

DECOLONIZING THE TIDES: OCEANIC ONTO-LOGIC OF AMNIOTICS AND HYDRO FEMINISM RECLAMATION IN WITI IHIMAERA'S THE WHALE RIDER

¹R.Reehan & ²Dr. C. Govindaraj, Ph.D..

¹Ph.D Research Scholar (F/T), Department of English, Periyar University Centre for PG and Research Studies, Dharmapuri - 635 205, Tamil Nadu.

Mobile No: 8072848598 E-mail: reehan.rafeek88@gmail.com

²Professor & Head, Department of English, Periyar University Centre for PG and Research Studies, Dharmapuri- 635 205, Tamil Nadu.

Mobile No: 9942031053 E-mail: drgovindpupgeec@periyaruniversity.ac.in

Abstract

The paper investigates on Blue humanities emphases on the bond between humans and the ocean, it explores how oceanic bodies shape human lives. Hydro feminism links feminist thought with water to explore ideas about fluidity, interconnection and Marine Ecosystem. Hydro feminism moves beyond thinking of the human, as separate as bodies, or superior like water's flow across boundaries, here water consider as global archive of meaning and matter. The key concepts of Hydro feminism are Adrift, Viscous porosity, Trans corporeal, Ecotone. Witi Ihimaera's novel The Whale Rider, represents whale as one of the most powerful and important symbol. The whale is directly connected to Paikea, the legendary ancestor, who came to New Zealand horsy on the back of a whale. The Maori community constantly taken efforts to conserve the sea and whale. Wet Ontologies emphasizes on the ocean as spaces, fluid, dynamic characteristics of water, aquatic species existence, material and cultural challenges. This article suggests the features of Hydro feminism and Wet Ontologies relates with the character in the selected novel The Whale Rider by Witi Ihimaera. Hydro feminism theory and situation acts as healer, removes the gender discrimination and Wet Ontologies renews a sense of justice to their ancestral knowledge. Both theories come together in survival and renewal depend on re-joining human and non-human and water relations through feminist care and oceanic interconnectedness.

Keywords: *Viscous porosity, Trans corporeal, Ecotone, Interpermeating*

Introduction

Steve Mentz coined the term blue humanities or oceanic studies, here term blue represents the visual and symbolic relationship with water. Oceanic advocacy and marine conservation. It accepts the non-human life and rejects human centeredness. Oceanic antiquity deeply encourages more than human beliefs where ocean is not just a scenery but a soul. 'aquatic spaces between and around areas of land [that] have been fundamental to social groups livelihoods and, consequently, to their senses of identity and belonging'. (Magan 3)

Hydro feminism theory introduced by Astrida Neimanis, which interpretations embodiment as watery, highlighting interconnectedness and fluidity. It expresses the ideas of women's bodies which stressing on water's transformative, gestational, and connective properties. Water act as a medium for understanding interdependence. 'Everyone has to sustain in their relationship by understanding their counterpart logically. The world of men is different from that of women.'(Govindaraj and Aujo Philip 2)The key concepts of Hydro feminism are Adrift, Viscous porosity, Trans corporeal, Ecotone. Adrift helps to understand the changes in Hydro logos, interactive and intertwined with ocean. Trans corporeal perspective, explaining the responsible and responsive boundaries between bodies and ocean. Viscous porosity explains the interdependence and ethical responsibility. Ecotone is the shift which occur between different Ecosystem.

Wet Ontologies provides view point for understanding the ocean's material flows, connection, liquidities, volume. Material flow represents multiple manifestations and flows actively participate in shaping human lives, however it, facilitate the reimagining and re-enlivening. Ocean's liquidities approaches wetness. Ocean's liquid volume for rethinking space, time and motion. All together focus on materiality properties this proceeds to the ocean goes beyond the liquid form, they are 'The ocean within' consider as materiality, wetness permeates within bodies that inhabit, constitute and transcend the marine environment. 'The ocean beyond 'conceive to beyond the liquid wetness in ocean as the universal system. 'The ocean imagined' represents the ocean as power in excess as stories, dreams and imaginings, here the material form and capabilities intertwine and transforms to other elements.

