

Ecology Media in Environmental Issues

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Abstract

Environmental issues which are heavily reported in various media are interesting to be explored using media ecology theory in terms of media coverage. Many forms of media in diverse information display, allow audiences to get information richly and from various perspectives. This is made possible by the development of technology that also includes the development of media and the emergence of new media such as online media to provide information with a wider range than the previous era without new media. Media ecology was triggered by McLuhan based on the statement "medium is the message" and McLuhan viewed that a media and message cannot be separated, they are unity. Based on literature review of journals and online media, it can be said that media acts as a message is received by the public as important information and become a part of their daily lives. Media in the form of films, online news portals, social media, videos, photography are the extension of the issue that the world wants to convey to the problems of what the trending is. Technology provides that information and the media becomes a communication forum for various forms and content stick on it.

Keywords: media ecology ; environmental issues ; medium ; technology

1. Introduction

When the latest superhero film entitled 'Aquaman' was released on the cinema screen, there was a review of an article about the film. A reviewer interviewed the main players and said if the film 'Aquaman' brought environmental issues in it by telling antagonists from the sea to gather the forces of the whole kingdom in the sea to attack the land which continuously pollutes the sea. A storyline that illustrates that issue brings the filmmaking team put an important message about the health of the planet – Earth (Gulf News, 2018). The director, James Wan, said there were two topics raised in this film and one of them was environmental issues by showing the cause of the sea world want to attack the land world. It happens because humans on land pollute the sea and kill marine habitats (Business Mirror, 2018).

Issues about the environment and living things become the spotlight recently because of a dead whale is stranded in Wakatobi and found 5.9 kilograms of plastic waste in the whale's stomach (Kiki Andi Pati, 2018b). In addition, 1.7 tons of plastics waste was found around the sea where the whale died (Kiki Andi Pati, 2018a). Then, another online media also reported about a pope and gave the complete details of any garbage contained in the whale's stomach by explained the results of WWF Indonesia's twitter account that there were hard plastics (19 pieces, 140 gr), plastic bottles (4 pieces, 150 gr), plastic bags (25 pieces, 260 gr), flip-flops (2 pieces, 270 gr), dominated by raffia straps (3.26 kg) and plastic cups (115 pieces, 750 gr) in the whale's stomach (BBC Indonesia, 2018).

News about the trashes in the whale's stomach is also found in another country, Thailand. The pope was found in a dying condition and before he died the whale spewed out dozens of plastic bag wastes which after being weighed reached 7.7 kilograms (Gita Laras Widyaningrum, 2018).

The dead Whales die with rubbish pollution in their stomach have just happened in the Philippines and found about 40 kilograms of garbage with the type of rice sack plastic waste (BBC, 2019).

In addition, there was a video that had viral on social media and was reposted by the Minister of Maritime Affairs, Ms. Susi Pudjiastuti on her Twitter account, which was a video of a turtle whose nose was

caught in the form of a plastic straw. After under reviewed, the incident took place in Costa Rica and a sea turtle expert, Christine Figgner, and her team helped the turtle by pulling plastic straws stuck in its nose (Jane J. Lee, 2018).

Environmental issues are described through other types of media, namely photography. Chris Jordan – a photographer and filmmaker captured dead albatross through photos when he was in the process of making a documentary about albatross birds. In the photo, there were a lot of garbage in form of plastic bottle caps found in the stomach of a dead albatross. Jordan also captured more than one photo of the dead albatross with some plastic bottle caps on his stomach (Anna Turns, 2018).

In 2011, a little boy named Milo Cress initiated a movement called 'Be Straw Free' when buying carbonated drinks and asked the store manager not to give plastic straws (Darryl Fears, 2017). Then in Indonesia, many news related on environmental issues are raising in the media, a campaign emerged like Cress's in 2011 which paid attention to garbage pollution, such as the 'No Straw Movement'. This movement was initiated by a community called Divers Clean Action in 2017 and the launched was marked by cleaning the sea and beaches on Pramuka Island in the Thousands Island and obtaining as much as 81 kilograms of garbage dominated by plastic, especially 1.45 kilograms of plastic straw (Clean Action Divers, 2017).

Environmental issues are displayed in various media, such as films, social media, online news portals, until photography show that if the media provides a forum for environmental issues it can be spread and as the prime information for people who consume the media. Because if there is no media that display environmental issues, pollution such as plastic wastes and the death of sea animals will only be known by people who see it directly and information is not widely conveyed.

2. Method

To see some environmental issues displayed in the media, researcher using literature review approach. The literature review must be systematic, clear, broad and reproducible and with the aim of obtaining comprehensive accumulation results, transparent analysis, and reflective interpretations when research a particular topic (Okoli & Schabram, 2010). Environmental issues displayed in various media use stand-alone literature reviews with the aim of describing what is known and for identifying sources that have not been identified and as support for more in-depth research (Okoli & Schabram, 2010).

