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Oceanic Narratology: Narrative Strategies and Literary Representations in Indian English Fiction

Vimal A

Assistant Professor,
Department of English,
Stella Mary's College of Engineering, Aruthenganvilai, Kanniyakumari Dist, Tamil Nadu, India.
E-Mail: vimal99.a@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper articulates the conceptual and formal architecture of Oceanic Narratology within contemporary Indian English fiction, challenging the entrenched land-centric paradigms of postcolonial literary criticism. By shifting critical attention from terrestrial landscapes to fluid, littoral, and transoceanic geographies, this study investigates how Indian English novelists construct water not merely as a passive backdrop or allegorical symbol, but as an agentic, structuring force that reorders narrative form, temporality, and spatial ontology. Drawing upon the theoretical intersections of the Blue Humanities, posthuman feminist phenomenology, wet ontologies, and hydrocolonialism, the paper analyzes key literary representations across subcontinental, estuarine, and archipelagic spaces. Special emphasis is placed on how writers such as Amitav Ghosh, T.S. Pillai, and Tara Menon deploy tidal poetics, non-linear chronotopes, vernacular sea-lore, and interspecies ethics to counter imperial cartographies and Anthropocene climate crises. The study demonstrates that oceanic narratives dismantle national borders, foreground subaltern and nonhuman agencies, and construct fluid epistemologies essential for navigating contemporary planetary crises.

Keywords: Blue belonging, Narrative techniques, Maritime memory, Oceanic narratology, Posthumanism

1. Introduction

For decades, postcolonial literary criticism surrounding Indian English fiction has been dominated by terrocentric paradigms. Scholarly inquiry has historically privileged land-bound themes, focusing on subcontinental partition, agrarian distress, village postcolonialism, urban modernization, and nation-state border formation. In these traditional readings, the landscape serves as the primary canvas upon which political identity, caste hierarchies, and national histories are contested. Prominent literary works ranging from R.K. Narayan's fictional South Indian town of Malgudi to Mulk Raj Anand's agrarian topographies, Raja Rao's village-centered narratives, and Salman Rushdie's cartographic allegories of the postcolonial state have consistently reinforced the assumption that narrative meaning is rooted in solid ground. However, the escalation of global ecological degradation, combined with the theoretical emergence of Critical Ocean Studies and the Blue Humanities, has catalyzed a profound paradigm shift an 'oceanic turn' in literary studies

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(Mentz, 2015; Vinai, 2021). This shift demands a radical recalibration of spatial and narrative hermeneutics, moving away from fixed, dry land toward the volatile, three-dimensional materiality of planetary waters.

The oceanic turn complicates the territorial limits of the nation-state by tracing transoceanic migrations, diaspora, imperial mercantile routes, and nonhuman ecological currents (DeLoughrey, 2019). Within the context of South Asia, the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal have functioned for millennia as vibrant arenas of cultural exchange, forced labor mobility, trade, and cosmological mythmaking (Amrith, 2013). Long before European cartographers mapped the region into rigid territorial boundaries, seasonal monsoon winds facilitated fluid connections between the Indian subcontinent, East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and Southeast Asia. Despite this deep maritime heritage, early postcolonial Indian English fiction often relegated marine spaces to the periphery, treating the sea as a static void, an insuperable barrier, or a romantic metaphor for existential alienation.

Contemporary Indian English fiction engages with what can be termed Oceanic Narratology, a literary strategy wherein the physical, ecological, and socio-historical properties of water actively dictate narrative design. Rather than conforming to linear plot structures anchored in stable geography, oceanic narratives adopt fluid, cyclical, and turbulent temporalities that mirror the ebb and flow of tides, monsoon currents, and cyclonic surges (James, 2015). In the works of Amitav Ghosh, the aquatic environment disrupts the cartographic certainty of colonial and nationalist mapping, revealing the fragility of human infrastructure in the face of dynamic ecosystems like the Sundarbans mangrove delta (Ghosh, 2004; Nayar, 2010). Water emerges not as a surface to be crossed or conquered, but as a dynamic medium characterized by volume, depth, opacity, and agency (Steinberg & Peters, 2015).

