
**INTRODUCING OCEO-POSTCOLONIALISM: REFRAMING
POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE THROUGH THE LENS OF BLUE
HUMANITIES**

Arul. M

I MA English, University of Madras, Chepauk Campus, Chennai

Email ID - arulmoses004@gmail.com

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Abstract: Blue Humanities is an interdisciplinary field of study that explores the cultural, social, and ecological significance of the ocean and its intersections with human experiences. In literature, Blue Humanities offers a new lens for analysing and interpreting texts that engage with the ocean, its cultures, and its ecosystems. Exploring Postcolonialism through the lens of Blue Humanities brings a new study, which can be named as Oceo-Postcolonialism. This research paper explores Blue Humanities as an innovative framework in contemporary literature, with a specific focus on the ocean's role in postcolonialism. By analysing literary works from diverse postcolonial contexts, this study reveals how the ocean serves as a powerful symbol of struggle, freedom, independence, and oppression. The research demonstrates how Blue Humanities offers a paradigm shift in understanding the complex relationships between the ocean, colonialism, and postcolonial identities. This study contributes to the growing field of Blue Humanities, highlighting its potential to reshape our understanding of postcolonial literature and its engagement with the ocean as a site of resistance and liberation.

Keywords: Blue Humanities, Postcolonial Literature, Ocean Studies, Colonialism, Resistance, Liberation.

Introduction: The Blue Humanities is a field of study that examines the human-water relationship. Blue Humanities was mainly influenced by major literary movements like Postcolonialism and Ecocriticism. Blue Humanities discusses key concepts like oceanic thinking, hydro-criticism and aquatic epistemologies which helps this research to develop Oceo-Postcolonialism and explore the contribution of ocean in colonial texts. The ocean has long been a site of fascination, exploration, and exploitation, shaping human cultures, histories, and environments in profound ways. As a growing field of study, Blue Humanities offers a critical framework for analyzing the complex relationships between humans and the ocean. Writers like Rachel Carson, Amitav Ghosh, Steve Mentz and Derek Walcott have been instrumental in shaping the field of Blue Humanities. Carson's seminal work, "The Sea

"Around Us" (1951), laid the groundwork for oceanic literature. Ghosh's "The Hungry Tide" (2004) explored the Sundarbans' cultural and ecological significance. Walcott's "Omeros" (1990) wove together Caribbean history, mythology, and oceanic experience. Steve Mentz's "Shipwreck Modernity: Ecologies of Globalization, 1550-1719" (2015), known for its concept of 'Oceanic Thinking'. These writers, along with others, have helped establish Blue Humanities as a vibrant and interdisciplinary field of study. Their works continue to inspire new generations of scholars and writers. Blue Humanities draws on postcolonial theory to analyze the ocean's role in colonialism, imperialism, and globalization. Tracing these elements through close verbal analysis on ocean and ecocritical analysis, this research paper introduces Oceo-Postcolonialism, a term to address oceanic texts in the discourse of Postcolonialism.

Point Of Convergence:

Oceo-Postcolonialism is a combined study between Blue Humanities and Postcolonialism. Blue Humanities and Postcolonialism converge in various aspects and promote the same ideologies prominently which forms Oceo-Postcolonialism. Such points of convergence are,

- Challenging Dominant Narratives: Both Blue Humanities and Postcolonialism question dominant Western narratives and epistemologies, seeking to decentralize and diversify knowledge production. These two fields intersect in their critique of colonial and imperialist representations of the ocean, highlighting the need for more nuanced and inclusive understandings. Ocean becomes a symbol for uncontrollable spirit and resistance which is shadowed in Postcolonialism where the colonized people raise against the colonizer and resist the imperial and colonial mindset.
- Emphasis on Marginalised voices: Both fields prioritize the experiences, knowledge, and perspectives of indigenous and coastal communities, who have been historically marginalized and silenced. By amplifying subaltern voices, these fields share a commitment to amplifying the voices of subaltern groups, including those affected by colonialism, slavery, and environmental degradation.
- Analysing power structure and inequalities: Both fields examine the power dynamics and inequalities that shape human relationships with the ocean, including issues of access, exploitation, and environmental justice. Blue Humanities and Postcolonialism emphasize the ways in which marginalized communities resist and resilience in the face of colonialism, imperialism, and environmental degradation. Ocean helps to analyse the power dynamics and act as a tool to disclose freedom and liberty.
- Environmental justice and activism: Both fields emphasize the need for environmental justice and activism, highlighting the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation on marginalized communities. They also share a commitment to imagining sustainable futures and promoting oceanic stewardship, recognizing the importance of preserving the ocean's health and biodiversity for future generations.

Literary Analysis on Oceo-Postcolonialism:

Oceo-Postcolonialism is seen in various literary works where postcolonial writers use ocean as a symbol for various colonial aspects and also represent the ocean as a powerful tool to promote postcolonialism.

