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**A Quantum Exploration of Morality in the Malayalam
Movie *Kishkindha Kaandam***

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Abstract: This paper explores the interdisciplinary intersection of quantum theory and human morality, with a particular focus on the malayalam film *Kishkindha Kaandam*. By examining the character of Appu Pillai through the lens of quantum mechanics, this paper offers a novel approach to film analysis. The movie ends with a question for the viewers, whether the climax was an evil move or a virtuous one. Is Appu Pillai an inherently evil character? By drawing parallels between quantum mechanics and human behaviour, it is possible to examine how a complex interplay of conscious and subconscious factors influences the morale of Appu Pillai's decisions. A wave function exists in a superposition of states until it is measured, at which point it collapses into a single, definite state. Similarly, human morality, as a complex interplay of thoughts, emotions, and actions, can be viewed as a superposition of potential moral states. Quantum theory offers a fresh perspective on human behaviour, highlighting the role of uncertainty, interconnectedness, and subconscious influences in shaping our decisions and moral judgments.

Keywords: *Morality, Uncertainty, Kishkindha Kaandam, Consciousness, Superposition, Entanglement, Malayalam Cinema*

The intersection of art and science has long served as a fertile ground for rethinking the complexities of human experience. This paper explores this intersection by examining the Malayalam film *Kishkindha Kaandam* through the conceptual framework of quantum theory. In recent years, Quantum Mechanics, a branch of physics concerned with the behaviour of matter and energy at microscopic scales, has increasingly informed discussions beyond the physical sciences, particularly in relation to consciousness, perception, and morality. As a cinematic text, *Kishkindha Kaandam* engages deeply with the intricacies of memory, reality, and human psychology, foregrounding the destructive power of concealed truths and the persistent human inclination to suppress emotional trauma. Through the character of Appu Pillai, a retired army officer grappling with cognitive decline, the film interrogates the fragile boundaries between truth and illusion, as well as past and present. This paper argues that quantum concepts such as superposition, entanglement, and wave-particle duality offer a productive lens for interpreting the character's fractured experiences and the ethical dilemmas that emerge from them.

Friedrich Nietzsche's assertion that individuals often resist truth to preserve their comforting illusions, as articulated in *On Truth and Lie in a Non-Moral Sense*, provides a compelling philosophical framework for interpreting *Kishkindha Kaandam*. The film foregrounds the fragility of human consciousness when confronted with unbearable realities, suggesting that truth is not merely obscured but actively resisted as a mechanism of psychological survival. At the centre of the narrative is Appu Pillai, whose memory loss functions both as a personal affliction and as a symbolic refuge from traumatic knowledge. His son, Ajayachandran, sustains a carefully constructed illusion by concealing a devastating secret, the accidental death of Appu Pillai's grandson, Chachu. Rather than confronting death, the family collectively inhabits a state of denial, choosing to believe in the child's disappearance. This deliberate suspension of truth reflects a refusal to acknowledge reality, preserving a bearable illusion in place of an intolerable certainty. In this sense, truth, values and morality emerge in human life not as an objective constant but as something contingent upon perception and recognition.

Morality, like truth, is often construed as a stable and unquestionable constant within human society; however, closer examination reveals its inherently fluid and contingent nature, shaped by cultural frameworks, lived experiences, and the subtle pressures of collective expectation. As Werner Heisenberg posits in *Physics and Philosophy*, the transition from the 'possible' to the 'actual' takes place during the act of observation. Applying this to *Kishkindha Kaandam*, morality is not an a priori constant but a potentiality that only takes a definite shape or 'collapses' based on the specific framework or 'measurement' applied by the characters in a given moment of crisis. When approached through the conceptual lens of quantum theory, particularly principles such as the Observer Effect and

Quantum Entanglement, the film enables a deeper interrogation of the unstable boundaries between conscious and subconscious thought, as well as the shifting terrain of ethical judgment. Just as observation in quantum systems participates in the formation of reality, the characters' selective acts of remembering and forgetting actively shape the moral universe they inhabit.

Memory thus functions not as a passive repository of facts but as an interpretive process that continually reconstructs meaning. Moreover, the entangled relationships among the characters suggest that moral responsibility cannot be isolated within individuals but must be understood as emerging from a network of relational and affective interdependencies. This approach ultimately challenges linear causality and moral determinism, foregrounding instead a probabilistic and relational understanding of existence in which meaning and morality are continuously negotiated. Karen Barad's theory of agential realism posits that meaning is not an intrinsic property but is 'enacted' through specific entanglements. Applying this to the narrative, memory functions as an 'agential cut' where Appu Pillai and Ajayachandran do not merely remember Chachu; they perform an act of reconstruction that separates 'bearable truth' from 'unbearable fact,' thereby constantly remaking the moral reality of their past.