Furthermore, Oceanic Narratology provides an essential framework for addressing the Anthropocene. As sea levels rise, oceanic temperatures surge, and extreme weather events intensify across the Indian Ocean rim, literature must evolve formal techniques capable of representing deep geological time and transoceanic ecological interdependencies (Neimanis, 2017; Nixon, 2011). By examining the narrative strategies employed to depict littoral environments, fishing communities, and open ocean crossings, this paper establishes how Indian English fiction creates an alternative hydro-epistemology, one that foregrounds vulnerability, interspecies ethics, and transoceanic connectivity over extractivism and territorial sovereignty (Hofmeyr, 2022).

2. Objectives of the Study

1) To deconstruct terrocentric spatialities in postcolonial Indian English.

2) To evaluate how the concept of ‘wet ontologies’ disrupts cartographic boundaries, linear plot progressions, and nation-state frameworks.

3) To analyze the intersections of hydrocolonialism, imperial maritime trade, and forced subaltern mobilities.

4) To interrogate how vernacular sea-lore, indigenous cosmological myths, and nonhuman marine agency.

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5) To examine how contemporary climate trauma and the condition of 'shipwreck modernity' reshape temporal structures and formal mechanics in Anthropocene oceanic fiction.

3. Research Gap

While environmental humanities scholarship has expanded rapidly over the past two decades, postcolonial ecocriticism in South Asian literary studies has remained predominantly land-oriented. Existing scholarship frequently focuses on agrarian struggles, deforestation, urban pollution, and terrestrial environmental justice movements (Heise et al., 2023; Rose, 2017). Where water is analyzed, critical attention is often restricted to freshwater rivers or localized irrigation politics, leaving marine, estuarine, and transoceanic spaces severely under-theorized within Indian English literary criticism.

Moreover, while early maritime studies focused primarily on human history, trade networks, and geopolitical control across oceans, there remains a critical gap in analyzing how the materiality of the ocean shapes narrative form itself. Existing literary evaluations of authors like Amitav Ghosh often treat marine settings as passive backgrounds for political or postcolonial drama rather than exploring how aquatic logic transforms narratological mechanics like characterization, focalization, temporal order, and spatial framing.

Furthermore, current Blue Humanities discourse is heavily weighted toward Western, Euro-American, or Pacific Indigenous contexts (DeLoughrey, 2019). There is a distinct lack of an integrated theoretical model that synthesizes postcolonial hydrocolonialism, South Asian maritime history, and posthuman hydro-poetics specifically tailored to Indian English fiction. This paper directly addresses this lacuna by establishing Oceanic Narratology as a rigorous theoretical framework that bridges South Asian literary studies, environmental humanities, and formal narrative theory.

4. Methodology

This study employs a multi-disciplinary theoretical and hermeneutic methodology that synthesizes formal narrative analysis with critical spatial theory, postcolonial ecocriticism, and the Blue Humanities. The methodological approach operates across three distinct interpretive scales such as narrative form, critical theory, and textual analysis.

At the scale of narrative form, the paper utilizes eco-narratological techniques to examine how aquatic environments influence narrative architecture (James, 2015). This involves analyzing focalization, narrative voice, temporal order, and spatial framing to determine how texts mirror the fluidity, turbulence, and cyclical nature of oceanic systems. The analysis investigates how narrative perspective shifts between human protagonists and nonhuman marine entities, thereby displacing anthropocentric narrative authority.

At the theoretical scale, the study establishes an integrative hydro-critical framework. It synthesizes Philip Steinberg and Kimberley Peters' concept of 'wet ontologies' (2015) which conceptualizes space as volume, movement, and dynamic depth rather than flat, static surface with Isabel Hofmeyr's theory of 'hydrocolonialism' (2022), which examines how maritime environments interact with imperial governance, customs regulation, and print culture. This is further enriched

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by Astrida Neimanis's posthuman feminist phenomenology of 'bodies of water' (2017) and Steve Mentz's 'poetics of planetary water' and 'shipwreck modernity' (2015).

At the textual scale, the study conducts comparative qualitative readings of representative Indian English and translated coastal fictions. The primary text corpus includes Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004) and *Gun Island* (2019), T.S. Pillai's coastal classic *Chemmeen* (1956), and contemporary environmental fiction such as Tara Menon's *Under Water* (2026). Historical and historiographical insights from Sunil Amrith's *Crossing the Bay of Bengal* (2013) and Maya Vinai's research on maritime folklore (2021) are seamlessly woven into the textual analysis to ground theoretical abstractions in South Asian socio-maritime realities.

