



Environment Throbbing with Life: Postcolonial Ecocriticism and Ecofeminism in the film *The Revenant*

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Abstract:

Alejandro G. Iñárritu's film, '*The Revenant*', is not just about conflicts among tribes, betrayal, unyielding perseverance to survive a harsh environment and avenging. A closer look at the film unveils ecocritical connotations. Cinema, a potent medium of cultural representation and communication has been used to address environmental issues. Land stands witness to the conquest and subjugation as DeLoughrey and Handley say and this is where postcolonialism and ecocriticism converge. The exploitation of the natural environment considering it mute and lifeless and utter disregard of the indigenous communities and landscape with an aim of profit maximization in capitalist enterprise recur in *The Revenant*. This paper will employ the theory of postcolonial ecocriticism to explore these themes in the mentioned film. Ecofeminists like Annette Kolodny draw a parallel between the subjugation of environment and women. Cultural Ecofeminists see the female body as a source of power, nurture and care. These are also the qualities of the environment which also sustains, heals, preserves and is a protagonist in its own right. This paper will look at *The Revenant* from the lens of ecofeminism to analyze the character of the Native American girl named Powaga, the protagonist, Hugh Glass's survival in the natural environment and the living and dying of other characters in the film. This argument also looks forward to New Materialism to explore the themes of agency of matter, the interconnectedness of humans, natural environment and the material world in *The Revenant*. This idea of inseparability also renders Ecofeminism's target of hierarchical dualism obsolete.

Keywords: Postcolonial Ecocriticism, Ecofeminism, New Materialism, film, alive environment





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Introduction

Environment features in every literary text, cultural representation and narratives of any sort directly or indirectly. Environment is where everything is situated. It is man's anthropocentric thought which impels him to think himself outside of the environment, an entity which is out there. Primarily to combat this thought there has been a wide array of narratives and texts emphasizing on the natural environment and its relation to humans. This is how ecocriticism as a theoretical enquiry came into being and more recently, authors, filmmakers and other content creators have been increasingly focusing on the natural environment and its relationship with humans. The ramifications of this intervention have been growing day by day and interconnectedness, intertextuality and even fluidity between subjects have taken place. Sometimes such representations have gone hand in hand with direct environmental activism and sometimes been in conflict with the former. Greg Garrard writes in his Routledge introduction to *Ecocriticism*, "Ecocriticism explores the ways in which we imagine and portray the relationship between humans and the environment in all areas of cultural production, from Wordsworth to Thoreau to Disney and BBC nature documentaries." (Garrard frontmatter) Literature dealing with glaring environmental issues like climate change, global warming and man's role in the destruction of the environment jeopardizing his own existence in blind pursuit of consumption has been termed as Climate Fiction. This gamut of literary work is often didactic in nature and explores the ethical realm of humans often shocking them with dystopic portrayal of the future with the use of science fiction. Thus, this kind of portrayal tries to act as a corrective measure and also includes other branches of literary work like science fiction. Authors like Kim Stanley Robinson, Richard Powers, Barbara Kingsolver etc are some prominent figures of this genre. Other types of literary enquiry probe deeper into anthropocentric acts and relate them to the environmental concerns. They explore themes of capitalism, imperialism, exploitation etc to show how ecological concerns are deeply imbricated with these. Cinema is one of the foremost mediums of communication and cultural representation and it reaches the mass often having a lasting effect on them. Filmmakers from around the world have used this potent medium to voice their opinions



not only about the environmental issues but also various cultural, social, political, historical and spiritual aspects of human beings deeply embedded in the intricacies of the portrayal of the natural habitat. In recent times there has been a surge of such productions primarily because of the fact that the destructive potency of human actions has become at par with large scale planetary forces as Dipesh Chakrabarty argues and the world has entered the Anthropocene. Climatologist Mark Maslin says, “Over the last 150 years, significant changes in Climate change have been recorded, which are markedly different from the last at least 2,000 years. These changes include a 0.85°C increase in average global temperatures, sea-level rise of over 20 cm, significant shifts in the seasonality and intensities of precipitation, changing weather patterns and significant retreat of nearly all continental glaciers.” (Maslin, 44-45) In the Indian context also literary texts with ecocritical points of view abound. Rabindranath Tagore's *Raktakarabi*, and *Muktadhara* are prominent examples. Also, texts like *Fire on the Mountains* by Anita Desai, *Nectar in a Sieve* by Kamala Markandaya, Ruskin Bond's *No Room for a Leopard*, Amitav Ghosh's *Hungry Tide*, etc are well known examples. Hollywood movies and documentaries like *Avatar*, *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*, *The Day After Tomorrow*, *An Before the Flood*, *Warcraft*, *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* etc have garnered accolades for their wonderful portrayal of the environment and invited ecocritical dissections. In the Indian context also, cinema has been used more recently to awaken the masses. Films like *Kadvi Hawa*, *Kedarnath*, *Carbon* etc are worth mentioning. Other films like *Matribhoomi*, *Peepli Live* voice socio-ecological concerns tormenting the country.