The notion of the Wave Function provides a particularly evocative framework for interpreting the moral and psychological states of the characters in *Kishkindha Kaandam*. In quantum mechanics, the wave function represents a spectrum of potential states that coexist until an act of measurement collapses them into a single, determinate outcome. Analogously, the characters in the film may be understood as inhabiting a moral and emotional superposition, wherein multiple, often contradictory, ethical possibilities remain simultaneously present yet unresolved. Appu Pillai's fragmented memory sustains this indeterminacy, allowing him to exist between knowledge and ignorance, guilt and innocence, truth and illusion. His condition effectively prevents the "collapse" of his moral state, preserving a fragile equilibrium in which the traumatic truth of Chachu's death remains suspended rather than fully realized.

Similarly, Ajayachandran's actions can be read as a conscious effort to maintain this superposed state. By withholding the truth, he resists the moment of moral measurement that would fix his identity unequivocally as either protector or perpetrator. Instead, he occupies an ambiguous ethical space shaped by both care and concealment. The family as a whole thus functions as a collective system whose shared "wave function" encompasses denial, grief, love, and culpability. Only when disruptive elements, such as the missing gun or the unearthed skeleton, emerge do these latent possibilities begin to collapse into a singular, inescapable reality. Through this lens, the film illustrates how moral reality, much like quantum states, is not pre-determined but contingent upon acts of recognition and

confrontation. By integrating the concept of the wave function into the earlier discussion of the Observer Effect and Superposition, the analysis further underscores that ethical meaning is neither fixed nor singular but dynamically constituted through perception, memory, and choice. The primary focus is on the character of Appu Pillai from the film *Kishkindha Kaandam*, particularly his experiences with memory loss and distorted reality. Key scenes are analyzed to pinpoint moments of cognitive dissonance and to explore the psychological factors influencing his perception of the world. Quantum mechanical concepts like superposition, entanglement, and wave-particle duality are introduced and explored in relation to human consciousness and memory. By drawing parallels between these concepts and Appu Pillai's character, the paper aims to offer a fresh perspective on the intricacies of human experience. This interdisciplinary approach combines insights from psychology, philosophy, and neuroscience to provide a comprehensive understanding of the human mind and its connection to quantum mechanics.

By applying quantum mechanical principles to the character of Appu Pillai in *Kishkindha Kaandam*, we can identify several intriguing parallels. In quantum mechanics, a particle can exist in multiple states simultaneously until it is measured. Appu Pillai's memories often exist in a state of superposition. For instance, when he recalls his time in the army, he oscillates between vivid, heroic memories and hazy, uncertain recollections. This is evident in the scene where he recounts a battle, switching between a clear, triumphant narrative and a confused, fragmented one. This oscillation between clear and unclear memories mirrors the quantum principle of superposition, where a particle can exist in multiple states simultaneously until it is observed.

Appu Pillai's decision to "burn" memories that no longer serve him or people he is concerned for can be seen as a conscious act of collapsing a superposition of memories. In quantum mechanics, a particle exists in multiple states simultaneously until it is measured or observed. Similarly, Appu Pillai's memories, which are in a superposition of various states (positive, negative, uncertain), collapse into a single, definitive state when he chooses to remember or forget them. Consciousness is a manifestation of quantum processes in the brain (Atmanspacher). In the climax of the movie when it shows Appu Pillai burning his findings he says to Ajayachandran, his son that "Truth that does no good for anyone, Let them be reduced to ashes, like this". By actively choosing to eliminate certain memories, Appu Pillai is essentially "measuring" his own mental state and selecting a particular outcome. This act of conscious choice can be seen as analogous to the collapse of a wave function in quantum mechanics. It can be considered as a kind of moral judgement. Appu Pillai's memories are entangled with each other, influencing and shaping his perception of reality. A single memory can trigger a cascade of related memories, highlighting the interconnected nature of his cognitive processes. Appu Pillai's past actions, no matter how seemingly insignificant, can have far-reaching

consequences. This echoes the concept of quantum entanglement, where the actions of one particle can instantaneously affect another, regardless of distance. External factors, such as the actions of other characters or environmental stimuli, can influence Appu Pillai's thoughts and emotions. This interconnectedness between the individual and the external world can be seen as a form of quantum entanglement.

