

## Appendix

### Excerpts from the personal Interview with Adoor Gopalakrishnan on

8 January 2022

Q.1. What do you prioritise in your films, realistic representation or symbolic representation?

A. I have not used symbols in my films. I show inner reality of man. Without showing surface reality it is impossible to represent the psyche. I used metaphors to represent the self of man.

Q.2. When you portray the conflicts of human psyche it moves beyond from personal to political and cultural, how is it possible?

A. Man is always the centre of my stories. For me man is the most important constituent. I represent man versus his surroundings, community, political atmosphere and society. Speaking about *Elepathayam* context of the story revolves around an age where the feudal system hardly exists. But the traces still exist. It is problematic and man holds the vestiges of power. I place man to occupy the centre and narrate his relationship with family, society and state. Culture, of course influences the man.

Q.3. Regarding the history itself there can be seen community history, social history and cultural history. What do you give preference?

A. They all are given equal importance. First it speaks about the family, and through it, we often come to think about the community, social and cultural back ground. So through man I narrate the history of his family, community, culture and state. And I never distort the truth.

Q.4. How do you see the influence of Italian neo realism and French new wave for the growth of art cinema?

A. It was not an influence. It is a sort of exercise which provides a newer feeling. You will be accelerated. It takes you to newer things. The narrative style in *Anantaram* is an example of this. I often took films which stick on to chronological narrative and also the ones which adhere to a linear mode. The characterisation of Ajayan both as an extrovert and introvert shows his very true nature. As an introvert he keeps on creating and as an extrovert he keeps on exhibiting. His way of hallucinations is narrated through this technique.

Q.5. One of the factors that I have noticed is the delineation of power structure in your films. In the film *Vidheyan* there is, of course, direct representation of power. But in all other films there are indirect power representations. What do you say about this?

A. Yes, Power is there. *Elepathayam*, for instance, narrates a structure of power. Unni is both a proponent and victim of power. He exerts a sort of power over his sisters. He is not willing to share. He exercises power more on Rajamma on whom he is more dependant. He asks her everything as a matter of right. She makes protest through illness. But that is a passive protest. The younger sister escapes and the elder one questions his possession of power. The three sisters react to the system of power, that is , resistance in different ways.

Q.6. Through the representation of class structure also the films represent power operations and the resistance. How do you look at the statement that power travels not only from top to bottom, but also vice versa?

A. Yes there are characters like Mathaikutty. He is employed and occupies a good position. And also there is the character of Mukesh in the film *Kathapurushan*. They reject the position of being considered as 'other'. In *Mukhamukam* also there is the demonstration of strike organised against the factory owners. There is an obvious representation of resistance in *Anantaram*.

Q.7. How do you look at the transformation in the characterisation of Sankarankutty in *Kodiyettam*? Have you portrayed to represent him as one who gains the normative traits of masculinity?

A. With the company of lorry driver he learned many things. He feels a sense of belonging. He learns to have a concern for others. His voice becomes strong and he escapes a child before it falls into the river. He becomes a family man and that is conceptualised through the reunion with wife and child.

Q.8 Regarding the use of props in your films, when do you decide it?

A. I think and fix the props together with the work of screen play itself. Each and every prop in shot carries a significant meaning. It has a definite intention and purpose to serve in that shot.

Q.9. How do you universalise the experience of viewers through the trope of Kerala in your films?

A. I always narrate the realistic account. The second thing is medium or the way of representation. It is not enough that you have good ideas. Certain elements are present in every human being where ever you live. So the typical way of presenting the core of the self of the humans using the metaphors may make it universal.