

## ***Amrtāh: The Creation Chapter***

(Excerpts from the dialogue screenplay of the film, *Amrtāh: The Author of Time*)

*Piyush Roy*

*Amrtāh: The Author of Time*, is an experimental cinematic expression of some enduring conversations on the ‘individual’ and the ‘Eternal’, as *wisdom culled* from the knowledge ocean of the *Upanishads*. Celebrated as fountainhead of Indian thought, the *Upanishads*, are an interactive amalgamation of centuries of meditative contemplation on spiritualism and existence, life and living – featuring some of humanity’s earliest philosophical enquires into the world and beyond. The film is a renewed engagement with some of those timeless questions, seeking personal answers in the pages of a life diary, vignettes of a photo album, collage of earth sounds and abstract nature videos.

Philosophical quests, irrespective of their era or area of origin, are universal bequests. Their trigger experiences and timeless questions are not limited to any geography’s natural gifts or exclusivity. The film’s scenarios hence, share life notes from the East and the West, each of which, could have been an independent short film in itself, and appeared anywhere on its narrative timeline featuring a rainbow of conversations between *Purusa* (the gender indeterminate Soul Self) and *Prakriti* (nature) in male and female voice, respectively.

Assembled through imageries of intuition shot over 10 years, across 100 plus locations in Asia and Europe, the film features over a 1000 characters – humans, animals, birds, bees, trees, rivers, mountains, natural creations and man-made constructions; depicted using the five fundamental, physical elements – space, air, water, fire and earth – that according to Hindu philosophy ‘make and sustain all life’. The *Upanishads* view the empirical world as an illusion, or ‘*Maya*’. It is a temporary dwelling for every this and that, the animate and the inanimate, the seen, the unseen and the beyond. And ‘Nothing’! In the film, *Amrtāh*, you get to see every this and that, which has come to shape our ideas about a film’s form today in its century-plus lifetime – still and moving images; simple drawings and exquisite *mise-en-scène*; distant conversations and grand dialogues; background noise and created music; sumptuously edited videos lingering amidst untreated, uncorrected camera recordings, captured *as it is*. The narrative is presented in a way that challenges conventional cinematic notions on beauty, continuity, characters, genre, editing, performance and meaning creation through the movie idiom.

The film’s purpose, in essence, through a *mélange* of form and content, reality and imagination, truth and interpretations, the personal and the universal – is to offer its maker’s experiencing of the seen, with a hoped for felt encountering in the viewer – *also* of the unseen!

The shared submission is an excerpt of 10 scenarios from the film’s dialogues script, featuring conversations between ‘*Purusa*’ (the gender indeterminate Soul Self), and ‘*Prakriti*’ (or nature), exploring thoughts and memories on processes of evolution from the ‘creation’ chapter of *Amrtāh: The Author of Time*. All images have been originally captured by the writer.

## Scenario 11



Purusa: First Life was born.

From Life – Faith, Ether, Air, Light, Water, Earth, Sense Organs, Mind and Food were generated.

From Food, Vital Energy, Austerity, the Words, the Works and the Worlds are created.  
And in the Worlds – The Name.

Prakriti: Together, these 16 parts make a person whole.



Purusa: And then, the Person takes over the Process!

Prakriti: Cannot... Ever!

Purusa: Can it? Never.

### Scenario 12

Prakriti: Beyond the beings with consciousness are the one without consciousness.

Purusa: And beyond the Animate and the Inanimate...

Purusa: The stable cannot be found amongst the unstable.

The eternal amidst the temporary.

The non-born among the dying.



Prakriti: The wise looks inwards.

The fool looks outwards.

The yogi closes his eyes.

### Scenario 13

Purusa and Prakriti (ponder and wonder together): Should I be Wise? Or should I be Blessed?

Purusa: The Wise one restrains speech in mind;

Mind in understanding;

Understanding in self;

Self in tranquility.

Prakriti: The truly Blessed can stop themselves from Self-thinking and Self-willing.