Quantum entanglement is a phenomenon where two particles become interconnected, regardless of distance. In the context of Appu Pillai's character, his present state of uncertainty and self-doubt can be seen as entangled with his past actions and their consequences. His mind is entangled with the past event, constantly questioning its nature and his role in it. This interconnectedness between the past and the present, where one influences the other, mirrors the concept of quantum entanglement, highlighting the complex and often unpredictable nature of human consciousness and memory. Ajayachandran in the movie says to Aparna that "He's also trying to figure out what happened to Chachu, But, without knowing where to begin or whom to ask he keeps going to Chachu's School, and places where Chachu had been to, and to know if it's because of something from his past he's been digging into that too. What he's been seeking and trying to understand from others is actually about him. Even he is suspecting himself". Appu Pillai's self-doubt and uncertainty can be metaphorically connected to quantum entanglement.

In quantum mechanics, particles can exhibit both wave-like and particle-like behavior. Appu Pillai's consciousness exhibits both wave-like and particle-like properties. In his wave-like state, he is open to multiple possibilities, his memories fluctuating and uncertain. This is evident in the scene where he debates whether to reveal the truth about the gun, wavering between different courses of action. However, when he finally makes a decision, his consciousness transitions to a particle-like state, leading to a definite outcome. Appu Pillai's character in "Kishkindha Kaandam" exhibits a dual nature, akin to the wave-particle duality in quantum mechanics. He oscillates between states of certainty and uncertainty, clarity and confusion. This duality is evident in his moral compass, which seems to be influenced by both internal and external factors. For instance, when confronted with the truth about his past, Appu Pillai initially resists it, clinging to a distorted version of reality. This can be seen as a particle-like behavior, where he is fixed on a specific interpretation. However, as he delves deeper into his memories, he begins to question his own beliefs and actions. This shift towards uncertainty and openness to multiple possibilities can be seen as a wave-like behavior.

Appu Pillai can exist in a state of clarity, where he is fully aware of his actions and their consequences. This can be seen as a particle-like state, where his identity and memories are defined and certain. However, he can also exist in a state of ambiguity, where he can manipulate his memories

and present a distorted version of reality. This can be seen as a wave-like state, where multiple possibilities exist simultaneously, and his true identity becomes blurred. This duality, where Appu Pillai can be both a clear and a blurred figure, mirrors the wave-particle duality in quantum mechanics. His consciousness, like a quantum particle, can exhibit both particle-like and wave-like properties, depending on the context and the observer's perspective. As Atmanspacher argues quantum concepts are used to understand conscious mental activity without referring to brain activity. In the movie Aparna says to Ajayachandran that “ In a way, Dads current condition is rather convenient for him,right? He’s the only one who knows what he remembers or has forgotten. He can pretend however he likes right? He could claim not to know things he actually does, and act like he’s forgotten things he’s hiding. No one would ever find out or ask him about it” (01:45:02). This dialogue from *Kishkindha Kaandam* offers a fascinating perspective on Appu Pillai's character, one that can be linked to the concept of wave-particle duality. Aparna's observation highlights the dual nature of Appu Pillai's consciousness.

Ultimately, Appu Pillai's moral decisions are shaped by a complex interplay of internal and external factors, reflecting the dual nature of his consciousness. This duality can be interpreted through the lens of wave-particle duality, where his morality fluctuates between definitive and indeterminate states, influenced by both his internal thoughts and external circumstances. By examining these parallels, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between memory, reality, and consciousness, as depicted in *Kishkindha Kaandam*.

The exploration of Appu Pillai's character through the lens of quantum mechanics offers a unique perspective on the complexities of human morality and decision-making. By examining the superposition of his memories, the entanglement with other characters, and the wave-particle duality of his consciousness, we can gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing his actions. The quantum mechanical interpretation of Appu Pillai's character challenges traditional notions of linear causality and deterministic outcomes. Instead, it highlights the probabilistic nature of human behavior, suggesting that multiple possibilities exist simultaneously. This aligns with the film's portrayal of Appu Pillai's fluctuating memories and his indecision in critical moments.

