has had enough. He slips into Madhusmita's home to evade the mob and shoots Joy, eventually killing him this time. Joy was a source of income for everyone around him as long as he was alive, whether it was Lissy's family, Vava, or even Madhusmita, who had started charging people money in addition to the police to look at him. Joy himself might be viewed as a symbol for how human beings abuse nature. Similar to how humans despoil the ecosystem so too do individuals take advantage of Joy's unique skill and use him. Joy, whoever he was, wasn't entirely human. He did admit at one point that he is unsure of his origins or his religious affiliation. And the unmistakable indications of his superhuman power, the capacity to draw marine life. When the insects discovered in his leg were previously tested, it was discovered that they had evolved into plants. In the field of science, this has never happened. Perhaps Joy was a natural aberration, or perhaps she was a supernatural being that mankind lost because of their stupidity and selfishness. We would never know and would only be able to infer it from our own experiences

The character Joy, an embodiment of life power, and his dramatic transformation into an exhibit in a natural history museum give Malayalam cinema an anthropocene imagination. *Avasavyuham* wanders across the enchanting waters of Nature's consciousness. Only this time, things grow a lot murkier. What may have been a fable about a princess kissing a strange frog turns out to be the key to solving a puzzling riddle between man and nature. *Avasavyuham* neatly fastens the multifaceted complications it takes up by widening its roots into different conflicts, including the transgressions of ecological squandering. Despite being focused on the interaction between man and nature, the movie goes in a completely opposite direction. The movie includes a significant role for nature, just like for man. Every animal and creature is presented by the director with highest accuracy. The movie is about how nature is being destroyed and encroached upon in Azhikode and Pudukkottai. Every spectator is reminded to pay attention to their surroundings by the movie. Nature also acts as a warning when humans abuse and plunder nature. This movie also posits a particular politics by picking a location like Vypin, where there are environmental issues. Through the narrative the director is trying to normalize fantasy by setting the story in the modern times. Grounding the story in an era we know brings the story closer to what we can relate to. In order to present his story, the director has chosen to merge elements of fiction and documentary. This technique has greatly aided in giving the audience the impression that what is being seen is real. The captivating vistas of nature's wonders are used to further the plot of the film. It's like reading a book as the tale develops in chapters. *Avasavyuham: The Arbit Documentation of an Amphibian Hunt* has a hero with the same name as a kind of frog that is very important to the plot. The film concludes with the line, "Why does the princess want to kiss a frog?" Kissing the frog to change him into a prince is a waste of a frog," emphasizing that animal is considerably more precious than humans today, who are willing to dig their own grave for a few seconds of bliss.

CONCLUSION

The story moves forward quickly and ingeniously, but what really stands out is the author's brave decision to be so ludicrous without resorting to showmanship or excessive audience explanations. Additionally, the contrast between the events as described by the protagonists and how they actually occur is darkly humorous gold. "*Avasavyuham*" is a subtly ironic criticism on how humans abuse nature. Political positions taken by *Avasavyuham* are priceless, maybe reaching their apex in the complete discrepancy between what some characters say in interviews and what is actually happening in front of the audience. What exactly is *Avasavyuham*, which is Sanskrit for "habit". It's perhaps best characterized as a fiction film that tries to pass for a documentary on Pudukkottai's endangered ecosystem and its inhabitants. Or a mockumentary, perhaps, but one that goes further than a typical human filmmaker might think is possible with its pretense. Joy represents the Earth's recovery after being devastated by *Homo sapiens*, making this the origin tale of the planet rather than a superhero story. This film expertly weaves together many Deep Ecological themes and ideas. Krishan's role in describing Joy's existence is to raise environmental awareness among the viewers. The movie raises awareness of the grave dangers faced by continuous urbanization. The film *Avasavyuham* proposes that benevolent Nature can meet all of human beings' basic wants and that without urban greed; they may be able to

live happily ever after. However, this new understanding of human existence can only be valid if non-human entities are accorded the same rights and respect as humans.

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