

Moana, the Climate Advocate in *Moana, the Movie*

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Over centuries, climatic conditions have undergone drastic changes and these changes have decided the functionality of the planet. While a lot of these changes were natural in the beginning, it is subsequently different in the recent centuries. As Wordsworth says, 'Our meddling intellect/ Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things,' humans have contributed to the inordinate changes to the planet and climate. In the endeavour to establish power and control, human population extended a dominance over nature; nature that is vast and enigmatic to the trivial human eye. This indifference regarding nature and climate is a hindrance to sustainable living.

Climate advocacy is an attempt to mitigate the rising dangers and anomalies that threaten the biosphere. With various movements, theories and campaigns, advocacy to have a sustainable future is becoming an irrefutable issue that must be tackled. Literature advocates the need to safeguard climate and nature through fiction and non-fiction. Poems, short stories, novels, memoirs, travelogues, and many other forms of literature delve into the importance of nature, and thereby create a larger picture—the absolute need for advocacy. Cinema, another form of art also equally plays a principal role in climate advocacy as recent films focus on the natural world and also sustainable living.

Movies for children, especially animated movies, have a huge flair amidst growing minds. Moana is an animated movie which has a strong conviction over the importance in guarding nature and the consequences of desecrating it. The movie has strong characters that not only represent humanity but also nature; it represents the nuances of nature, climate and sustainability.

Moana (2016) depicts a tale of the different facets of nature—the nurturer and avenger. In the movie, Maui, a demigod steals Te Fiti's heart that leads to devastating consequences as Te Fiti, the nurturer becomes Te Ka the destroyer. A millennium later, Moana ventures on a quest to find and return the heart to Te Fiti. Despite being forbidden by her father to go beyond the reef, she decides to break the rule to save her village and also nature.

The movie directly addresses the necessity for advocacy to protect nature. At the same time, the villagers living on the island have a sustainable life. They use coconuts for food, fibres to weave nets and go fishing only until the reef. The reef is the safe zone beyond

which Te Ka's darkness would engulf them. But Moana has an ancestry of sea voyaging, and that call drags her to the sea. She becomes a tool to solve the lack of advocacy from her father and the other villagers. Except for her Grandma who encourages her, the others are horrified of the drastic climatic change around them.

In a microcosm, their island, the tribe is content with a lifestyle that provides for everyone. But the impact of the climate change is not felt by the people. They feel that they are safe from Te Ka, and the horrifying truth. Moana realises the horror of the climate impact as their fishing zones are depleting. Her close attachment to the sea and her want to protect her island shows a primal instinct to unravel the mystery of Te Fiti and Maui.

The above situations indicate that indifference towards climate change can also be fatal. The fear of Moana's father, Chief Tui, is the base fear encountered by humans when they are faced with the dangerous side of nature. But when the fear becomes an inhibiting factor, breaking that hindrance is the only saving grace. Moana becomes that saviour as she crosses the obstacles to not only save the present but also to prevent the calamities of the past from intruding into the present. Her first step is to look for Maui, the source of the change. Similarly, addressing the climate issue is a simple task as digging to the roots is arduous.

The movie also has a lot of symbols that represent the functionality of an equitable society. Initially, Maui lived amicably by respecting the environment. But the moment he decided to go against nature and covet more than was required; he created a void that threatened living conditions. This event symbolizes how humans have moved from guarding nature to stealing from it. Just like Maui's actions led to drastic climatic and natural changes, people in their anthropocentric view have gradually eroded on nature. Te Ka is the reflection of a society that in its indifference could be potentially lethal.

The heart of Te Fiti is a stone called pounamu. While the movie emphasizes on the fact that the stone is integral in the identity of Te Fiti and the fate of humans, in real the stone is precious and valuable. In Maori culture, the stone is significant as it was used for trade purposes. The stone represents the economic stability between nature and humans, and also the social equity that is required for sustainability. It is the loss of the stone that causes a collapse in social conditions, as Moana and her tribe keep away from the sea in fear of Te Ka. A tribe that used to traverse the seas are away from it due to the imbalance in survival and living. Moana's quest can be related to a strategy to reform the equity as she approaches Maui to solve the problem. Maui's theft is an indication of how humans have lost themselves to greed, and his redemption is an address of the root cause of climate change.

Moana through her efforts, though they were tiring and deadly, identifies the root cause- Maui. Similarly, the issue of climate change should be identified; the most prominent cause is the disregard for anything other than humans. But if the root cause is tackled, climate advocacy can be achieved as is evident with Moana, a climate advocate.

While Moana strives to create a society that balances nature and humans, Te Fiti is integral to the ethical part of climate and nature. The natural sequence of events and climatic events closely depend on each other. Te Fiti had been a nurturer when she was respected by humans. Her appearance in the movie is enchanting, and the hues of green reflecting her geniality are vividly portrayed. She has an anthropomorphic appearance that shows the co-dependency between humans and nature. Her appearance also reveals a biocentric lifestyle where Te Fiti was at the centre. Her heart is what makes her sociable as is the purpose of the stone. Towards the end, despite the crimes committed against her, she forgives Maui, and returns the sea from being torrid and dangerous to being calm and pleasant.