5. Theoretical Framework

5.1 Wet Ontologies and Fluid Geographies

Central to oceanic thinking is the concept of 'wet ontologies' articulated by human geographers Philip Steinberg and Kimberley Peters (2015). Traditional spatial theory, heavily influenced by terrestrial bias, conceptualizes space as a flat, fixed, two-dimensional surface over which human history unfolds. In contrast, a wet ontology demands an engagement with space as continuous volume, depth, movement, and transformation. The ocean is not a solid platform, it is a turbulent, three-dimensional medium where physical properties change dynamically across depth, salinity, temperature, and current (Steinberg & Peters, 2015).

Applying wet ontologies to literary theory destabilizes traditional narratological structures. When narrative action is situated within or across aquatic volumes, conventional plot developments based on fixed boundaries, permanent settlements, and static cartography dissolve. Narrative form must adapt to liquid spaces where terrain is constantly built, unbuilt, and rearranged by tides and currents, forcing characters and narrators to navigate world-making practices defined by drift, instability, and permeability (Peters & Steinberg, 2019).

5.2 Hydrocolonialism and Imperial Maritime Networks

While the ocean is often idealized as a space of absolute freedom or romantic transcendence, postcolonial ocean humanities insist on reading maritime spaces through the lens of power, extractivism, and imperial dominance. Isabel Hofmeyr defines 'hydrocolonialism' as a framework for analyzing the complex ways in which colonial expansion, maritime law, print culture, custom houses, and shipping infrastructures colonized water worlds (Hofmeyr, 2022). Hydrocolonialism examines how empire sought to discipline fluid space by imposing legal jurisdictions, regulating maritime trade, and tracking the movement of indentured labor (coolies) and commodities across transoceanic routes.

In Indian English fiction, hydrocolonialism exposes how the British Empire transformed the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal into arenas of resource extraction, militarization, and forced migration. Oceanic Narratology incorporates hydrocolonial critique to analyze how subaltern sailors, indentured laborers, and coastal communities resisted imperial maritime governance, retaining vernacular sea-lore and counter-hegemonies of ocean movement (Vinai, 2021).

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5.3 Poetics of Planetary Water and Shipwreck Modernity

Steve Mentz's eco-critical framework proposes a 'poetics of planetary water' that challenges both terrestrial complacency and tranquil pastoralism. Mentz argues that human history and literature are fundamentally shaped by 'shipwreck modernity' the recognition that human beings exist in a state of ongoing survival amidst the ecological and technological wreckage of modernity. Ocean-logic forces narrative literature to abandon utopian dreams of absolute control over nature, substituting them with a chaotic, turbulent reality where survival demands resilience, movement, and adaptation (Mentz, 2015).

Within Oceanic Narratology, shipwreck modernity provides theoretical tools to analyze literary representations of sudden environmental disasters, cyclonic storms, and marine collapse. It replaces the classic heroic arc of conquest with an ethics of swimming, drifting, and adapting to unstable, changing fluid environments.

5.4 Posthuman Feminist Hydro-Phenomenology

Astrida Neimanis's concept of 'Bodies of Water' extends posthumanism and feminist phenomenology by asserting that human beings are fundamentally watery entities, physically and ecologically continuous with planetary hydrological cycles. Neimanis dismantles the illusion of the autonomous, self-contained human subject enclosed within an impermeable sac of skin. Instead, water connects human bodies across species, geographies, and temporalities through cycles of ingestion, transpiration, gestation, and excretion (Neimanis, 2017).

This hydro-phenomenological perspective allows Oceanic Narratology to trace interspecies ethics and corporeal vulnerability in coastal and ocean fiction. It highlights how human identity in littoral spaces is continuously permeable to nonhuman marine life from microscopic plankton to river dolphins and deep-sea megafauna, thereby establishing a posthuman ethics of responsibility toward marine ecosystems.

6. Discussion and Analysis

6.1 Tidal Poetics and Spatial Fluidity in Deltaic Landscapes

The theoretical convergence of wet ontologies and narrative form finds its most compelling expression in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004). Set in the fragile mangrove archipelago of the Sundarbans in the Bay of Bengal, the novel presents a landscape defined not by solid earth, but by the relentless, bi-daily rise and fall of the tide. In this 'tide country,' islands are born and submerged daily, mangroves erase cartographic boundaries, and fresh water from Himalayan rivers continuously mixes with the saline water of the sea (Ghosh, 2004).

