

AQUAMAN: AN ECOCRITICAL VIEW

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Abstract:

Natural disasters such as Earth Quakes, Tsunami and Wildfires make every individual think about a future world free from calamities and fear. To make our environment free from all these disasters, every individual must possess some awareness about nature as it is being continuously deteriorated due to human activities. This paper analyses how every act of humans destroys the innocence of nature and makes it arrogant through the movie Aquaman directed by James Wan in 2018 from an Eco critical point of view. This movie is an example to show how mistreatment of natural sources results in exploitation of humans. The main focus of this story is to show how the marine environment gets destructed due to human activities such as dismissal of human wastes in sea and emergence of technical advancements which creates a topsy-turvy situation, resulting in the destruction of nature. It happens due to the irresponsibility of humans in caring and safeguarding the natural resources which always act as the base for humans' every step towards progress. This paper highlights how Arthur, an amalgamation of human and mermaid safeguards both the underwater kingdom and the surface world from war and destruction. The researcher, through this article tries to create awareness among the youngsters that one should not be an aquaman to safeguard nature; there is an aquaman in every human who is capable of rejuvenating the deteriorated environment.

Keywords: *Nature, Eco-criticism, Media, Natural Awareness*

Introduction:

Literature reflects human life. It instructs and enlightens humanity. A literary work should possess some artistic quality in it, otherwise it cannot be considered as literature. Studying literature not only provides us pleasure but shows a clear way to achieve our goal in life. Literature helps in protecting the

feelings and emotions of a society and it can be transferred from one generation to another. It helps in a clear understanding of tradition and culture of a nation and it also helps in developing brotherhood among nations.

Our world is filled with pollution, contamination and industrialisation and due to these factors earth has become inhospitable for life of human beings as well as of any kind. Eco criticism is a very new literary theory. Eco means ecology. Ecology means the environment, animate and inanimate, living or non-living, biotic or non-biotic. Everything comes under Ecology. It is a very fast entity and it cannot be defined so easily and man cannot live in isolation. All the chemical or physical entities are all included in Ecology, so he has ever felt the need of the surroundings the trees, leaves, animals, roads everything big or small and also when he started writing he felt the need of environment. Right from Chaucer to Shakespeare, Hardy to Frost and so many others, all the writers include the study of nature. They expressed their feelings through the different entities of nature. Chaucer in his *Canterbury Tales* says April is the best month for the pilgrims who decide to go on a pilgrimage as it is spring season neither too hot nor too cold and again T. S Eliot cursed April because it is the spring season, it brings life back in man and therefore making guilty of his evil acts.

Shakespearean plays like *King Lear* where he has given the instance of the storm in the storm scene where the internal turmoil of the king's mind is shown through the external entity that is storm. Again in *Tempest* the title has been taken from the ecology. Wordsworth is the biggest example who has written every word, whether physical or philosophical, he has taken the help from nature to express the complete life of man. Again Robert Frost talks about philosophical aspects in his poem "Birches" he says it's good to escape from Life by climbing up the Birches, but then he loves to come back to earth because it is the right place. In "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" he says "The woods are lovely, dark and deep, / But I have promises to keep, / And miles to go before I sleep, / And miles to go before I sleep." (13-16) This world is beautiful he says, he metaphorically used in this poem as there are so many distractions that is beauty around you through nature. He has his other poems which are also connected to nature Thomas Hardy in his Wessex poems and also in his Novel *Return of Native* he personifies nature. In his "Ode to Autumn" the only example in Literature which has all the senses expressed in the poem. All the five senses, sense of sight through the beauty of autumn, sense of smell through the poppy flowers, sense of taste through the fruits that are sweet up to the core and the nuts, sense of touch, and for sense of hearing, there are so many examples right from Red Breast Robin whistling, sparrow twittering and the young sheep bleating and the grasshopper making different sounds to produce music. All these ecological features are characterised by the literary writers in their world famous works.