They can still the wheel of imagination and the senses.  
Become Calm within. Experience tranquility.

Purusa: Should I then be Blessed?

Prakriti: Or should I be Wise?

#### Scenario 14

Purusa: Once the Buddha was asked – ‘Will the Tathagata survive after death or will he not survive?’ He acknowledged the question, but refused any answer saying – ‘My continuing to exist will give rise to one set of misunderstanding. To deny it, will lead to others.’



Prakriti: Seek not the changeless in the world of the changing.

#### Scenario 15

Purusa: I am Rational. Logical. Emotional... I always ask questions. How can I Believe?

Prakriti: If you are what you say, there cannot be a believer more doubt free than you!

Prakriti: Go inward, not outwards.

Interrogate mist, not clarity

Interrogate flame, not light

Interrogate desire, not knowledge  
 Interrogate partner, not teacher  
 Interrogate prayer, not study  
 Interrogate grace, not doctrine.

Purusa: Interrogate god, not man.

Prakriti: Faith doesn't always have to begin where proof ends.

### Scenario 16

Prakriti: Ordinary People – of divided minds, oppressed by dualities, and conflict in desires – cannot be the final product of Evolution.

Purusa: Not even the intellectual, who better uses mind, life and body?

Purusa: Human intelligence has birthed sciences and philosophies, cultures and civilizations. It has made the world wonderful and beautiful.

Prakriti: Tragic and Evil, too!



Prakriti: An intellectual person is what his deep driving desire is.

As is the desire, so is the will.

As is the will, so is the deed.

As is the deed, so is the destiny.

Only those free from desire can enlarge their consciousness to super consciousness.

Their joy is the crown of Evolution.

Merely by logical arguments, convinced they are not of a greater existence or regard it as an object to be adored in thought and feeling.

They are those for whom the multiverse is no more an object, but personal life. They live the universe or rather are lived by the universal.

They Become Deified Consciousness.

Purusa: God or Avatara

### Scenario 17



Purusa: The eternal is the ‘now’ without duration.

The manifested world of the past, present and the future.

Prakriti: At the core of all comings and goings – imagined and experienced – is the illusion of our self-preservation.

### Scenario 18

Prakriti: Are we the elements? Or, are the elements us?

Purusa: Fluid is our nature. And so are your questions.

Prakriti: Science says over 66 percent of our body is water. And Isn’t the earth so too?

Purusa: We are creatures shaped of water.

Memory remembers – from the waters, the first person was drawn, and given shape.

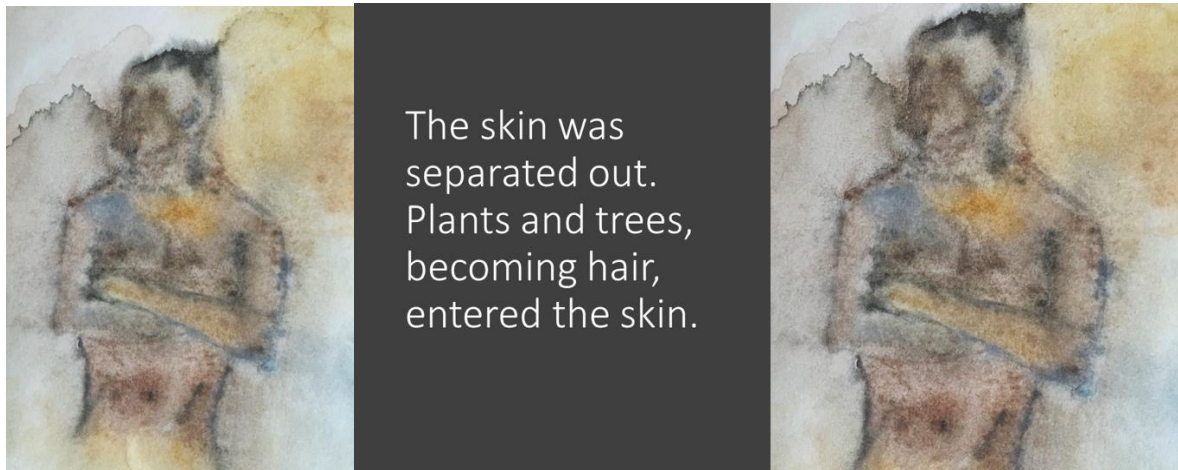


Memory remembers...  
from the waters, the first person was drawn, and given shape.