Ghosh constructs a narrative architecture that directly mirrors this tidal ecology, enacting what can be termed a 'tidal poetics.' The novel dismantles terrestrial spatial stability by contrasting two distinct epistemological modes of knowing the water world as the instrumental, satellite-driven scientific cartography of Piya Roy, an Indian-American marine biologist, and the embodied, sensory hydro-knowledge of Fokir Mondol, an illiterate local fisherman (Ghosh, 2004). Piya arrives equipped with high-tech GPS devices, rangefinders, and visual binoculars, viewing the delta

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through a lens of scientific abstraction. However, as the tidal landscape actively shifts under her feet, her instruments repeatedly fail to capture the fluid reality of the aquatic environment.

In contrast, Fokir possesses an intuitive, tactile, and acoustic understanding of the waters. He reads the depth of channels through the vibration of his wooden paddle, senses underwater silt shifts, and tracks the rare Orcaella dolphins by listening to their breathing patterns. Fokir's knowledge exemplifies Steinberg and Peters' 'wet ontology' (2015) he does not perceive the river as a flat surface connecting point A to point B, but as a dynamic, three-dimensional volume of moving currents, sub-surface topography, and nonhuman life.

This epistemological friction is formally encoded into the novel's narrative structure. Ghosh divides the book into two major parts, 'Ebb' and 'Flow,' structural designations that directly tie the text's pacing and thematic development to hydrological cycles. The narrative alternatingly zooms in on microscopic aquatic encounters and expands to encompass geological deep time. The spatial fluidity of the Sundarbans systematically undermines the state's attempts to enforce rigid legal and cartographic borders. The violent history of the 1979 Morichjhapi massacre, where the West Bengal state forcibly evicted subaltern Bangladeshi refugees from a tidal island in the name of wildlife conservation exposes the tragic hypocrisy of land-based, state-centric environmental governance. The state views the delta as fixed territory to be mapped, partitioned, and militarized; the novel's tidal poetics reveals that such terrestrial hubris is ultimately overwhelmed by the oceanic forces of the delta.

When a catastrophic cyclone strikes in the novel's climax, human social hierarchies dissolve in the face of planetary waters. Fokir sacrifices his life to shield Piya from the furious storm surge, binding his body to a mangrove tree alongside her. This scene enacts a visceral, posthuman fluid ethics as human survival ceases to be an individualistic, land-bound conquest and becomes an exercise in vulnerability, mutual dependence, and physical attunement to oceanic turbulence (Neimanis, 2017).

6.2 Transoceanic Mobilities, Hydrocolonial Networks, and Subaltern Kinship

Moving from localized littoral deltas to open oceanic expanses, Oceanic Narratology provides critical tools for analyzing transoceanic mobilities, historical trauma, and imperial exploitation across the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. Historically, the Indian Ocean was a space of vibrant, fluid global exchange long before the rise of European maritime hegemony. However, nineteenth-century British imperialism systematically transformed this aquatic highway into a disciplined hydrocolonial network designed to extract raw materials and transport forced indentured labor.

In Amitav Ghosh's Ibis Trilogy (*Sea of Poppies, River of Smoke, Flood of Fire*), the narrative space is centered on the Ibis, a former slave ship reconditioned to transport opium and coolies across the Indian Ocean. Ghosh deploys a transoceanic narrative strategy that dismantles the nation-state novel. The ship functions as a microcosm of imperial hydrocolonialism a floating prison governed by strict racial hierarchies, maritime law, and commercial extractivism. Yet, simultaneously, the

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fluid environment of the open sea enables the formation of unexpected, subaltern solidarity among the diverse passengers on board.

As the Ibis cuts across the Bay of Bengal, traditional terrestrial categories of caste, religion, language, and gender begin to disintegrate. The indentured laborers, drawn from disparate agrarian regions of northern India, are transformed by the shared trauma of oceanic passage into jahaj-bhais (ship-siblings). The shared experience of sea-sickness, storms, and displacement creates new relational kinship structures that defy subcontinental social stratification. Here, narrative focus shifts from individual heroic agency to collective oceanic mobility.

The historical reality of hydrocolonialism, as Isabel Hofmeyr argues, relies heavily on administrative infrastructures such as custom houses, port authorities, and maritime censuses designed to control fluid movement (Hofmeyr, 2022). In Indian English fiction, this bureaucratic discipline is constantly subverted by the material resistance of the ocean itself. In *Sea of Poppies*, monsoon storms, shifting currents, and shipboard rebellions repeatedly disrupt imperial schedules. The polyphonic linguistic landscape of the ship, a rich dialect composed of Hindustani, Bengali, Lascari sailor jargon, Malay, and nautical English serves as a narrative manifestation of transoceanic hybridity, challenging the monolingual authority of colonial administration.