This paper takes up the multiple Oscar winning film *The Revenant* because apparently it does not speak aloud environmental issues and propose any possible solution but it has multiple layers of environmental artefacts deeply embedded within the cultural, sociological, historical and spiritual aspects of life. It opens up scope for interconnected genres to enmesh and be mutually influenced. Broader perspectives regarding the relation between man and environment unveil and thus we get deeper into the realm of cause, effect and meaning making getting a glimpse of the ever expanding, dynamic and changing equations among humans themselves situated within the environment which acts as a protagonist. Environment which is plundered by the colonizers stands witness to the exploitation of the ‘other’ who are disenfranchised from their life-world. The interconnectedness of all living beings, female body as a microcosm of nature herself, a human's potential to overcome cold reason and anthropocentric hubris causing him to think natural environment as mute and lifeless and subsequently growing reverential and sensitive to nature's language disclose various arenas of intervention which are multi layered and ever expanding. The film espouses respectful participation which may impart a transcendental experience to a human



being who may begin being aware of the mysteries of his own existence through being aware of the vastness, complexity and inscrutability of the natural environment.

Postcolonial Ecocriticism and *The Revenant*

The coming together of the terms 'postcolonialism' and 'ecocriticism' resulting in the portmanteau term 'postcolonial ecocriticism' does not necessarily indicate heterogeneous and opposing ideas blended together in rebellious academic theorising. These two fields of critical enquiry have many overlapping arenas of intervention and essentially both emerged as a corrective measure of what can be called a wrong way of dwelling. In that sense, both the fields are didactic in nature. Both the fields are concerned as to how social reality may be changed through literary and cultural criticism and both have strived to moor humanities in social and material realities. Postcolonial studies tried to translate the political freedom into cultural freedom and espoused the corrective measure of social reality: Western culture is not superior to non-western ones. Similarly, ecocriticism also propagated a corrective measure. First, ecocriticism engaged in the investigation of the relationship between humans and non-humans in various cultural narratives like literature, films and popular culture. Second, it pointed out the anthropocentric depictions of such productions and third it went on to suggest an alternate way of dwelling in the world. Overlapping points have been systematically spelled out in the works of modern critics especially in Elizabeth DeLoughrey's and George Handley's (2011) edited collection *Postcolonial Ecologies: Literatures of the Environment* and in Graham Huggan's and Helen Tiffin's (2010) co-authored study *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*. In the arena of postcolonial criticism there is an abundant mention of the metaphor of the land and the indigenous communities who are rooted in the land. But, postcolonial critics have largely ignored the metaphorical aspect of the land. As DeLoughrey and Handley write of the work of Caribbean poet Eduard Glissant, the land is "saturated by traumas of conquest [...]" Glissant argues that this is why a postcolonial ecology cannot be interpellated as a pastoral but rather an untranslatable historical record of a "fight without witnesses [...]" . "Since it is the nature, so to speak, of colonial powers to suppress the history of their own violence, the land and even the ocean become all the more crucial as recuperative sites of postcolonial historiography." (DeLoughrey and Handley 8). Therefore, there is an indication of witnessing. The land has been the gist of exploitation. In order to address the cultural, economic and environmental destruction perpetrated by the colonizers, there must be the process of witnessing of such plunder by the colonial subject whom the colonizers have often killed off. What remains is the land which is the sole spectator of such exploitation. Here ecocriticism adds to postcolonial studies. Whereas postcolonial critics consider the land as mute and lifeless, the ecocritics think of it as alive and eloquent. The task of ecocriticism