The sea presents us with a space that is emergent through a particular composition of matter and forces. In turn, this hydro-elemental assemblage allows us to re-think motion and matter and how it shapes the world as we know it. (Steinberg, Philip E and Kimberley Peters 52)

The Whale Rider novel is published in the year 1987 by Witi Ihimaera. He was the foremost Maori writer to publish a collection of short stories and novel. A memoir of childhood is the first Ihimaera's memoirs. It received the award for General non-fiction, Ockham New Zealand book award in 2016. It was adopted as Film in 2002. The novel set in Whangara, a Maori community on the eastern edge New Zealand's North Island, the novel is being retelling of the myth of Paikea. Blue Humanities explores ocean and aquatic environment. Hydro feminism enhances a feminism. In Wet Ontology water performs the role as material element and a living relational presence that shapes identities and communities. These concept is embodied with watery connections, interspecies connection and considering the boundaries of self, other human and ocean. This paper analysing the Maori community, interconnection of blue humanities, the key concepts of Hydro feminism and Wet ontologies relate with characters to secure the ocean and whale.

I am a singular, dynamic, whorl dissolving in a complex, fluid circulation. The space between ourselves and our others is at once a distance as the primeval sea, yet also closer than our own skin_ the traces of those same oceanic beginnings still cycling through us, pausing as this body thing we call "mine". (Gunkel, et al.85).

Parvathy Rajan (2023) in his article, *Celebrating The Canon: Blue Humanities as A Burgeoning Literary Genre* describes the Blue Humanities, Ocean studies, Cultural studies, Thalassology. Satish (2012) in his article, *A Postcolonial Analysis of Witi Ihimera's the Whale Rider*, focusing on Cultural Deformity and Identity Crisis as Themes of Analysis explains Marginalization, Maori, Self-representation, Post colonialism. Denning, L.R. (2022) *Developing a hydrofeminist art practice: bodies, spaces, practices* in his thesis explain the Hydro feminism, Trans corporeal, Ecotone.

Astride Neimanis (2015) in her articles, *Bodies of water, Human Rights and the Hydro commons* describes the onto-logic of Amniotics and water commodification and water resources. so far the researches are conducted with a frame works of Postcolonial, Tradition, Culture and Maori community. The

researcher has employed the theoretical frame work of Hydro feminism and wet ontologies for this study.

Onto-Logic Amnotics

The herd of whales leads by his master Bull whale. He feared about mankind cause damages to nature. Bull whale remembers the olden days where man and animal were united communicate one another, here ocean is considered as Amniotics of whale, it carries joy and sorrow of them of life and transforms from one mode to other but Kahu and whale devote their life for wellbeing of Maori community. 'You have called and I have come, bearing the gifts of the gods' (Ihimaera 4)

Koro is the present leader of the Maori community of Whangara. He is the great –grand father of Kahu. Porourangai the elder grandson of family, his wife Rehue, gives birth to female child Kahu. She broke the male descent line, now she is an eldest daughter of her Family.

The onto- logic of amniotic does not suggest that all bodies of water are the same in terms of their, but rather that bodies of water share a way of being because they are bodies of water. the amnion materializes a mode of relational being that is certainly trans corporeal – transiting across and between bodies- but a kind of transit that also nurtures and facilitates other bodies, while also differentiating them. (Neimani 95)

Koro bitterly gets disappoint with Kahu's birth. He is eagerly waiting to find the right successors to his chieftaincy. Nanny Flowers, wife of Koro, she tries to convince her husband but she going against her husband so strongly because she wants him to appreciate the beautiful birth of their great-grandchild. Here, the amniotic articulates in three modes common logics, bodies of water as differentiating, bodies of water as interconnecting and interpermeating.

