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ECOCINEMA AND ENVIRONMENT: MISE-EN-SCÈNE OF 2018: EVERYONE IS A HERO**Mr N. Devadhas Prabu**

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remagopu@gmail.com**Abstract**

Every human being has an environmental responsibility. This responsibility triggers the awakening, showcasing how horrible the callousness from the end of humans, reflect on the environment. Humans should realize this responsibility and should resent vociferously against the disasters caused to the environment. However, many human beings remain dormant or unresponsive to the biggest catastrophe that the world encounters. This negligence leads to disaster like droughts, floods, earthquakes, cyclones etc, subsequently resulting in a huge catastrophe. The mass media plays a pivotal role in the social awakening of all the citizens. Movies have always served as a popular culture to showcase the climate change crisis. Significantly, a huge global audience gets educated through movies. Recent cinema has witnessed the uprising of movies echoing the climate change crisis. All these movies reverberate the causes and the consequences of the man-made catastrophe of the environment. This genre, specifically termed as eco-cinema, lenses the resources in nature and the issues that affect these resources. This genre, moreover catenates, the human-nature relationship. Consequently, these eco-movies serve as visual warning to the global audience, reiterating the impending doom on humans and their habitats. Ecological issues that are challenging to life on this planet include floods, drought, cyclones, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions. The present paper analyses an Indian movie by name 2018, produced in the southern state of Kerala, highlighting the havoc of the 2018 floods.

Keywords: Ecocinema, Ecological issues, ecological crisis, climate change, 2018, Kerala floods

Every human being has an environmental responsibility. This responsibility triggers the awakening, showcasing how horrible the callousness from the end of humans, reflect on the environment. Humans should realize this responsibility and should resent vociferously against the disasters caused to the environment. However, many human beings remain dormant or unresponsive to the biggest catastrophe that the world encounters. This negligence leads to disaster like droughts, floods, earthquakes, cyclones etc, subsequently resulting in a huge catastrophe. As Chu and Uy state, in recent years, numerous monographs and edited volumes have been released broadly on the intersecting topics of film, media, ecology, and environmental issues.

The mass media plays a pivotal role in the social awakening of all the citizens. As Zeisler (2008, p:1) says a cultural product with a mass audience can trigger this social awakening, provided the product leaves a long lasting impression as the minds of the audience. Though the popular cultural spreads through various media, the big screen has always proven to be the one with a long-lasting impact.

Movies have always served as a popular culture to showcase the climate change crisis. Significantly, a huge global audience get educated through movies. Every idea or belief of the past, the present and the future are driven into millions of the minds through the movies- both commercial

and non-commercial. Hence, sensitizing the entire population across the globe on the climate change issues has become getatable.

Recent cinema has witnessed the uprise of movies echoing the climate change crisis. All these movies reverberate the causes and the consequences of the man-made catastrophe of the environment. This genre, specifically termed as eco-cinema, lenses the resources in nature and the issues that affect these resources. This genre, moreover catenates, the human-nature relationship. Consequently, these eco-movies serve as visual warning to the global audience, repercussing the impending doom on humans and their habitats. According to Raymond Williams, ecology refers to the study of the relations of the plants and the animals with each other and their habitat. Environmentalism was, on the other hand, was the commonest word for such concern with the human and natural habitat. (Raymond Williams, 111). Ecological issues that are challenging to life on this planet include floods, drought, cyclones, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions. Being an offshoot of eco-criticism, eco-cinema also analyses how modern innovation and climate change crises are directly proportional. It serves as a mode of analysis which probes into cultural artefacts, captivating the attention of the audience, in turn educating them the preventive measures which eco-critics, scientists, environmentalists and researchers foresee.

The first use of the term 'ecocinema' was used by Roger C. Anderson in his 'Ecocinema: A Plan for Preserving Nature' when he proposes to film all living organisms in the world and show them in theatres with simulated conditions that resemble natural environments, as a way of preserving nature. The idealistic idea of opposing nature's annihilation and conquest as a way to draw attention to the real world is what first gave rise to the study of natural settings in movies. Ecocinema tackles issues related to the environment and ecology that are caused by humans in addition to natural events. The realization of negative effects such as environmental degradation, extinctions of non-human species, toxic wastes and contaminations, unregulated food and manufacturing industries, new diseases and epidemics, and the irreversible loss of indigenous and native cultures is signaled by industrialization, urbanization, and overdevelopment.

Scott Macdonald used the term "ecocinema" in his 2004 book *Towards an Ecocinema*. David Ingram also investigated the concept of an ecological cinema at the same period, employing the word to verify whether a movie featured a strong environmental message. In the background of an acceleratingly rising climate at the beginning of the twenty-first century, ecocinema depicts an unparalleled crisis moment. Environmental and conservation-related themes and concerns are not exclusive to non-fiction movies or what is referred to as "activist documentaries." Numerous fictional movies have made an effort to address the sociocultural settings and lived environments that influence how humans and non-human life interact. The importance that these cinematic narratives play in spreading awareness of environmental issues has been explored in Indian film in recent times. Millions of Indians treasured their moment of recognition on the glitzy international stage when the 1995 Academy Awards (also known as the Oscars) saw the Tamil-language Indian film *The Elephant Whisperer* win best documentary short. *All That Breathes* (2022), a highly regarded documentary directed by Shaunak Sen, is the movie that gave India more hope for an Oscar. Sen's video tells the incredible tale of two Muslim brothers who have devoted their lives to protecting the black kites, injured birds of prey, and subsequently the national capital of India's ecosystem. One of the most controversial aspects of India's ecological history—the Adivasis and their ongoing struggle for land rights—was depicted on cinema in Rishabh Shetty's *Kantara* (2022). Another movie from Kerala which received accolades for the portrayal of ecological issue is 2018, subtitled *Everyone is a Hero*. This study adopts an ecocritical lens to examine modern ecological films. Moreover, it shows how an

ecocritical approach might help us decipher hidden meanings in movies that don't always seem like they're about the environment.