is to move from metaphorical to the material and emphasize on the balance between human and non-human environments. A particular form of ecological imperialism is 'environmental racism' defined by the American environmental philosopher Deane Curtin as 'the connection, in theory and practice, of race and the environment so that the oppression of one is connected to, and supported by, the oppression of the other' (Curtin 145). Environmental racism is the extreme form of what Val Plumwood calls 'hegemonic centrism' which is a self-serving view where racism, sexism and colonialism support each other and have been historically appointed for exploiting nature while 'minimising non-human claims to [a shared] earth' (Plumwood 4). Such an argument extends towards animals as she states, "our [collective] failure to situate dominant forms of human society ecologically [has been] matched by our failure to situate non-humans ethically, as the plight of non-human species continues to worsen" (Plumwood 2). "Hegemonic centrism thus accounts not only for environmental racism, but also for those forms of institutionalised speciesism that continue to be used to rationalise the exploitation of animal (and animalised human) 'others'" (Huggan and Tiffin 5). Plumwood argues that the Western notion of humanity is dependent on the not human, the animal, the animalistic. Huggan and Tiffin say that European justification of the colonial exploitation proceeds from this idea of the presence of non-European lands and the humans and animals that inhabited them as 'spaces', 'unused, underused or empty. European colonialism sees the 'indigenous cultures as "primitive", less rational, and closer to children, animals and nature" (qtd.in Huggan and Tiffin 5). "Postcolonial ecocriticism has brought forward critiques of capitalism, consumption, technology, neoliberalism, modernization and biopiracy in the former British colonies and beyond." (Deloughrey 325).

In *The Revenant*, the natural environment has been shown in the celluloid in its truest form possible and to achieve this purpose the director Alejandro Gonzalez Iñárritu's has shot the movie in natural light. Nature in the film, is vibrant and alive, almost achieving a sense of mysticism. This setting has opened the avenue to probe the relationship between man and the environment in multiple layers of enquiry. 'The Revenant' means one who has returned from the dead. Though, the film depicts the superhumanly grit and perseverance of the protagonist Hugh Glass to survive the harsh environmental conditions after being mauled within an inch of his life by a grizzly bear and subsequently abandoned by his fellow mountain men, it seems the movie preaches man, blinded by greed of consumption and colonization and on the verge of his own death by environmental destruction, to desperately try to save himself along with the natural environment by proper dwelling. Anthropocentric greed has been established early on in the film when the antagonist Fitzgerald, an embodiment of the colonial master's attributes of exploitation, selfishness, lack of conscience and cunning declares to the other fur trappers appointed by the



Rocky Mountain Fur Company that they are amassing “thirty pelt bales” and not “fifteen pelt bales.” (*The Revenant* 5:01-5:05) The region where they are hunting down animals for their skin and flesh actually belong to the indigenous Native American community like Arikara and Pawnee tribes who live in sync with nature for many thousands of years. The White Men have systematically slaughtered these tribes, plundered their environment killing animals, building forts and destroying the natural habitat. The film begins with a scene where such destruction is shown in the form of a dream sequence. Hugh Glass's Native American wife was murdered in such a raid and the whole village was burnt. While the White fur trappers are busy with their work, they are ambushed by the Arikara tribe and a fight takes place where men of both sides are killed. Even at the face of imminent death, Fitzgerald refuses to leave the pelts and escape to the boat urging the men to carry as many pelts as possible and later exclaims, ““ Life! What life are you talking about? I ain't go no life. I just got living and the only way I get to do that is through these pelts.” (*The Revenant* 16:19-16:26). He does not know the route of exit from the wilderness and only exploits it for consumption and encroachment. The group is dependent on Hugh who has been hired to chart their way out of the territory. Fitzgerald constantly calls the indigenous community and also Hugh's son with his Pawnee wife, tree niggers, savages and thus the animalized ‘other.’ During the fight a delirious White Man, amidst the shower of flying arrows and bullets, is shown shooting a horse for no reason at all as if in a trance. This, as if, indicates the state of the deranged modern man who is committing ecocide and consequently, suicide. The scene ends with a blazing tree falling with a thud and it shows that the site of exploitation, that is, the natural environment is an alive witness. During his solitary odyssey through the wilds in a mentally and physically devastated state in his quest for revenge for his son's murder by Fitzgerald, Hugh Glass comes across a Pawnee man who does not flinch to help a White Man. We come to know that it is the White Men who have killed his family and taken away his place and he is displaced and in search of men of his own tribe. Though considered savage, animalistic and wild by colonizers, he possesses values acquired living in a respectful participation with nature. He is infinitely superior in the moral realm and seems one with nature in his innocence, innate wisdom and sense of justice. He lets Hugh to travel with him, nurses his wounds with natural medication, builds a shelter for him with natural objects and gives him the greatest lesson of his life. He says his heart bleeds for the loss of his family but revenge is in the hands of the Creator. He is later killed by a group of French, also perpetrators of loot and violence in that region and his lifeless body is hanged from a tree, also considered lifeless by the White Man. The tree becomes a witness and a site of such brutality.