Furthermore, the concept of quantum entanglement underscores the interconnectedness of characters and their impact on one another. Appu Pillai's actions, no matter how seemingly insignificant, have far-reaching consequences for those around him. This echoes the quantum principle that particles can be entangled, influencing each other's behavior, even across vast distances. The wave-particle duality of consciousness, as applied to Appu Pillai, suggests that his behavior is a complex interplay of conscious and subconscious factors. At times, he exhibits wave-like qualities,

open to multiple possibilities and uncertain about his choices. At other times, he transitions to a particle-like state, making definitive decisions that shape his destiny.

Appu Pillai's moral compass is influenced by a complex interplay of conscious and subconscious factors. Consciously, he is influenced by external stimuli such as the gun and Chachu's photo, which trigger specific memories and emotions. It is evident in the movie when he stares at Chachu's photo on the wall. His rational thought processes and moral beliefs also play a role in his decision-making. Subconsciously, emotions like fear, guilt, and confusion can cloud his judgment. Additionally, unconscious biases and the fear of social stigma can further complicate his moral choices. This interplay between conscious and subconscious factors, shaped by both internal and external influences, highlights the complex nature of human morality.

In the climax of the movie the character Aparna says that “ I've found myself with a few people who are deeply concerned about each other. It's not morality, but concern that keeps them together” (02:00:56). Aparna's observation challenges the traditional notion of morality as an absolute standard. She suggests that the bond between the father and son, rooted in concern and understanding, transcends conventional morality. This implies that the labels of "good" and "evil" are relative and subjective, and that the true essence of human connection lies in empathy and compassion. By highlighting the significance of concern, the film suggests that it is this human quality, rather than rigid moral codes, that ultimately drives our actions and shapes our relationships. This quantum perspective on *Kishkindha Kaandam* invites us to consider the role of chance, uncertainty, and interconnectedness in shaping human experience. By embracing the probabilistic nature of existence, we can develop a more nuanced understanding of morality and the ethical implications of our actions.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of applying quantum mechanics to human behavior. While quantum theory provides a fascinating framework for exploring consciousness and decision-making, it is ultimately a physical theory that describes the behavior of matter and energy at the atomic and subatomic level. The human mind, with its complex cognitive processes and emotional experiences, may not be fully reducible to quantum principles. Nevertheless, this interdisciplinary approach offers a valuable tool for analyzing complex characters and narratives. By combining film analysis with quantum theory, we can gain new insights into the human condition and the ethical dilemmas that we face.

In Conclusion, Kishkindha Kaandam offers a rich tapestry for exploring the intersection of quantum mechanics and human consciousness. By examining the character of Appu Pillai through a quantum lens, we have uncovered the intricate interplay of memory, reality, and morality. The superposition of memories, the entanglement with other characters, and the wave-particle duality of

consciousness offer a novel perspective on the complexities of human behavior. This interdisciplinary approach challenges traditional notions of linear causality and deterministic outcomes, embracing instead the probabilistic nature of existence. By understanding the quantum nature of human experience, we can develop a deeper appreciation for the complexities of moral decision-making and the interconnectedness of all beings. Through a quantum mechanical analysis, we can see that Appu Pillai's moral compass is not fixed but rather a dynamic interplay of conscious and subconscious factors. His memories, like quantum particles, exist in a state of superposition, influencing his perceptions and decisions. The entanglement between his past, present, and future highlights the interconnectedness of his experiences, shaping his moral identity.

While quantum mechanics provides a fascinating framework for exploring consciousness and decision-making, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The human mind, with its complex cognitive processes and emotional experiences, may not be fully reducible to quantum principles. Nevertheless, this interdisciplinary approach offers a valuable tool for analyzing complex characters and narratives. Moreover, the film suggests that the concepts of "good" and "evil" are not absolute but rather relative. Appu Pillai's actions, often driven by fear, confusion, and a desire to protect his loved ones, can be seen as both morally questionable and understandable. This ambiguity mirrors the uncertainty inherent in quantum mechanics, where multiple outcomes are possible until a measurement is made.

By combining film analysis with quantum theory, we can gain new insights into the human condition and the ethical dilemmas that we face. Further exploration of this intersection between art and science can lead to a deeper understanding of the mysteries of the human mind and the nature of reality itself. Ultimately, the film suggests that it is not morality that defines a person, but rather their capacity for empathy, compassion, and understanding. Appu Pillai's journey, marked by both triumphs and failures, highlights the importance of human connection and the power of forgiveness. By embracing a quantum perspective, we can appreciate the complexity of human nature and the potential for transformation.

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