From the shape, first a mouth was drawn and separated out.  
Fire, becoming speech, entered the mouth.

Next the nostrils were separated out. Air becoming breath, entered the nostrils.  
Then the eyes were separated out. The sun, becoming sight, entered the eyes.  
The ears were separated out. The parts of space, becoming hearing, entered the ears.  
The skin was separated out. Plants and trees, becoming hair, entered the skin.



The heart was separated out. The moon, becoming the mind, entered the heart.  
The navel was separated out. Death, becoming the outbreath, entered the navel.  
The generative organ was separated out. Water becoming semen entered the generative organ.

Then the ARTIST subjected such a person to thirst and hunger...

### Scenario 19

Prakriti: Some eat to live. Some live to eat.

The former are free within the cage of three.

The latter spend lifetimes bound to the five chains untamed.

Purusa: The three walls of the cage are life, body and mind. Its five binds are Ignorance, Ego, Love, Hatred, and Fear.

Purusa: Humans... As enjoyers of necessity,  
containers of knowledge,  
receivers of care,  
identifiers of difference,  
and creators of memories,  
cannot be Beings of Freedom.

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### Scenario 20

Prakriti: Know that your body is not you. It is the first of many layers that surround your personality, each less physical than the one below.

Bliss is the outermost. The lightest, as well.

Next is intelligence, then instinct, then life...and food thereafter.

Food is the first cover. The healing herb of all. The eldest born of beings

Purusa: From food are beings born. When born, they grow up by food.





I, who am food, eat the eater of food,  
to become food again.

Amrtāh: The Author of Time  
THOUGHT QUOTES

A Film By Piyush Roy

Prakriti: I am food. I am food. I am food.

Purusa: I am the food-eater. I am the food-eater. I am the food-eater.

Prakriti: I am the combining agent.

I am the digester.

I am the energy.

Purusa: I, who am food, eat the eater of food. To become food again!

Prakriti: Realising this; when death comes, one sheds the body with no more severe a break in consciousness than what we feel while taking off a jacket at the end of a day – rainy, cold or warm.

**Film Credits**

Source text: The Principal Upanishads interpreted by Bharat Ratna S. Radhakrishnan

Screenplay, principal cinematography and direction: Piyush Roy

Editing: Parag Ekhande

Art work: Shaikh Ayaz

Narration: Hermann Rodrigues, Roshini Dubey

**Dr. Piyush Roy** is an Indian National Film Award winning critic-columnist, and an international author, curator, filmmaker and educator. Presently, he is Dean and Professor, School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, R. V. University, Bengaluru. Former editor of popular film magazine, *Stardust* and film-weekly, *Star Week*, he has worked at senior reporting positions in leading Indian dailies (*The Indian Express*, *Hindustan Times*) and has been published in *The Times of India Crest Edition* and *The Speaking Tree*, *The Asian Age*, *Society* magazine, *Screen* and *The New Indian Express*, authoring over 500 media publications. He's been the writer of a popular film column, 'Sunday Talkies' with *Orissa Post* (2011-2018). Author of two fiction works – *Never Say Never Again* and *Alexander – An Epic Love Story* and an online novel series, *The Millennium Batch* (2020); in 2019, he made his non-fiction and feature film debut with *Bollywood FAQ: All That's Left to Know About the Greatest Film Story Never Told* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, USA), and a critically acclaimed documentary, *Pleasures Prejudice & Pride: An Indian Way of Filmmaking*. His latest film, an experimental feature, *Amrtāh: The Author of Time* (2021), is inspired by ideas, insights and learner-teacher interactions in *The Upanishads*.