Ecofeminism and *The Revenant*





The origin of Ecofeminism can be tracked back to the 1970s and 80s when a link between feminist issues and environmental problems began to be established. The term 'ecofeminism' was coined by the French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne in her book *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* (1974) where she describes that the disenfranchisement and oppression of women are intrinsically linked to the degradation of nature as both arose as a result of patriarchal dominance. Ecofeminists differ in their definition of the term according to their race, class, geography and conceptual orientation but one idea is common to all of them: the exploitation of nature follows the same logic as the exploitation of women and other minorities. Greta Gaard says, "Drawing on the insights of ecology, feminism, and socialism, ecofeminism's basic premise is that the ideology which authorizes oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature. Ecofeminism calls for an end to all oppressions, arguing that no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature." (Gaard 1) Ecofeminism, until the end of the millennium has pointed towards various theoretical dimensions within its framework to analyze the relationship between women and nature. Liberal (or radical rationalist) (eco)feminists, Cultural (eco)feminists and Social and socialist feminists are the three broad branches espousing three different ways of engagement between women and nature. However, this paper will take up the arguments of Cultural ecofeminists and then attempt to make a transition to material ecofeminism to interpret the film *The Revenant*. Cultural ecofeminists value the association of women and nature. Feminists like Mary Daly, Adrienne Rich or Susan Griffin even argue that women belong to a superior ethical realm. The female body is considered a source of power, nurture and care. They argue that patriarchal lust for consumption and destruction of the environment results from man's alienation from the female realm of love and growth. Charlene Spretnak speaks how man's lack of awareness of the reproductive experience has accelerated his destructive mentality. She says, "Not feeling intrinsically involved in the processes of birthing and nurture, nor strongly predisposed toward empathetic communion, men may have turned their attention, for eras, towards the other aspect of the cycle, death." (Spretnak 129) Ecofeminist Spirituality is a closely connected movement and sometimes even considered a part of Cultural Ecofeminism. It argues that spirituality is central to ecofeminist politics and believes in the presence of an immanent goddess instead of a patriarchal transcendent god. Carol P. Christ, Joanna Macy, Ynestra King and Charlene Spretnak are major proponents of this movement. Carol P. Christ provides a succinct definition of this movement: "The preservation of the earth requires a profound shift in consciousness: a recovery of "ancient and traditional views that revere the connection of all beings in the web of life and a rethinking of the relation of humanity and divinity to nature" (Christ 314). Ecofeminist spirituality believes that the awareness of the presence of a





