

## Thematizing Post-truth in Cinema: A Cultural Reading of Android

### Kunjappan ver. 5.25

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#### Abstract:

Post-truth is generally defined as a social and political situation that creates an alternative or parallel world beyond the reality or truth. It is narrated as a characteristic of post-modern society. Even though it is considered a social and political phenomenon through artistic representations, post-truth also becomes an artifact of culture. The paper analyses the Malayalam film Android Kunjappan Ver. 5.25 in the light of the theory of post-truth and explores its cultural intricacy in the life of Kerala.

Post-truth is a tenant of Postmodern culture and society. Post-truth gained its popularity in 2016 when the Oxford Dictionary selected the word as *International Word of the year*. The reason behind this selection is the irrelevance of truth in the election of the United States. Then the Post-truth social culture is formed as a characteristic of Postmodern society. In a post-truth condition, truth becomes irrelevant. It is a state in which the truth gets rid of its significance, a condition in which facts do not matter anymore, while the only thing that counts is the capability of channeling and exploiting the emotions prevailing in the disgruntled masses (Diago Han, 12). Here truth belongs to everyone, no one tries to attain truth in a proper way and chooses deceitful shortcuts. The freedom of finding personal truth gets abused and replaced by the alternative truth found as a result of social or personal reasons. This results in a person feeling lost or insecure. The concepts

like truth and freedom lose their magical appeal among people and start to feel dangerous. Post-truth gives way to Hyperreality or Para reality. It creates a new reality. Hyperreality is a special kind of social reality that is created or defined by reference to models. It is an inability of consciousness to distinguish reality from a simulation of reality, especially in a technologically advanced society. It also shows the technological advances of the future. In Hyperreality the process of simulation occurred and created different Simulacra. The simulacra or hyper-real copies precede our lives and encounter “the death of real” where one lives in a hyperreal realm by connecting more and more deeply with things like virtual realities.

The Process of simulation is as follows:

1. Order of sacrament: It is the reflection of a basic reality. (Exact representation)
2. Order of Maleficent: It masks and perverts a basic reality (Exaggerate the reality)
3. Order of Sorcery: It masks the absence of a basic reality (No original but a sense of reality)
4. Order of Simulation: It bears no relation to any reality (The successful condition of Hyperreality...no sense of basic real...lives in world of para reality)

Android Kunjappan Version 5.2 is a Malayalam movie released in 2019. The script of the film is written and directed by Ratheesh Balakrishnan Poduval. Major characters are Suraj Venjaramoodu, Soubin Shahir, Sooraj Thelakkad, Kendy Zirido, and Saiju Kurup. The film narrates the bonding of Baskara Poduval (Suraj Venjaramoodu) and his son Subramanyan (Soubin Shahir) Baskara Poduval is a stubborn old man, who is totally against the technological world. He is basically a farmer and is utmost reluctant to send his son Subramanyan for a job in the town. He never uses any kind of equipment in the kitchen and always leads a simple and strict lifestyle. But without considering his father's approval, Subramanyan left for Russia for a job in a Japan Robotic

Company. From the company, Subramanyan bought a Robotic Home nurse to look after his father. First of all, Baskara Poduval was against the idea but gradually he considered the Robot as his son. The film presents dynamic concepts of post-truth and explores the encounter between the human world and the digital world.

The cinema begins with a scene of performing a death ritual. The scene itself is the best example of the uncertainty of truth. The son practices the death ritual without any belief. The day of the death of the father is questionable here. Even, the death of the father is not confirmed. Without considering the real knowledge, a discourse of pseudo and ambiguous knowledge is established. The opposing elements like belief and knowledge become meaningless and go hand in hand.

Then the cinema presents the son and his duties to his father in a realistic manner. Subramanyan's urge to grab a good future resulted in the arrival of his substitutes who are supposed to look after and take care of the father. The home nurses who came to look after Baskaran Pillai are presented as a perverted image of his son. They are comics. Never assimilate with the needs of the father.

Thirdly one could see a robot Android ver 5.2 as a caretaker of the father. The father got an accident and his son called him from Russia to enquire about his health. In between their conversation, the signal became lost. The incident foreshadows the detachment of father and son in the future. Then there is a scene in which the father touches the heart of the robot while he was going to fall once. There begins the absence of basic reality. Most of the scene which narrates the complex relationship between the father, son, and the robot represents absurd reality which is one of the chief characteristics of post truth and postmodernity. Gradually the father rather thinks or

believes that the robot is his friend or his son. He made the robot wear dress. He wrote his horoscope. He shared his secrets which he could not want to share with anyone. The robot becomes more than his son. When the man took over the control of the Robot by himself, he began to live in hyperreality. He is completely separated from basic reality.

The robot becomes a human being in his psyche. He is unable to differentiate between the real and hyperreal. While the municipality men were taken away from the robot he reacted nervously. He is not ready to give up the robot even though his son told him that the robot would be a threat to his life. He decided to elope with the robot. The last scene of the film says that he will not be able to escape from the hyper-real world where he and his robot enjoyed their life.

In the context of psychology, the impact and influence of post-truth are defined as:

post-truth promotes a very hopeful future. These post-truth characteristics make it look good, especially for certain people. Specifically, people who feel confused, disoriented, and insecure. These characteristics make people susceptible to needing a higher level of closure. Aside from this, these people normally feel threatened, humiliated, or insignificant. Because of this, they have an intense desire to search for importance. (What is Post-Truth? - Exploring your mind)

When Subrahmanyam went to Russia, Baskara Poduval felt that he was abandoned by his son. The incidents after their parting and his behaviour toward the servants and others prove that he is confused, disoriented, and insecure in his life. He is not interested in anything and becomes rougher and more reserved. The robot helps him to have contact with his ex-lover. To keep such a relationship after a long time explores his intense desire to be important in his life. Uncertainty is

a chief characteristic of post-truth conditions. The film ends abruptly without giving a clear idea about the mental state of Poduval.

The Malayalam film industry always represents and adopts new trends, especially in its theme and presentation. The film becomes a good example of the present digital world and human addiction to it. The relationship between Poduval and the robot is highly subjective and the personification of the robot becomes a hyper-reality in contemporary society. The character experiences emotions and passions toward a machine. The machine becomes man, son in the digitalized world.

### **Bibliography**

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