Gestational waters in a creature acts as oceanic water that sustain us, protect us and nurture us. Water connects human beings from one scale of life to other scale. however, all Water bodies are constitutional, the genealogical and the geographical sense. Amniotics articulates as common logic as Rehua, Mother of Kahu, eager to name her daughter their ancestor name. Porourangai, her husband, decides to name the baby Kahu, but, Bodies of water as differentiating, Koro is angry because, Kahu Kahutia Te Rangi is the name of chief ancestor of the community. In Koro's thought naming a girl after the hero is an insult to his ancestor.

The whales are sacred, which is considered as guardians of the tribe and messengers of ocean and human, The Bull whale is directly connected to

Kahu Kahutia Te Rangi (Paikea), the legendary ancestor, here the Bull Whale has tattoo on its head which creates the mystical bond between them. He came to New Zealand horsy on the back of a whale. Koro never allows Nany to bury Kahu's birth cord in whagara because she is female in their family and finally she buries. As she is principled women standing up for what they believe to be right, which goes along with the purpose of Maori community. 'She is of Porourangi's blood and yours, Nani Flowers said to him. It is her right to have her right to have her birth cord here this on this ground' . (Ihimaera 16) Unfortunately, Rehue died. She was brought up by maternal grandparents.

Transmutation in Kahu

Koro as a hero fighting to preserve Maori culture he started the school and he is searching for a Male to be the leader for his community. He says, once human was able to talk to animals and befriended the whales. But now, when humans grew apart the sacredness, and so the gift of speaking to animals sly disappeared. In the summer leave Kahu comes to Whangara, her great grandfather avoids her. Her uncle Rawiri shows love on her, once he took her to the film, she saw haunting whale scene. She started crying, it continues for three hours, she considers ocean to "Women as Womb" it shows her love for the ocean and whale. Her desire for water is Essentialist, as she changes from one state to another state (transmutation). Water turns as transformative, gestational, and connective properties to her.

As a consequence, non-human animals will be addressed here with personal pronouns, that otherwise there might not be a paradigm change from man's supremacism and speciesism, also paying respect to Witi Ihimaera's guiding authorial choices, in tune with neo materialists' views on human vs nonhuman relationships. (Lingue 156)

Interdependence and Ethical Responsibility

Kahu becoming a mature girl. She is studying in Koro's school. She is the star of her culture group, that she has a great love for the Maori songs and dances. In her school's cultural closing ceremony. She invites all her family with fancy and sincere cards and everyone arrives. When the hall crowds up, Kahu brings Nanny a seat, right next to another seat marked reserved. she looks at the seat for Koro, will come but, Koro has no plans at all of coming to see his great-granddaughter's performance.

And I felt so proud of her, so proud, and so sad that Koro Apirana was not there to hear how much she loved him. And I wanted to shout, well done, good for you, to this young girl who was not really so brave and

who would have liked the support of the one person who was never there –her Koro (Ihimaera 69).

Kahu is the leader of her group, leading them with a firm hand and strong voice. She is determined to make her family proud. However, with every section that passed, Kahu's bright face grew more and more dim. Kahu had realized Koro was not coming. She understands vulnerability his heart. She gave the speech, expressing love and respect for Koro, Maori tongue, genealogy and tradition. Ihimaera conveys the vulnerability of Koro

This is a universal story, that these themes of inherited power and the clash between the contemporary and the traditional, the familial love and the obligations that Koro the chief has that get in his way of exercising that familial love, the role of a woman in society – those were things that it didn't matter where you came from in the world, you were familiar with these things. (Hokowhitu 54)

Koro takes some boys to the shore to give them a test. After he takes them to the centre of the sea, he throws the carved stone and casts it into the water. He asked the boys that one of them must retrieve it. Though the several attempt taken, none of them reach the sea floor. It shows their inability. So Koro returns to his home and weeps.