goddess will help in shifting the consciousness from a reductive self to the ecological self of both men and women. Ecofeminism has gained much strength from the New Material turn which is today, the most sophisticated and prominent enquiry within this field. It is a reaction against the linguistic turn where language was branded too much power. Indeed, discourse and constructionism have dominated humanities since the mid twentieth century. The material turn considers what it means to be a human being in the natural environment. It proposes an insight that human beings are an inextricable part of the material world which acts upon humans who, in turn, act upon it. It speaks about the agency of matter and thinks that life is materially embedded. According to Christa Grewe-Volpp, new materialism provides an attractive model for ecofeminism because “it argues persuasively against the separation of nature and culture, of human bodies and the natural environment, of sex and gender, of matter and discourse, and because it thus renders ideas of hierarchical dualism, ecofeminists’s [sic] major target of critique, obsolete” (Grewe Volpp 214). Donna Haraway says, “In its scientific embodiments as well as in other forms, nature is made, but not entirely by humans; it is a co-construction among humans and non-humans” (Haraway 297). Another important aspect of the material turn is that elements never work in isolation just as man cannot exist outside of the environment as a separate and solitary entity. Interconnectedness is of seminal importance to the New Materialists. Hence, “[matter’s] efficacy or agency always depends on the collaboration, cooperation, or interactive interference of many bodies and forces” (Bennett 21). Stacy Alaimo also speaks of ‘transcorporeality.’ which theorizes the inseparability of the human body and the environment. According to Alaimo ‘transcorporeality’ is the “movement across bodies’ and the “interchanges and interconnections between various bodily natures’ as well as the invisible flows between human corporeality and the more-than-human world” (2). Transcorporeality erases notions of subjectivity that depend on human exceptionalism. It urges to come to terms with the fact that humans both male and female are parts of the ever evolving environmental process thus abolishing the male-female hierarchy. Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva argue that the material and the spiritual are inextricable to each other especially for Third World women fighting for survival. The Chipko Movement took place in the Himalayan regions in India where women hugged trees to save them from being cut down by unscrupulous loggers. In her book, *Staying Alive* (1989), Shiva says that the gendered nature of the Chipko Movement has a religious undertone since it considered nature as ‘prakriti’ or the creative force which in Indian traditions is seen as “organising principle in daily life” (40).

In the film, *The Revenant*, there are ecofeminist assumptions and a link between the subjugation of women, the plunder of the natural environment and the indigenous people has been established. The superior moral realm of women associated with reproduction seems connected to nature’s sense of justice and nurture. The material world seems alive and plays vital



roles in the development of the plot and the material embeddedness of humans has been established through picturesque cinematography and flowing story line. In the film, scores of humans, both from the indigenous tribe and the White colonisers die at the hands of one another in multiple clashes. It seems that men are eager to kill one another at the blink of an eye for individual interests. On the other hand, death in the natural environment, without anthropocentric intervention has been shown as difficult as nature is eager to care and heal if one knows how to respond to its gifts. Glass's extraordinary journey of survival in nature shown throughout the film testifies to this fact. In spite of a gruesome bear attack, he does not die in the natural environment. He not only survives but emerges as a wiser man, more receptive to nature than ever. Women has been shown as more aware of the entanglement of nature and humans. We see this as Hugh Glass reminisces his wife's words at the jaw of death. She uses nature as example to speak the words which resuscitates Glass: "When there is a storm and you stand in front of a tree, if you look at its branches, you swear it will fall. But if you watch the trunk, you will see its stability." (*The Revenant* 41:10-41:55). A subtle and picturesque enmeshing of the female body and nature is depicted. In the scene where Glass's wife is killed by a White Man while looting and burning down the Pawnee tribe's dwelling, the director shows a little bird flying out from Glass's wife's heart as life flees from her body. But she awakens almost as a Goddess figure to guide Glass throughout the movie and whispers nature's wisdom to him. Exploitation of nature and women is another important theme in the film. We encounter this idea when we see that the Native American woman named Powaga is kept as a sex slave to gratify the White Man's lust. They consider the woman as an object of carnal gratification in the same vein in which they consider the natural environment as a lifeless site of consumption. The indigenous tribe whom they subdued and killed, value women as they revere nature. From the beginning we see the name Powaga, repeated many times by a Native American as they continue their quest to search for her almost obsessively. The Native American tells the French fur trappers, "You stand there and talk to me about honour? You have stolen everything from us. Everything! The land, the animals. Two white men snuck into our village and took my daughter, Powaga. We leave you these pelts because honour demands it." (*The Revenant* 33:13-33:53) Being close to nature heightens man's morality as we see in the indigenous tribes. Glass, in his journey, finds a White Man raping Powaga. He saves her and is later repaid. At the end of the movie when he ultimately finds his son's murderer, Fitzgerald, he hands him over to the indigenous tribe, the agents of nature for justice. He does not deliver justice himself. In spite of being a white man whom the Arikara tribe kills on sight, the Arikara tribe walk past him gazing at him with Powaga at the centre. It is almost as a note of gratitude from them and especially Powaga who belongs to a superior moral realm much like nature. At the end of the movie we see Glass's wife again, as a Goddess of nature who is pleased



