

For you and I to live is all the stone's will; Interpreting Thanos Via Reader's Response

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Abstract

Reader response, primarily a German and American offshoot of literary theory, emerged in the west mainly as a reaction to the textual emphasis of new criticism of the 1940's. The philosophical origins of reader response criticism can be traced back to the doctrine of phenomenology. A reader is also an observer and a critic. A reader is the one who gives multiple meanings to what he reads more than the author. The truth is, a reader is considered to enjoy more privileges than the owner of the text. Taking the above arguments into consideration, this paper aims at talking in favour of Thanos who is considered as an evil force in *Avenger Infinity War Part Three*. This paper supports Thanos' intention of saving the world and make a better place to live.

Keywords: *Infinity stones, murder, salvation.*

"The entire time I knew Thanos, he only ever had one goal, to bring balance to the universe by wiping out half of all life." (*Avengers Infinity War Part Three*). The above two lines explicitly explain the story of the movie. Thanos felt that the world was not equally gifted. When one side was happy and content, the other side starved for food and basic needs. The main intention of Thanos was not completely evil. He wanted to have a change through salvation and he believed salvation cannot occur without losing one's life. He wanted to have a world which is equally divided in resources. He emphasized the fact that there is nothing wrong in losing something in order to gain something else. In fact he says that is how achievement can be perceived.

"At the dawn of the universe there was nothing. Then the big bang sent six elemental crystals hurtling across the virgin universe. These infinity stones each control an essential aspect of existence." (*Avengers Infinity War Part Three*). The Universe consists of six infinity stones. First is the blue stone which stands for space. Second is the red stone which stands for reality. Third is the purple which stands for power. Fourth is the orange which stands for soul. Yellow is the fifth stone which stands for mind (vision) and at last green is the sixth stone which stands for time. All the six stones had been protected and taken care of by six different people around the universe. Thanos' idea was to get all the stones from the respective owners and to change the world according to his favour. Well, his favour was not subjective and he was not selfish in his plan.

"You may think this is suffering but this is salvation. Universal scales tip towards the balance because of your sacrifice" (*Avengers Infinity War Part Three*). Thanos initially gets the purple stone which stands for power. After attaining this power he goes to space and kills 'half of the people' and gets the key for space stone. The point that has to be noticed as a reader is Thanos was not in the idea to terminate the whole world. He saw half of the world suffering and thus he wanted to abolish half of the population. He considered this abolition as a salvation. These people sacrificed their life in order to make their fellow mates and predecessors to live in peace and harmony.

"Choose a side or die. One side is a revelation, the other an honour known only to few." (*Avengers Infinity War Part Three*). The words revelation and honour denote Thanos' mentality for people's death. He never saw people suffering and dying. He considered that as a revelation and in fact he honoured and respected the people who died for this world. His intention at any cost was not self-centred. Thanos adopted a daughter named Gamora from one of the planets that he demolished. He explained his theory of balance to Gamora which gave hints for the reader to get to see Thanos as a man who worked for the welfare of the people rather than as an evil force.

GAMORA: we were happy on our home planet

THANOS: Going bed hungry, scrounging for scraps. Your planet was on the brink of collapse, I'm the one who stopped that. Since then the children born have known nothing but full bellies and clear skies.

GAMORA: you murdered half of the planet

THANOS: A small price to pay for salvation. It's a simple calculus, the universe is finite, its resources finite. If life is left unchecked, life will cease to exist. Life needs correction, at least I am the one with the will to act on it. (Avengers Infinity War Part Three)

Thus, Thanos intention was very much clear from his conversation to his adopted daughter. Thanos did not make only other people to suffer and sacrifice. Though Gamora is an adopted daughter, he loved her with all his heart and soul. He too made sacrifice for the betterment of the universe. He sacrificed his daughter to get the soul stone. In order to get the soul stone Thanos was demanded a sacrifice. He had to lose something that he loved. His only love was his daughter. To achieve his aim and for this world's sake he was even ready to sacrifice his daughter from his part too. This clearly shows that Thanos idea of saving the world was not highly unacceptable. His love for the daughter shows Thanos as an ordinary man who longed for love and to have a normal life in peace. By discarding all his personal feelings and emotions he accepted the will to work for the world and made up his mind to sacrifice his daughter.

This is a place which gives hints to the critic that Thanos sacrificed his daughter only because she is adopted, it will be a question mark if Gamora is his own daughter. But as an objective observer, one can argue that Thanos love for his daughter is irrevocably true. When the avengers trapped him and asked for Gamora, one of the avengers felt his sadness and pain for sacrificing his daughter. The other avenger questioned "What does this monster have to mourn?" (Avengers Infinity War Part Three). The words monster and mourn are highly paradoxical and put forth the point that after all the evil Thanos also had a heart.

"Titan was like most planets. Too many mouths, not enough to go around and when we faced extinction I offered a solution." (Avengers Infinity War Part Three). Thanos was from the place called Titan. He shared his own history to the avengers. His sharing about his history gives a clue to the readers that Thanos must have influenced by his own life experiences. It is to be noted again that Thanos was not in the intention to eradicate the whole world. He was only in the search of a remedy through the existing people in the world. Thanos wanted to get all the six infinity stones and become the owner of it. He says,

"With all six infinity stones, I would snap my finger. I finally rest and watch the sun rise on a grateful universe" (Avengers Infinity War Part Three). It is to be noted from the above statement that Thanos used the word 'grate' and not great. Thus it shows that he wants this world not to be big in size, to have multiple planets, large amount of people and to look great and vast from outside. Rather he wants this world to be grateful to each other for their existence. He says "The hardest choices require the strongest will" (Avengers Infinity War Part Three). And in the course of the movie he proved that he had a strong will. A will to save the entire universe, a will to sacrifice his own love, a will to get all the six stones not just to become a master of it but also to create a new and grateful universe.

"When I'm done, half of the humanity will still be alive" (Avengers Infinity War Part Three). Thanos emphasized on the point 'half' which gave an output that he killed only half of the people to make other half to live and enjoy all the resources. He found no fault in doing this. Even Jesus Christ as a single man was crucified and died for the sins of other people. The people of the world literally watched the death of one person and did nothing. In the same way, it is also acceptable to have one half sacrificing for the betterment of the other half. When the intention is so pure, it could not be cared less about the way of execution.

Finally after getting all the six stones Thanos is stabbed in his heart and loses his breath and meets his daughter's soul. When his daughter asked what it cost him to get all the six stones, he replied "It cost everything" (Avengers Infinity War Part Three) with a smile. His smile revealed that Thanos himself has undergone so much of silent pain and suffering to make the world a new and a better one. As a reader or an observer one may fail to view the movie from the perspective of Thanos as the film itself projects Thanos as an evil force or as a villain to the avengers. While watching the movie, the viewers are tend to look at Thanos' gigantic figure, harsh nature, his quest to grab all the six stones, and killing of people. But looking at the movie from the point of view of Thanos, ultimately he becomes the real hero than all other super heroes. He becomes a hero by his heart and

good intention if it is not by his looks or by his nature. He is a hero prone to invisibility and he should be prone to visibility only by the response of a reader.

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