

balance his capability with the natural songs. Afterwards when he knew about his capabilities he used the natural sounds and his intelligence to generate new instruments. And when this procedure was done, with time new generations came up with new enthusiasm, but with equal love for nature and added to the original instrument. Like this, now there were instruments which were played by hands directly, some had strings in it, also some instrument came into being which were played by blowing air into it. Present day electronic technology is creating a whole new range of musical instruments which can trace its origin in nature. But the most natural form of music is incorporated in the songs and instruments of these tribes. Won't we categorize them as the pioneer of environment preservation? Interdependence between environment and human life with a holocaust of unsolved mysteries looming large in front – presents the most beautiful ambivalence of surrender and rebellion in human mind (at its crudest and most innocent state in these tribes) towards Nature. Nature has always inspired human to develop music in their life. The sounds of chirping of a bird, water floating down the stream, growling of a cow, the thundering of the clouds, these are the sounds which have forced man to think about developing them and implement new ideas to bring the sound to them through instrument. And human also for the love he has for all the sounds of nature, wanted to capture them for ever, so decided and tried to imitate the sounds as close as possible. This was the reason why he developed his singing skills by imitating the songs of bird by working on his vocal chords, while he was already making musical instruments out of wood and bamboo and rocks. It would not be wrong to say that like the musical instrument has their origin from nature; local music also shares its traces from the same. It is interesting to note here that language, phonetics, linguistics, phonology – all the modern nomenclature of language theory owes its allegiance to natural music and natural sounds. According to Manes, "in addition to human language, there is also the language of birds, the wind, the earth worms, wolves, and waterfalls- a world of autonomous speakers in nature". Tribes – the rustics so to say are in the company of purest forms of natural objects and hence their language is the closest copying of natural songs and music. The onomatopoeic affect of the songs sung by the tribes are proofs in itself regarding their originality and accuracy.

A folk painter, when he paints a painting the painting does not belong to him or he cannot claim any copy right on his painting, because the subject matter of the art is known to everybody. The only difference between a common man and the artist over here is, the common man only feels the art and the painter adds colour and shape to the art for the sake of beautification. This is the reason why folk art never belongs to a single person but is dedicated to the whole society. It is amazing to know that there are no teachers and students amongst the tribal people. But then also their culture and tradition are so well preserved. Also there is no written literature available to them, about their evolution and culture. But still the folk songs sung by them at every occasions are so original. The art of the tribes should be preserved and should be made known to the people outside their periphery. The literature or the music which is

so pure originates directly from the nature should be made available to the common man. Eco system or ecology is to be sustained not from air conditioned rooms within concrete buildings but under the shade of a tree which teaches fundamental aspects of life and morality. Gond folk art has its own limitations with respect to its societal, cultural and also geographical aspect, they can only write limited things. They are very conscious to their tradition, which does not allow them to bring any remarkable changes in their taste or creations. This is a big reason why different art created by different tribes have a common factor in them which is so very noticeable. As literature shows the actual circumstances prevailing in the society, folk literature too shows the current situation of the folk people. The attitude towards the folk people and their culture can be very well seen in the presentation of a lyric or story. The folk literature not only depicts beautiful aspects of nature, but shows the other side of the coin with the aim of imparting knowledge. The moral values are also taught in collaboration with fables created on nature themes. Here's quoting a Gond folk tale to substantiate the preceding discussion. Once there was a farmer worried about the safety of his harvest got offers from a cockoo, crow and cock. He considered cock to look after his crops. The cock screamed on top of his voice when the robbers robbed the property, they killed the cock so as to shut him up but the cock even after death was calling his master. The farmer came out running from his house at the cock's call and got hold over his yielding. Through this small tale, a beautiful picture and relationship between a farmer, his yielding and birds has been brought into picture. Nature has no ego- it is selfless and its services are sincere and honest.

Tribal have there own stories and myths about every single thing coming under ecology. The clouds and stars are no exception. The clouds and stars are said to be brought in to existence by the tribes according to them. Once an agitated Gond threw a plate full of rice to the sky and the plate transformed into cloud and the rice became stars. The planet without clouds and stars is impossible. Their existence is very important for the survival of humans. Clouds as we all know are important for rain. And rain is necessary for a good harvest. If the myth about the clouds are to be believed, then whole of the humanity should be indebted to the Gond people. Air is a big part of ecology. We breathe; we need all the components of air as per different, requirements. Tribes consider themselves to be the reason to bring it to earth. The story goes like this - once there was a Gond who for the purpose of his son's marriage wanted air to be there because without air the ceremony was not manageable. The Gond went to a pious pond and brought a fish from it. The fish came and opened its mouth and that was the first time when air came into existence. The tribes know to welcome, appease and pay reverence to nature and the man-nature relationship of love and care is mutually reciprocated. Amidst the company of nature, the interdependence becomes more pronounced and prominent. Nature becomes a living animate thing to them. Untouched by the severe issues of the modern world like global warming, diminishing ozone layer, environmental pollution etc., and their acceptance of nature with all its wrath, anger, turmoil and trepidations is a moral wisdom for mankind. Their literature