Jude Anthany Joseph's 2018 film is somewhat generic from a scripting standpoint. The film's main goal is not to wow audiences with a brilliant screenplay because it is about an incident that happened only six years ago and has been covered so extensively that it is still accessible to many. Jude takes the movie's drama to a whole new level by carrying out the scenes with remarkable precision after setting up the plot in the first half in a passably decent way. Using excellent production and sound design together with superior visual effects. The storyline of 2018 showcases a survival drama on account of the 2018 catastrophe floods in Kerala, South India. The movie shows how an array of characters face the calamities caused by incessant rain and nature's fury.

The narrative opens in the village of Aruvikkulam, where one gets to know many characters and their little arguments. Tovino portrays a young man who was one of them and who departed the Army with a forged medical certificate. Their everyday lives are shown, and then, in a stark contrast, one witnesses how the flood turns them over. Jude Anthany Joseph, the director, does a good job of portraying the utter fear and helplessness that one feels when water reaches their home's roof, and he is able to fairly represent the agony, despair, and anguish that millions of people experience. Each of the actor—Tovino, Asif Ali, Lal, Indrans, Sudheesh, Narein, Kunchacko Boban, Kalaiyaran, Gauthami, Tanvi Ram—has fulfilled their respective responsibilities to a high degree. There was nothing ostentatious about the performances given by a variety of performers who played supporting parts such as mothers, dads, victims, and officials.

A military dropout is there, and he wants to leave since he is being humiliated. An ambitious model believes that his family's background as fishermen is a barrier to success. A cab driver has made the decision to accompany two foreigners on an all-Kerala tour. A reporter who covers both sides of the Mullaperiyar controversy works for us. The film shows how each of these characters—as well as those who were closer to them—became victims, survivors, and fighters throughout this extraordinary disaster. Every enduring act of bravery, generosity, and heartache related to the events taking place there is depicted in this film. That sort of aids them in instilling the people's fear without really aiming for large-scale images of destruction. It was also a clever idea to include a Tamil character who was genuinely benefiting from the significant rain in his village.

The movie speaks volumes of the sacrifice and service rendered by ordinary citizens during the emergency, thus each rising to the level of heroes, without capes. The lead played by Tovino Thomas, the crew consists of a stardom cast including Kunchacko Boban, Vineeth Sreenivasan and Aparna Balamurali. All these characters, at different junctures in their life, become victims and survivor of an unprecedented calamity. The floods had affected the entire state of Kerala and needed a collective effort to bounce back from the disaster. The significance of the visual treat lies in the nightmarish experience, which every Keralite beholder of a sleepless night during the 2018 floods. The fisherman who were the real life heroes too, have been well honoured in the big screen in this project. A television worker alarms the society earlier of the cataclysmic downpour, which as usual, is neglected. The rescue of the 2018 flood victims was a joint venture of the disaster management cell, the media, the army and above all the fisher folk and a handful of helping humans, who prove to be selfless at this breaking point. Every altruistic worrying detail of the flood is picturised with the massive pool of water and the remnants of destruction scattered everywhere. The visual treat showcases how the real victims of the flood struggled to bounce back and combat the situation. The digressive portrayal probes into the complexity of the situation, wrenching every heart and throwing light on the preparatory steps to live in harmony with nature. “ Just like the people of Kerala used

whatever was at the hand to save themselves, 2018 deploys every available cinematic resource to craft an absorbing and engrossing chronicle of a disaster specific to Kerala but also universal for anybody who has learnt to fear climate change. Both the background music and the songs have been tastefully chosen and not overly distracting.

The short time taken for the introduction of the different characters, gives more time to picturise the havoc-stricken state and the common folks, which culminates in the representation of human-nature relationship. Anoop, played by Tovino Thomas, may easily be referred to as the movie's main character based on his screen time. Tovino has done a fantastic job of portraying Anoop as this endearing and sincere young man. His character is arguably the most developed in the film, with a fitting journey. It doesn't really matter that Asif Ali reverts to the image of the carefree young guy because the film has entirely other goals. As the father and son team, Narain and Lal were excellent. Although most of the time Kunchako Boban's persona is confined to the control room, he does occasionally have sequences that call for the actor in him. Though there were some areas that needed more attention, doing justice to a tragedy that this generation has experienced is a significant task for which you must perform to the highest standard. The writing is of high caliber, and Jude and Akhil P. Dharmajan have done a fantastic job. Akhil George's cinematography deserves particular attention. With excellent visual effects and editing by Chaman Chacko, the film is worth seeing.

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