Result and discussion

Environmental issues raised in various forms of media can be explored using Media Ecology theory. This theory was introduced by Marshall Professor McLuhan, who in the 1960s questioned the relevance of media and culture. McLuhan's theory stimulates that the media should be understood ecologically. McLuhan began the introduction of this theory with a statement "the medium is the message" and looked at media and messages as a whole and studied the personal and diverse social environment formed by the usage of different technologies and saw the medium as technology which was an extension of human hands (Griffin, 2012).

Media ecology contains communication, information, perception, expression and views different media as having different biases depend on the content and its influences on communication, awareness and culture. Then, media ecology also examines the effects of different media on individuals, groups and society. Finally, media ecology sees the function of media as an environment of humans who live surrounded by symbols and technology and can shape or even influences the humans (Strate, 2016).

Based on Neil Postman's glasses, media ecology views how media communication affects humans in terms of perception, understanding, taste and value. While ecology is a study of the environment about structure, content and impact on society. Environment here is a complex system of messages that affects humans in ways of thinking, feeling and acting (Islas & Bernal, 2016). By communication, media ecology separates and has position as an open, dynamic, interdependent, and systematically. Thus, the media ecology views from 4 (four) media and cultural environmental models namely oral, manuscript, print and electronic (Newton, 2015).

According to Postman, media ecology is a study of the symbiotic relationship between people and the media technology that they are created and used. Not only that, media ecology as a study that sees media as the environment, besides looking from the perspective of media ecology, communication also conveyed by the media do not contain of anything neutral or value-free when the information in the media is conveyed from one place to another (Lum, 2014).

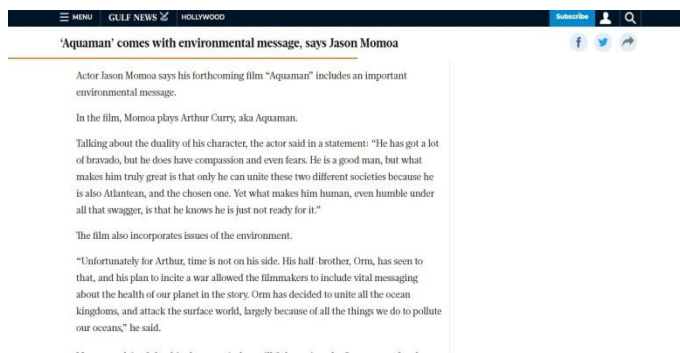


Figure 1. Main actor says that Aquaman comes with environmental message (source : gulfnews.com)

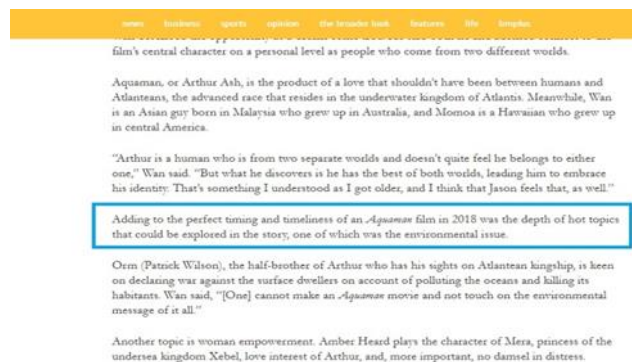


Figure 2. The Director of Aquaman says that the film comes with environmental issues (source: businessmirror.com.ph)

As shown from the screenshots above, we see that the news come from two different online media and contain of interviews with players and directors of the film Aquaman and said if the “Aquaman” movie comes with a message of environmental issues which are heavily discussed. Let’s imagine, media such as movies can be a forum for expressing information about environmental issues by portraying them through films that are dynamic, colorful and have stories.



Figure 3. Online media review the topic about environmental issue (source: kompas.com)



Figure 4. Photography from Chris Jordan (source: chrisjordan.com)

The third photo shows a screenshot of an online news portal that covered the deaths of a whale and found a number of plastic wastes in its stomach in Wakatobi. While the fourth photo shows a photograph of a photographer Chris Jordan which shows the death of an albatross and found plastic garbage in his stomach.