By mapping these watery itineraries, Indian English fiction restores the memory of forgotten subaltern oceanic migrations. As historian Sunil Amrith notes, the Bay of Bengal was forged through the sweat and sacrifice of millions of Indian migrants who crossed the sea to labor in rubber plantations, timber yards, and dockyards across Southeast Asia. Oceanic Narratology integrates this historiographical reality into literary analysis, demonstrating how the postcolonial Indian English novel uses transoceanic itineraries to challenge narrow, land-bound definitions of national identity and postcolonial citizenship.

6.3 Vernacular Hydro-Epistemologies, Myth, and Interspecies Ethics

A central component of Oceanic Narratology is its capacity to amplify vernacular maritime knowledges and nonhuman agency, offering a radical critique of neoliberal, extractivist views of the ocean. For centuries, coastal fishing communities across South India and the Bay of Bengal have developed rich oral traditions, cosmological myths, and ecological taboos that regulate human interactions with marine ecosystems (Pillai, 1956).

A foundational text illustrating this vernacular hydro-epistemology is Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's classic coastal novel *Chemmeen* (1956), which, through its widely read English translations, occupies a seminal position in Indian maritime literature. Set among the Hindu fishing community of the Malabar coast, the novel's narrative engine is driven by the myth of Kadalamma (Mother Sea). According to coastal lore, the safety of a fisherman out on the treacherous open ocean depends entirely on the moral purity and fidelity of his wife remaining on shore. If she transgresses social taboos, Kadalamma will unleash her fury, summoning a giant sea monster or a monstrous whirlpool to swallow the fisherman whole (Pillai, 1956).

While early sociopolitical readings criticized Chemmeen for reinforcing patriarchal taboos, an oceanic narratological lens reveals a complex ecological undercurrent. The myth of Kadalamma

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functions as a vernacular framework for recognizing nonhuman ocean agency. The sea in Chemmeen is not an inanimate, exploitable resource as it is a living, moral, and agentic entity that demands humility, restraint, and reverence from human communities. The novel's tragedy unfolds precisely when human characters allow personal desires and commercial greed to breach this ecological and spiritual covenant with the ocean (Pillai, 1956).

In modern Indian English literature, this engagement with nonhuman agency expands to embrace posthuman interspecies ethics. In *The Hungry Tide*, the river dolphin is framed not as a passive object of scientific inquiry, but as an agentic co-inhabitant of the estuarine ecosystem. Ghosh attributes distinct behavioral intelligence and communicative capacities to the dolphins, highlighting how Fokir and the mammals engage in a co-operative fishing practice that has sustained the delta for generations (Ghosh, 2004).

Similarly, Maya Vinai's research into coastal folklore like oral traditions of Marakkalathamma in Southern India, demonstrates how maritime mythologies construct counter-narratives against imperial and modern capitalist ocean governance. These vernacular narratives recognize that human communities are embedded within wider ecosystems, echoing Astrida Neimanis's posthuman claim that human bodies are continuous with the bodies of water they inhabit. By incorporating these mythic and sensory modalities into narrative form, Indian English fiction challenges Western scientific instrumentalism, presenting a world where nonhuman marine agents actively shape human destiny.

6.4 Temporal Compression, Shipwreck Modernity, and Anthropocene Climate Trauma

As the Anthropocene accelerates, the representation of oceanic space in Indian English fiction has become increasingly entangled with climate trauma, extreme weather phenomena, and deep temporal compression (Menon, 2026). In Steve Mentz's terms, contemporary climate fiction operates under the condition of ‘shipwreck modernity,’ where ecological crises are no longer distant future threats, but an ongoing, lived reality of storm surges, thermal expansion, and coastal erosion.

Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019) explicitly operationalizes Oceanic Narratology to address the global nature of Anthropocene climate change. The novel constructs a transoceanic narrative corridor that connects the endangered mangrove islands of the Sundarbans directly to the flooding lagoons of Venice. Ghosh utilizes a non-linear, uncanny temporal structure to demonstrate how oceanic warming and extreme weather events collapse geographical distances.