The Technical Aspect of Eco Criticism:

The first person to use Eco criticism was William Rueckart in the essay "Literature and Ecology" in 1978. The work was devoted on the study of Rachel Carson's *The Silent Spring* 1962. The title is metaphorically used here, and this work is devoted to show all the ecological factors used in the literary works. Eco criticism is the study of literature and environment with the interdisciplinary point of view. Critics here are trying to evaluate the text which has got the environmental concerns and they try to find out in what way or in what form the writer has used nature or the natural surroundings in his work. This brings in mind the work of George Orwell, the farm and all the animals. They are given human feelings or human nature and with the help of the surroundings and these animals often have tried to express their concern for humanity. Environmental studies can also be called as green studies or eco-critics. They have less political and they have more of moral and philosophical use. Even our films are full of symbols taken from the environment. All the natural inhabitants are used in today's films to depict our emotions and feelings. The main critic of Eco Criticism is Cheryl Glotfelty, the co-founder of ASLE and the first professor of literature and environment in the United States. She defines ecocriticism in her work *The Ecocriticism Reader* as follows: "ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment." (18) Only in 1990 eco criticism emerged as a separate discipline and it talked about the relationship between man nature portrayed in literary works such as novels, short stories, non-fictions and it includes movies also. Most of the ecocritical works relate to either exploitation of nature by human beings or praise the beauty of nature. Rabia in her thesis quoted the words of Arnold Toynbee who says:

. . . mankind now has the power to make the biosphere uninhabitable, and that it will, in fact, produce this suicidal result within a foreseeable period of time if the human population of the globe does not now take prompt and vigorous concerted action to check the pollution and the spoliation that are being inflicted upon the biosphere by short-sighted human greed. (225)

Media and literature:

Media has become one with our day to day life. It entertains us at the same time provides various news, information and facts. The impact of media is so massive that people without argument accept what media provides and it reflects in their thinking and also is seen in their every action. In olden days media was used to spread activities of great national leaders. Their every action was reported to the general public through media. Later, it has transformed into

an entertainment providing tool which further has undergone a tremendous change and now it has conjured the minds of every human being and in today's scenario, no human being is far from media especially digital media.

Aquaman Movie Analysis:

Aquaman is a movie by James Wan. It is film based on DC comics character. This movie is an evidence to show the reaction of nature for every action of human beings. The main characters of this movie are Arthur Curry/Aquaman, the half human, half Atlantean son of Tom Curry, the lighthouse keeper and Atlana, the queen of Atlantis. Princess Mera- a warrior from Xebel kingdom, Arthur's love. Nuidis Vulko, an Atlantean advisor, King Orm or the Ocean Master-the half-brother of Arthur, King Nereus-King of Xebel, David Kane or Black Manta- Aquaman's foe, Atlanna-Arthur's mother, Queen of Atlantis and finally Thomas Curry-father of Arthur.

In this movie, the hero of the novel Arthur Curry is the son of Atlanna, an Atlantean Princess and Thomas Curry, a normal human. Arthur was born as a symbol to justify that both the surface world and sea world co-exist. He is amalgamation of Human and Atlantean. The movie opens with the rescue scene of Atlanna by Thomas as she was stranded on the sea shore due to a heavy storm. In due course she falls in love in with Tom and their born Arthur, the Aquaman. He realises his power as an Atlantean on an excursion to an aquarium during his school days. As all superheroes, he helps people which are evident through his rescue operation of innocents from a sub marine which was hijacked by Black Manta. His statement "You kill innocent people, you ask sea for mercy" indicates his love for nature.

The submarine seized by the pirates is destroyed and it crashes in Atlantis where King Orm tries to unite the seven underwater kingdoms including King Nereus and plans to wage war against the surface world as they contaminating the sea world with their wastes. King Nereus is injured. They misunderstand that the submarine that submerges in the sea is an indication of war. King Orm says "The war has already begun."

To prevent this from happening, princess Mera goes to the surface and requests Arthur to save both the worlds from destruction, but he fails to do so, as she thinks that they killed his mother. The revenge attack of Orm comes in the form of tidal waves carrying decades of pollution and stranded it in the surface world. Arthur, the son of land, on understanding the seriousness takes the option of safeguarding both the world, sea and earth emerges as a hero by defeating his half-brother and becomes the king of Atlantis. Though King Orm is shown as a villain in this story, his intention towards protecting environment is agreeable. But the path which he chooses makes him look bad. He kills the

kings who deny his offer of joining hands to wage war. His words “for centuries they have polluted our water, poisoned our children” makes the viewers realise their fault in polluting the environment through their deeds such as throwing wastes in sea, polluting the land by using non degradable things, polluting the air which we inhale through automobiles and vehicles and so on. A change has to come, in order to safeguard the environment from facing disasters such as Tsunami, Bush Fires, Earthquakes and Zero Water Levels. We should minimise the use of natural sources to maintain harmony and piece with the nature.

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