with Glass's journey, his newly found wisdom that revenge and justice lay on the hands of the Creator and his respect for the natural environment. New materialist concepts of matter turning them into a living reality abound in *The Revenant*. During Hugh's journey in the wilderness, on one particular occasion, he is ambushed by Arikara tribe and has no place to hide. He tries to escape riding on a horse but falls over a cliff with the horse. The horse dies from the fall but Hugh survives both from the fall and the Arikara tribe. Weak and emaciated, he would have died from exposure to the unforgiving winter and snowstorm but the dead horse saves his life. He cuts open the gut of the carcass and removes the insides. He then squeezes himself into its abdominal cavity and saves himself. When the weather gets better and he gathers a bit of strength, he comes out of the carcass and caresses it out of gratitude. In a tremendous act of cinematography, the glistening sunrays of a new morning is shown greeting Hugh Glass through leaves drenched in fresh morning dew. It shows how a vibrant and lively nature, a witness to Hugh's relentlessness in the face of all odds, gives him a ray of hope to continue his fight for survival. Mother nature always opens a window but one has to be able to see it. The dead horse becomes a site of conflicting ideas: mother nature's life- giving quality at times even at the cost of her life just as a woman brings a new life in this world and at times, dies in the process, man's inseparability from and dependence on nature and at the same time man's taming and using of non-human objects for his own selfish interest. It also points towards man's unethical dwelling and lack of concern not only for the environment but also for each other as a severely injured Hugh was left alone for dead by his fellow men. A non-living thing like Hugh's water bottle also becomes full of agency and vitality and helps Captain Henry and others to find Hugh. Bridger inscribed a roundabout circle in the water bottle which he left to a dying Hugh as he was compelled to leave him under Fitzgerald's order and intimidation. As New Materialism says that matter, nature and human beings are connected in a complex web of relations, the marked water bottle makes its way to Captain Henry's fort through the hands of another French fur trapper who also got lost in the wild and approached Captain Henry's fort for food and shelter. Bridger, at once, recognized the bottle and the Frenchman said where he found it. Thus, Hugh was found and Fitzgerald's nasty truths of abandoning Hugh and murdering Hugh's son, Hawk were revealed. In the course of the film, we also see a physically and emotionally wrecked Hugh Glass putting a flower on the mouth of Hawk's dead body. The little flower, in this context, reinforces man's situatedness in the natural environment. Human body, irrespective of gender, race, class etc, is created from nature and returns to nature.

Conclusion

Motion pictures have the capability to reach the most number of people especially in the modern era of technology. They influence a large number of audiences and can gradually bring





about a positive change by depicting the follies of human existence. It is a potent medium of representation of cultures, history, natural environment, human psyche and life. A film like *The Revenant* provokes several thoughts in the mind of its spectators but it lays the most emphasis on the natural environment which the film's cinematography captures exceptionally. Along with winning Oscars for the best director and the best leading actor, the film also won an Oscar for the best cinematography. The most intriguing part is that the whole plot of the film is thoroughly eco-centric and it speaks of the environmental concerns without stating it directly but by exploring complex web of relationships among human beings, the material world and the natural world. It intervenes with the themes of history of the subjugation of the Native Americans, love for family, the astonishing range of human willpower but all of these are related to and situated within the living and breathing natural world which watches everything as an overarching and omnipresent spirit. Various viewpoints and ideas are allowed to amalgamate seamlessly as the film does not directly address ecological issues but delves deeper into the reasons of environmental destruction, that is, the unbridled avarice of imperialism and holds up the mirror to human beings warning them of their own impending doom resulting from greed. It also penetrates deeper into human consciousness and impels the audience to think. It speaks of exploitation at many levels but never shows environmental exploitation directly. Rather it uses cinematography to give the broader picture of nature where the exploitation takes place. It uses glimpses, scenes, metaphors and dialogues loaded with meaning to show human lust for consumption. It also uses a terrific survival story in the wilderness to show nature in its vivid glory and it also opens a space for showing how a human being can be receptive to nature's boons and in the process unveil the meaning of existence. Such wisdom gleaned from nature would put an end to exploitation of all sorts. While receiving the Oscar for *The Revenant*, Leonardo di Caprio ended his speech with the words, "Let us not take this planet for granted, I do not take tonight for granted." (Oscars 4:22-4:27)

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