lays the basic foundation of environmental protection strategies solely intended “to find ways of keeping the human community from destroying the natural community and with it the human community. This is what ecologists like to call the self destructive or suicidal motive that is inherent in our prevailing and paradoxical attitude towards nature. The conceptual and practical problem is to find the grounds upon which the two communities – the human, the natural- can coexist, cooperate and flourish in the biosphere”. Feeling one with nature is the fundamental environmental message of Gond literature. As is rightly depicted in this folk song of Gonds.

These kites have hither wing'd their way
 A thirst for water clear,
 The greedy geere with graceful suring,
 Thus wend there way up here
 Oh, take them where you tam'rind tope
 Doth stand- do take them there
 Point out to them you mango grove,
 O let them their repair
 The tam'rind top they do not like
 It does not please them so
 You mango grove there geese mislike,
 I'll – pleas'd are they, I thro.

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The Hungry Tide: Some Textual and Subtextual Glimpses

- Santanu Basak

Abstract: If 'text' is seen as 'the actual words of a book in their original form', 'subtext' lies 'below the text' allowing the readers' full play of internal commentary and imagination challenging the author's authority. However the uniqueness lies with Ghosh is that the subtextual glimpses in his narration have been relied upon more intensely than the textual interpretation of his writings. It is from the readers' perspective to expose some of the subtextual evasions, ambiguities, gaps and overemphasis through the working of co-texts within a unified pattern or subterranean flow of the text in *The Hungry Tide* and to fit them into the hermeneutical circle of the (sub)textual meaning.

Keywords: Text, Subtext, New Historicism, Translatability, Diaries and memory, Marginalisation.

Etymologically derived from Latin *texere* or *textum* meaning 'to weave', text may be seen as 'the actual words of a book in their original form or any form they have been *transmitted* in or *transmuted* to' (emphasis mine, Cuddon, 1998). This transmission or transmutation leads towards another dimension of reading the text—'subtext' that lies below the text allowing the readers' full play of internal commentary and imagination challenging the author's authority. Roland Barthes, too, questions the sovereignty of a text:

Any text is a new tissue of past citations. Bits of codes, formulae, rhythmic models, fragments of social languages, etc. pass into text and are redistributed within it, for there is always language before and around the text. (Barthes, 1981)

Subtext gets an access through this gaps or lapses created by the authoritative text through which the author entraps the reader with the mask of his sovereign textual writing. According to Terry Eagleton,

We are constructing what may be called a 'subtext' for the work – a text which runs within it, visible at certain symptomatic points of ambiguity, evasion, or over emphasis, and which we readers are able to 'write'.... All literary works contain one or more such subtexts, and there is a sense in which they may be spoken of as the 'unconscious' of the work itself. The work's insights as with all writings, are deeply related to its blindnesses: what it does not say, and how it does not say it, may be as important as what it articulates; what seems absent, marginal or ambivalent about it may provide a central clue to its meanings. (Eagleton, 1991)

However the uniqueness lies with Ghosh is that these subtextual glimpses in his narration have been relied upon more forcefully than the textual interpretation of his writings. It is not a kind of interpenetration but both text and subtext coalesce leading towards a divergent study of his works that ultimately emerges as a study of co-texts that becomes the