Te Ka, on the other hand, is a clear example of nature having a breaking point. As she haunts the sea with her ferocity and also spreads her darkness everywhere like the plague, it looks hostile and cruel. The initial belief of Te Ka being a different entity is a result of Te Fiti's metaphorical death. Te Fiti's death and Te Ka's existence is the image of how climate change can have an exorbitant impact on the ecosystem. Te Ka's terrorising of the sea indicates the grim reality of climate change.

The transition from one climate to another could be quite jarring to an ecosystem, and such a change transforms Moana's tribe from being sea voyagers to land dwellers. Their reluctance to keep away from the sea escalates the terrorizing events beyond the reef. When it strikes home, Moana takes the step to revive the co-dependency that has been lost over the centuries. While Maui is to be blamed for the changes, backing away was not the way to handle the situation.

Moana is a resilient character who faces the biggest hurdle with Maui. Maui is not repentant of his actions in the beginning. He doesn't accept his role in the drastic climatic and ecological changes around him. Maui also represents the part of the society who talks about ecological safety but stay away from putting their efforts into reclaiming the ecosystem and climate. His reason for stealing the heart resonates with Prometheus stealing fire. Maui stole the heart to provide people with the opportunity to create life. While he regrets the consequences, it is more out of fear than guilt. His regret is focused on him losing the special position he was provided when Te Fiti was a nurturer. He is quite miffed with having lost his fish hook which symbolized his position as a beneficiary of Te Fiti. His traitorous act is a colossal betrayal against nature.

This denial of Maui and his fear signifies the part of humans who justify their deeds of plundering nature. Loss of ethics is not confined to moralities and humans but also to the larger part of the world. Maui justifies his theft as an aid to humans. He ignores the ethics behind it and not only does it affect him but also humans who he supposedly wanted to help. His denial continues until he is forced to acknowledge his fault by Moana. Moana comes from a tribe who have also lived in denial.

People tend to think that their individual acts don't harm nature and climate. The belief that a bigger force – governments and corporate mentality- is responsible for the climate changes is quite prominent in the society. This belief is espoused by Moana's tribe as they blame Maui for their miseries and Te Ka.

The denial and reluctance to settle the crisis makes it a daunting task for Moana. In contemporary society, blaming and ignoring is easy and common than addressing the complexity of an issue. Addressing climate change is a global concept but it is not prioritized. In the movie, Maui and the tribe avoid the climate change. But Moana and Grandma prioritize the change and move forward to change things.

Moana while trying to convince Maui tries force, bargaining, and every other strategy. She is blocked at every turn. Similarly in a bid to protect nature, a lot of efforts have been made. Few have resorted to violence, few to demands, and few to protests. But Maui doesn't help Moana because of her threat sand pleadings; instead he helps her for her resilience. Moana keeps on going as she believes that the sea has chosen her for the remarkable feat. The remarkable feat of returning the heart to Te Fiti and restoring her is a herculean task but she undertakes it with ardent fervour.

Moana's resilience is a admirable quality throughout the movie. In her defiance of a tribal rule of avoiding the violent sea beyond the reef, her strong commitment to nature is exposed. In her tireless efforts in traversing a sea that she is unfamiliar with, it shows her unrelenting courage. Her tenacious arguments with Maui show her indomitable quest for repairing the damages.

Moana is a strong advocate to clear the darkness around and bring forth some light that has been out of reach for a long time. Her resilience acts as a catalyst to illuminate the darkness. She offers strategies to handle critical situations. In the beginning when fishing becomes dull, she tries

to convince her father to go beyond the reef. With Maui, she makes him come out of his fears and identifies his purpose. She also faces Te Ka without losing hope in her goal. Moana is a symbol of how resilience is a needed and demanding attribute to be the clear voice in a cacophony. She defies the loud proclamations of impossibilities, and takes up the role of proving the denials wrong. Her success is a clear indication of how resilient strategies can work wonders as is seen with Te Fiti.

In her advocacy, Moana doesn't compromise on her ethics. Instead she solves the unethical behaviour of Maui and brings about an ethical yet resilient strategy. She strongly believes in unleashing Maui's ethics and that is a great help in their mission to restore the climate and nature. This strategy is what brings back Te Fiti, the loving figure of nature back to life. The combination of climate advocacy, resilience and ethics completely alters the fate of Moana and also the people around her. Moana, a climate advocate as a tribal woman contributes to the continuous sustainability of the society by encouraging a cordial relationship with nature. She prioritizes the need to restore nature as a progress in a healthy lifestyle. This advocacy is also a way in which the contemporary society can work to avoid any more climatic changes that would alter the entire ecological system of the planet.