The Maori authors wrote mostly on the themes of love for mother land, identity crisis, postcolonial effects and the relation between man and nature. Oral tradition was one of the powerful weapons used by Maori people within their community. Only during the nineteenth century, written literature emerged. Maori literature showcases the Maori cultural heritage and their own identity. The Maori language is packed with the richness of culture and tradition .(Napoli79)

Kahu understands her great-grandfather worries and she decides to retrieve the stone, without any safety measure. She dives into the sea with help of Nanny and Rawiri. She has some power to communicate with some dolphins. She retrieves the stone and she returns to the boat. Here, these incidents describe viscous porosity, it draws an attention to both past and future problems, to resist and oppose with open possibilities. Here Kahu wants space time differentiation to convenience herself to sweep away from gender discrimination like the sea. Water serves as a medium for understanding interdependence and ethical responsibility in her:

The concept of fluidity emphasizes traversals across and between bodies, viscosity reminds still bodies-all different- that need to be accounted for. Viscosity draws attention to "sites of resistance and opposition" rather than only "a notion of open possibilities" that might suggest one discrimination flow (Gunkel, et al. 91).

Adrift

Bull Whale remembers the rider diving through the oceans in pure harmony. In this ride, he forgets bitterness, anger and sadness. Only the love for Whale persists, now the phase changed, the Rider married and settled down. One day, in the end of the ride, both bid farewell to each other. 'The ocean within' consider as despite all his anger, sadness and love. Materiality, permeates within bodies that inhabit, constitute and transcend the marine environment. Both stays with emotional bonding.

At present, now the bull whale must deal with the problems, He is leading his herd through Antarctica, underneath frozen waters. As they pass through this underwater ice cathedral with its inverted ice towers, but soon the herd comes to a dead end of a wall of solid ice. The old bull whale stops in confusion and panic. At the same time the ice all around begins to crack and ice shards start flying through the water. As the ice crashes and falls around them. Adrift situation occurs due to ontological understanding between ocean and whale, changes in human exploit and hydro logos. Whale is considered as isolated bodies, proposing that bodies are interactive and intertwined with other bodies and environments.

Their leader was totally ensnared in the rhapsody of his dreams of the golden rider. So long part of their own whakapapa and legend, the golden rider could not be dislodged from their leader's thoughts. The last journey had begun and at the end of it Death was waiting (Ihimaera78).

'The ocean beyond' explains that ocean as the universal system, here Bull whale leads his herd to the surface of his old master's Island. The whale thinks of rider he will rescue from all their delinquent, this situation express unconditional love between whale and Rider. The trust of Rider going more than the ocean.

Wet ontology does more than shed light on the complex ways in which the ocean, as a space of depth and churning. Simultaneously connects and divides the world in which we live. It also provides us with a way of thinking that destabilizes sedentary and surficial notions of "place" and

“being” while revealing a dynamic world of relational becoming (Steinberg, Philip E and Kimberley Peters 126).

Ecotones Zone

Koro sees the Whales are coming out of the sea, he begins to pray with his community. It bridges the oceanic world and life of the Maori belief. It is a sign that to save the whale is the way to save the life, otherwise all will destroy. ‘If the whale lives, we live. These were the only words of Kahu could think of. The water was freezing, but not to worry. The waves were huge, but she could do this. The rain was like spears, but she could do this’ (Ihimaera100).

All together plan to pull the whale into the ocean, it never goes to sea. ‘Women is not born but made into women through the process of socialization which is predominately male centric and that has reduced women to second sex and to the inferior and subordinate state’.(Raina3374)Koro calls women to prove their will power, Nanny and the women come to the beach, Kahu accompanies with them. Koro give a chance to try all the women to pull the Whale into the sea, it never drowns. Koro believes that male will save life of Whale, but Koro gets transition and call the women for help. Ecotones play the role as transition and transformation and a shift occurs between the two gender. He offers opportunities for growth and redefinition.

Transcorporeality and Ethics

Koro deeds as the pillar to create the Mario community, He connected with Whangara and the whale herd. The Whangara and the whale are the symbol of Mario people. The whale herd struggle is the struggle of Mario people. Koro says whale as power to speak with man. They divide the world into the past and the present. The real and unreal. The fantastical and the scientific. Some actions lead by man are trouble of the world. But this whale herd as supernatural power it is a bridge between those two worlds. It is a sign of the original purity if they can save the whale the Maori way of life is saved, and if they cannot then it is dead.