- **Freedom and Liberation:** The ocean represents freedom and liberation from colonial oppression, as seen in Derek Walcott's "Omeros". Achille, the protagonist of the poem, uses the ocean to escape from colonial rule. Ocean acted as a catalyst to the freedom and liberation of Achille. This symbolism is also seen in "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket" (1838) by Edgar Allan Poe and "Sea Wolf" (1904) by Jack London.
- **Resistance and Resilience:** Ocean represents resistance against colonialism and imperialism, and resilience in the face of oppression. "The Wretched of the Earth" (1961) by Frantz Fanon focused on the ocean as a symbol of resistance against colonial oppression.
- **Cultural Heritage and Identity:** Ocean symbolizes cultural heritage, connecting postcolonial communities to their ancestors, traditions, and histories. Especially in Carribean literature, writers use ocean as a powerful symbol to spotlight their true essence of writing and to bring their literary work to the canon. "Omeros" by Derek Walcott also stand as an example for this symbolism.
- **Displacement and Migration:** Ocean symbolizes the displacement and migration experiences of postcolonial communities, highlighting the complexities of identity and belonging. "The Namesake" (2003) by Jhumpa Lahiri stands as the best example. The ocean symbolizes the displacement and migration experiences of the protagonist's family, who travel from India to the United States who faced lots of hardships and obstacles.
- **Environmental Degradation:** Ocean represents the devastating impact of colonialism and imperialism on the environment, emphasizing the need for sustainability and conservation. This is evidently seen "Whale Rider" (1987) by Witi Ihimaera which highlights the devastating impact of colonialism and environmental degradation on the ocean and its inhabitants, emphasizing the need for sustainability and conservation.
- **Imperialism and Exploitation:** Ocean represents the exploitative and oppressive nature of colonialism and imperialism, highlighting the historical and ongoing struggles of postcolonial communities. "Heart of Darkness" (1899) by Joseph Conrad, although written during the colonial era, this novella critiques imperialism and exploitation, with the ocean serving as a symbol of the darkness and savagery that colonialism unleashes.

In postcolonial literature, the ocean is often represented as a complex and multifaceted symbol, reflecting the tumultuous histories and experiences of colonized communities. On one hand, the ocean represents freedom, liberation, and the promise of new beginnings, as seen in Derek Walcott's "Omeros", where the sea is a symbol of connection

to

the Caribbean's history and identity. On the other hand, the ocean also symbolizes displacement, migration, and the traumatic legacies of colonialism, as evident in Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake", where the ocean represents the protagonist's family's journey from India to the United States. Furthermore, postcolonial writers often highlight the ocean's role in the colonial project, critiquing the exploitation and degradation of marine resources, as seen in Amitav Ghosh's "The Hungry Tide". Through these diverse representations, postcolonial writers reclaim the ocean as a symbol of resistance, resilience, and cultural identity, challenging dominant narratives and forging new perspectives on the complex human-water relationship.

Religious Analysis on Oceo-Postcolonialism:

Oceo-Postcolonialism is also captured in religion texts like *Bible* and *Ramayanam*. Ocean becomes both an obstacle and also a catalyst to liberation. In the second book of *Bible*, 'Exodus', Moses, a Jewish leader saves his people from the colonial rule of Pharaoh, the King of Egypt. Here, the Red Sea act as a barrier for their journey to Canaan (their homeland). Moses hits the sea which separates it and makes it stand like walls. This act symbolises the resistance of the colonized countries. Later the sea comes back to its position to destroy the Pharaoh's army which came to destroy them. This incident, with sea as the central symbol, showcases how the ocean acts as a tool to destroy the oppressor and to promote decolonisation.

Similarly, in *Ramayanam* by Valmiki, Lord Ram with help of Nala and Nila (twin Vaanaram Brothers) build a bridge from Pamban Island (now called as Rameshwaram) to Lanka (now called as Srilanka) to bring his wife Seetha from the hands of the villain, Ravana. Here Ram uses the ocean to transport from Ayodhya to Lanka to bring back his wife and to this act ocean becomes the important support for him. Similarly, to the Postcolonial writers, ocean becomes an important symbol to speak back against the colonisers to get back their freedom.

Methodological Innovations:

Oceo-Postcolonialism can be analysed using new methodologies, which includes; Hydrocriticism, which combines literary analysis with hydrological and oceanographic insights; Oceanic Ecocriticism, which examines human-ocean relationships and environmental issues; Postcolonial Hydrology, which analyzes oceanic spaces in postcolonial texts; Blue Cultural Studies, which explores the cultural significance of the ocean; Transoceanic Studies, which analyzes connections between oceanic cultures; Eco-Oceanic Feminism, which examines intersections of feminism, ecology, and oceanic studies; and Oceanic Archipelagic Studies, which analyzes island cultures and oceanic spaces, offering innovative approaches to understanding human relationships with the ocean. These methodologies help to study Oceo-Postcolonialism more deeply and also elevates the need of decolonisation through the symbolisation of ocean.

Conclusion: Future directions for Oceo-Postcolonialism are vast and exciting, offering opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborations, innovative methodologies, and impactful applications. Integrating insights from oceanography, ecology, anthropology, and literary studies will foster a more nuanced understanding of human-ocean relationships. Collaborations between scholars, artists, and scientists will develop innovative representations of oceanic cultures, while digital humanities will provide new tools and platforms for analyzing, visualizing, and representing oceanic data and narratives. Oceo-Postcolonialism will also play a crucial role in developing ocean literacy and awareness among diverse audiences, from primary school students to community leaders. Moreover, this study will inform and support environmental activism and advocacy efforts, collaborating with indigenous communities, fishermen, and other stakeholders to develop sustainable and equitable ocean governance practices. Through Oceo-Postcolonialism, postcolonial and decolonial perspectives will continue to be centered in oceanic studies, highlighting the histories and experiences of marginalized communities and developing new methodologies and frameworks that account for complex power dynamics and cultural exchanges. As the field evolves, it will be essential to address the climate crisis, oceanic environmental degradation, and social injustices, promoting a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable relationship between humans and the ocean. By exploring these future directions, oceanic studies will continue to grow, expand, and make significant contributions to our understanding of the complex relationships between humans and the ocean.

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