appropriate vehicle for his characteristic text-context blurring. Boundarilessness of history, geography, social study, archeology in the greater canvas of literature owes much to the mesmerizing effect of his effect fictions that become 'factful' making every reader stand before a mirror for self-identification either to have the experience of disillusionment or to be aware of the elusiveness of the present. In *The Hungry Tide* the pages on cetological research of Piya may sound digressive keeping the reader away from the main stream text but it may also be considered as an instance of how a subtext turns to be a hidden or suppressed co-text. When Kanai and Piya met accidentally and their different purposes of going to the Sunderbans have been revealed, the reader gets absorbed if not entrapped by the author's very clandestine but dexterous hinting at the cetological research by Piya in the salted water of the Sunderbans that seems quite unlikely and deserves further exploration. Surprisingly the author himself snatches this scope or 'gap' of subtextual elicitation and presents the research concern in its entirety in a co-textual fashion. Similarly the subtextual penetration of the reader with the glimpse of the packet containing the diary of Nirmal to be handed over to Kanai by his aunt has been averted by the author himself when he makes the diary play a significant role as a co-text encroaching on the readers' subtextual domain of expansion of meaning. The reader has been soon captured by the enticing presentation of the overwhelming past sweeping very fast hypnotizing him with the stick of Morichjhapi massacre allowing little scope to continue with the present experience of Piya with Fokir. The intermittent memory presented through the diary is highly absorbing and alluring as well as providing relief in a stark emotional voyage too difficult to bear with in such a voluminous fiction. The boundary of the past and the present has been characteristically blurred by the author pertaining to the concept of the 'historicity of text and textuality of history' (Montrose, 1986). In fact, the subtextual reading bears a close synchronizing relation with the New Historicism as 'New historicists and cultural materialist practices encourage the reading of literary texts in conjunction with non-literary ones and blur the distinction between the two, especially by showing that literature does not passively or neutrally reflect society.' (Banerjee, 2002). In fact, the continuity of the subtextual construction has been maintained through further subtextual penetration probing into many deeper areas of meaning. This series of subtextual experiences in Ghosh's novels has been felt relentlessly in different perspectives such as the silent relation between Piya and Fokir, unspoken penchant for the so called illiterates (Fokir and Horen) by the highly educated people (Piya and Kusum), religious unity in the myth of Bonbibi or in the nomenclature like Kanai or Fokir, untranslatability of human language etc. This paper is an endeavour to expose some of the subtextual evasions, ambiguities, gaps and overemphasis through the working of co-texts within a unified pattern or subterranean flow of the text and to fit them into the hermeneutical circle of the (sub)textual meaning.

In *The Hungry Tide* in the chapter, 'An Epiphany', Ghosh presents a quite non-conventional literary subject, a sudden insight in the character of Piya engaged in a research on orcaella. Generally known of two kinds-

'one tribe liked the salt waters of the coast while the other preferred rivers and fresh water' (Ghosh, 2006, p.123), their behaviour differs in accordance with difference of their habitation. The river water dolphins usually come back from the wide range of watered field to certain 'pools' in the dry season. She experiences it in the river Mekong in Cambodia. Now her epiphany is with the coastal orcaella congregating in the pool in the Sunderbans. These lead her in further query of how the dolphins in the Sunderbans attune with the seasonal variation of salinity and turbidity, the change of tidal time every day. She probes more and more into her research work with the technical help of Fokir who knows the location as his palm. To attribute significance to this incident in the pattern of the text, it is quite likely to enjoin it to a deeper probing into the heart of the dormant illiterates with high potential. It is also adumbrative of an affinity among various species. Mekong dolphins can find her cousins in the Sunderbans. The idea of origins of different continents by the movement of the tectonic plates from the stage of a unified whole has been intensified by the suggestion of the existence of the same species in different rivers which may have had the same ancestral home. So the 'epiphany' in a broader perspective exposes a subtextual dimension befitting the hermeneutical circle of its meaning. The author's intrusion in the subtextual space of the reader's domain has been further enunciated in the next chapter entitled 'Crabs'. These small creatures not only please Piya by their clicking and clattering in a pot or become the means of livelihood for Fokir, it is also a connector between the two unlikely persons not even knowing each other's language. Further elicitation is needed on how a unified scheme runs to establish the dignity of labour through which the livelihood of two unlikely persons, Fokir and Piya come together. On the way of his earning bread through crabs, Fokir experiences the dolphin. Similarly, through dolphins via crabs, Piya knows the livelihood of Fokir, the son of the soil and Fokir, the man. On the other hand, the importance of every member in the ecological chain has been established by the crab's importance as doing the sanitary works to keep the ecological cycle moving for ever by clearing the leaves and litter of the mangroves, and thus keeping them alive. The cycle of creation and destruction has all been materialized by this tiny creature. The clattering of the crabs may please Piya, an intruder in this labyrinthine forest region, but it is only the son of the soil, Fokir who, though illiterate, can conceive a greater realisation through the scratching sound of the crabs that will destroy the *badh* (embankment) from inside. Not only the 'tide' is hungry, but also the crabs, the wind and the storm are full of monstrous appetite to devour the 'frail fence' of mortality. Ironically, the helplessness of the marginalized against even such tiny creatures has been reiterated by Nirmal: 'Neither angels, nor men will hear us, and, as for the animals, they won't hear us either' (Ghosh, 2006, p.206). The prophetic sayings by Nirmal that 'A storm will come, the water will rise and the badh will succumb, in part or in whole. It is only a matter of time' (Ghosh, 2006, p.205) ---assumes an affinity with the Hardian pessimism, but even within the circle of an intrinsic relationship between man and nature, the distinctive identity of every species has also been hinted at. The Chapter 'Snell's Window' in