The whales kept dying. As each death occurred the people who were looking after the whale would weep and clasp one another. They would try to force away the younger healthier whales which had returned to keep company with their dying mates. when a large whale was turning on its side, several juveniles would try to assist it, rubbing their bodies against the dying whale’s head. (Ihimaera84)

Kahu asks Koro about the situation, he replies that the Whale is eager to die. She understands it, she wishes to save the ocean and whale. she looks the younger whale escorting their leader. Her heart is pounding and she is surrounded by whale herd. She placed the head against Whale skin and closed her eyes. She never cares about her. The sign on Bull whale's head is activated and it mistakes Kahu as ancestor Paikea. It rejoices and gently surfs and spouts. Kahu rides on whale and it takes to the sea. Trans cropyreality demands new ethics, being responsible and responsive to others. Kahu perspective represents new ethics of responsibility that she unknowingly takes risk in interconnected existence. The tribes are Weeping. Nanny shocks and her tears are streaming down her face to see the Whale takes Kahu to the sea, this incident makes her to admitted in the hospital. 'The Whale's body tensed. The girl felt her feet being locked by strong muscles. The cavity for her face widened. The wind whipped at her hair' (Ihimaera107).

In the sea, Bull whale opens up a small breathing chambers and it helps Kahu to breathe in water, in sea everyone celebrating the love for the ancient bull whale. The mother whale cares and kisses him. Sometime whales can speak, think and behave according to the human action, it emphasizes their connection to the human experience. The Mother Whale experiences that Kahu is the genealogy of Paikea, she is female.

'The ocean imagined' represents that the bull whale mistakes Kahu as the Rider. Mother whale explains the difference between master and master's linkage to her husband. Bull Whale understands the comparison and Kahu, the seed of Paikea. He wants to take responsible for the future benefit and the girl would take along to her people. The bull whale intentionally sets his mind. He intertwines and transforms to other situation. He plans to return the rider back to Whangara so they slowly turn to the shore and leave Kahu. 'Then let everyone live, and let the partnership between land and sea, whale and all humankind also remain' (Ihimaera119).

Kahu is floating on the ocean for three days and she remains in coma. The tribal admit her in hospital next to her Nanny. Nanny recovers and shows the retrieved stone from Sea to Koro. He begins by saying that this is entirely his fault. Kahu wakes up Nanny gives an anguished sob and reached out to hold kahu tightly. She sees her great-grand daughter with proud. Koro understand Kahu for the first time expresses his love for his great-granddaughter This gives him redemption. At present moment, both has been

hearing the whale's song, singing for forever. Koro becomes responsible great-grandfather. Here Paikea, the legendary ancestor who upholds the Maori culture and values, he had no problems with females leading his Maori people. Water bodies are interconnecting and interpermeating with all human being, whale, ancestor and sea. Water is substance of medium and connector of ancestor Paikea, to Kahu and highlight water is never static, it is a process, a movement and transformation.

Water, in all of its repetitions – in fact because of its compulsion to repeat is in the first place facilitative and gestational. Each moment of water will inevitably give itself over to the elaboration of something different, something new. As we've already explored, this is linked to the exuberant idea of sexuate difference described above, where sexuate difference is a general facilitative capacity engendered by the meeting of different bodies (Neimani 95).

Conclusion:

The article concludes with Paikea, an ancient leader, who embodies the bond between ocean and whale. Mother whale and Nanny are same in their brave as both are principled and wise and nurture a great love for those around them. Ocean is regarded as life –giving force that resists male dominated tradition. Community survival is lies in water and marine species. Hydro feminism theory and situation acts as healer to Kahu and Koro. It smoothens the wipes away gender discrimination. Wet Ontology plays vital role in building relation between water and whale. Kahu and Nanny decision and support leads to hopeful and positive change. This change can be made with patience and perseverance. It renews a sense of justice to their ancestral knowledge. This article concludes by giving wet ontology describes ocean as life and Hydro feminism works like healer through Kahu as watery kinship with Whale.

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