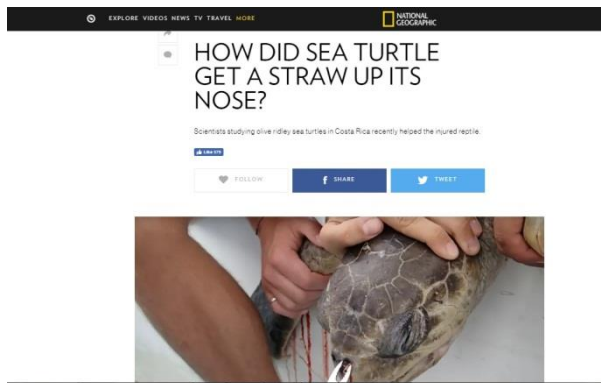


Figure 5. Online media discuss about the sea turtle which gets a straw in its nose (source: nationalgeographic.com.au)

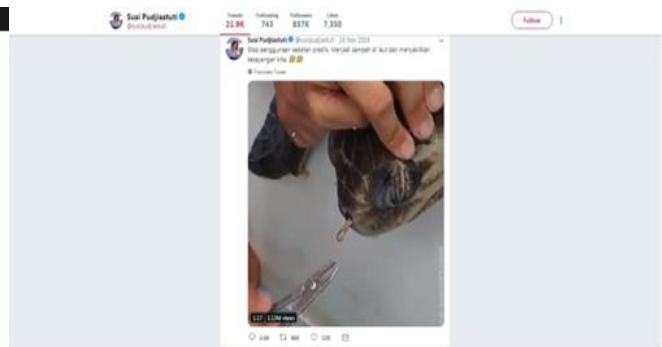


Figure 6. The tweet from Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries about the sea turtle (source: twitter.com)

The two images above show a sea turtle caught in a plastic straw on his nose. In Figure 5, is news in the online media that reviews the location, who saved the turtle, and how the sea turtle found and was saved. While the next picture is a tweeting from Ms. Susi Pudjiastuti who is the Minister of Fisheries and Maritime Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia which are contains of videos of sea turtles and got so many responds; commented by 2 thousand accounts, retweeted by 48 thousand accounts and favored by 32 thousand accounts.

Environmental issues related with wastes in the oceans could effect sea creatures, then similar issues also in line with the environment are conveyed through films, reviews on environmental issues on social media and news in online media, even to photography works giving McLuhan a picture of media as a technology that become an extension of the human hand. With various types of media that display similar issues, it can be inferred that individuals and social environments are formed by using different technologies and produce different information. In addition, media ecology is viewing the function of media as an environment of human beings that contains symbols and technology and has an impact to shape and influence humans in using the technology and symbols available around them, such as photographic media technology, film, social media, news portals online. Because, most of them is used by humans to express their opinions and produce photos, videos, articles as manifestations of ideas. Furthermore, media ecology is not only seen as a function of the media as a human environment that can be utilized, but also can affect humans in perception, understanding, taste and value because of the opinion results which are manifested in the form of photos, videos and articles. It also give a reaction to shows reportedly that needs an action response by initiating a campaign that supports the environment to be better. By showing the results of photos, videos, articles, it is a dynamic and dependent manifestation with an example of a news article about sea turtles which is clipped in the article. Then, media ecology is also a symbiotic relationship between a group of individuals and the technology what they have created and used because media is a technology created by humans and used by humans as an extension of their hands to be able to reach more broadly.

In addition, affected audiences with information have more sophisticated packaging in the media. When environmental issues raised through various forms of media, make audiences to do something. Embark on an environmental campaign, for example. For example in the film, according to James Wan's statement as the director of Aquaman, an information called environmental issues was raised as the topic of the film with a super hero storyline. Then in the online media, the form of the discussion can elaborate the news with the facts found in the field. Whereas in the form of social media, the form can be displayed in form of data, images and support using hashtags. Another form can be shown in form of a video that displays moving images of an object that becomes an environmental issue such as a turtle whose nose is caught in a plastic straw. After that, there is another form of media called photography in the form of images and has meaning in appearances. The effects are given such as the presence of the 'No Straw Movement' campaign which are in response to news in various forms of media. Media that is seen as the content of the message allows the audiences to be exposed to information and create some effects related to issues which are being heavily displayed in various media.

3. Conclusion

Environmental issues that are viewed through media ecology see a link between media and culture. In addition, McLuhan's argument about 'medium is the message' states if a medium can be a message for individuals who

receive it and a medium such as photos, videos or news articles as symbols that can be used by humans to manifest their thoughts into something. It can be seen by other people using technology to create it. Because the media ecology examines the personal and diverse social environment formed by technology in the form of media as an extension of human hands, such as films, videos, photos and online articles can be produced through the available media technology around the human environment. Then, the media ecology also sees the dependence of media on other media such as online articles that include appropriateness videos in it, and the existences of dynamism because a similar issue will create the other forms of different media. Media ecology also affects people in perception, understanding, taste and value. So that, when issues such as the environment are displayed and spread, it has some impacts on a group of individuals and ideas such as campaigns without plastic straws and many fast food restaurants do the same way by not giving straws on drinks. Alternatively, stainless steel straws appear as a substitute and form of supports for the campaign because stainless steel straws can be washed and worn repeatedly so that they are not like disposable plastic straws and become a garbage pollution that as if caught in the nose of sea turtles. By the study of ecological media, it can be seen that humans are more aware of the use of surrounding media technology, because humans who are from different social environments and affected by different technologies, will produce information from diverse media forms.

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