In *Gun Island*, the displacement of littoral communities in Bengal due to rising sea levels drives a wave of undocumented climate refugees across the Mediterranean Sea. The narrative links nineteenth-century folklore, the myth of the Merchant fleeing the wrath of the Snake Goddess across the seas with contemporary climate migration. By weaving ancient maritime myth with modern hydro-climatic reality, Ghosh demonstrates that planetary waters act as conductors of deep historical time. The ocean becomes a portal through which historical trauma and future ecological collapse collide in the present moment.

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This temporal and spatial reconfiguration is similarly analyzed in contemporary works such as Tara Menon's *Under Water* (2026). Menon's narrative framework deploys an experimental, non-linear chronology that mirrors the rising and receding of floodwaters during catastrophic ocean surges. By utilizing econarratological strategies, the text fragments traditional linear plots, creating a 'wet ontology' where human characters experience climate trauma not as a singular event, but as a continuous, ambient immersion in fluid instability (Menon, 2026)

The shift from terrestrial narrative paradigms to oceanic Anthropocene narratives fundamentally alters literary composition across multiple formal dimensions:

(i) Spatiality moves from static, bordered land masses to dynamic, three-dimensional oceanic volumes and unstable littoral zones.

(ii) Temporal structure shifts from linear, progressive national histories to cyclical tidal rhythms, sudden cyclonic disruptions, and geological deep time.

(iii) Agency expands beyond the anthropocentric human hero to encompass nonhuman marine species, oceanic currents, and atmospheric forces.

(iv) Political scope broadens from insular nation-state borders to transoceanic migration corridors, imperial trade networks, and planetary fluid interdependencies.

7. Summation

This study demonstrates that 'Oceanic Narratology' provides a critical hermeneutic framework for reading Indian English fiction in the twenty-first century. By systematically deconstructing the terrocentric bias of traditional postcolonial literary theory, oceanic readings expose how aquatic environments disrupt linear timelines, nation-state borders, and anthropocentric narrative authority.

The synthesis of wet ontologies, hydrocolonialism, posthuman hydro-phenomenology, and planetary water poetics yields profound insights into the formal and thematic evolution of South Asian literature as:

At the level of spatial ontology, writers like Amitav Ghosh reframe littoral regions such as the Sundarbans not as marginal zones, but as dynamic hydro-geographical centers that defy state mapping and legal enclosure. In these tidal landscapes, spatial reality is defined by volume, depth, and constant movement, forcing narrative form to adopt fluid, adaptive structures.

At the historical and political level, applying a hydrocolonial lens reveals the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal as contested spaces of imperial discipline, labor exploitation, and subaltern resistance. Transoceanic novelistic itineraries restore visibility to subaltern mariners (lascars) and indentured migrants (coolies), replacing insular nationalist narratives with polyphonic, cross-oceanic histories of solidarity and mobility.

At the ecological and posthuman level, oceanic narratives foreground vernacular sea-lore and nonhuman marine agency. Through texts like *Chemmeen* and *The Hungry Tide*, water acts as an agentic participant in world-making, demanding an interspecies ethics that recognizes human physical continuity with planetary bodies of water.

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Finally, in the context of the Anthropocene, Oceanic Narratology articulates the condition of 'shipwreck modernity,' providing formal techniques to narrate climate trauma, storm surges, and sea-level rise. Non-linear plot designs and cyclonic chronotopes connect distant geographies across planetary waters, asserting that human destiny in the Anthropocene is inextricably bound to the turbulence of the world's oceans.

8. Future Research

Future research should expand oceanic frameworks beyond major estuarine deltas to focus on the distinct archipelagic literature of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Lakshadweep archipelago, and Sri Lanka. Exploring archipelagic narratology will provide nuanced understandings of island isolation, indigenous sovereignty, and militarized ocean spaces.

Moreover, as deep-sea mining, offshore oil drilling, and seabed privatization escalate in the Indian Ocean, literary scholarship must engage with sub-surface narratives. Research should investigate how literature represents the invisible, bathyal depths of the ocean floor and the ecological impacts of subsea resource extraction.

Comparative studies bridging Indian English fiction with untranslated coastal vernacular literature in Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi, Bengali, Odia, and Gujarati, will enrich Blue Humanities discourse. Unearthing local folk songs, fishing songs, and coastal rituals will provide a more comprehensive mapping of South Asian hydro-epistemologies.

Furthermore, integrating GIS mapping, narrative visualization software, and computational literary text-mining tools can help scholars trace transoceanic plot movements and climatic temporalities across massive corpora of Indian Ocean literature.

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