

COMMUNICATION IN UNKNOWABLE JUNGLE IN THE HUNGRY TIDE

Abstract

In man-animal relationship, Amitav Ghosh's textual practice appears to play a similar role. In *The Hungry Tide* he seeks the essence of a non-confrontational, co-operative communication between humanity and nature. Many issues have been discussed in this novel. One of them is how humans communicate a complex and dangerous ecosystem with animals--dolphins, tigers, snakes, and crocodiles. In the Sunderbans, tide-country, home to Bengal-tiger, crocodiles, snakes and a few people are trying to search out a living with proper communication between them. In this novel Ghosh describes the communication of Piyali and dolphins, and other peoples in unknowable jungle.

Keywords: non-confrontational, co-communicate, ecosystem, relationship...

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The Hungry Tide is the sixth novel by Amitav Ghosh. It is about adventure, love, identity, history and constant movement. *The Hungry Tide* is set in the Bay of Bengal, at the easternmost coast of India, lays the immense labyrinth of tiny islands known as the Sunderbans. A place between the sea and plains of Bengal, on the easternmost coast of India, lays an immense archipelago of islands. There are no borders to divide fresh water from salt, river from sea, even land from water. Tigers, crocodiles, and dolphins are seen everywhere in the land. Peoples of all races, classes, and religions live together there. Piyali Roy, a young marine biologist; Fokir, a young illiterate fisherman; and Kanai Dutt, a translator and businessman from Delhi collide in the Sunderbans who come from different worlds. Piyali comes here in search of the rare dolphin. Her journey begins with a disaster when she is thrown from a boat into the waters and rescued and saved by Fokir. They don't have any ideas about their languages, so they can't communicate but understand each other very well that is sufficient for them to journey in the Sunderbans.

Amitav Ghosh's textual practice appears to play a similar role in man-animal relationship. In *The Hungry Tide* he seeks the essence of a non-confrontational, co-operative communication between humanity and nature. Many issues have been discussed in this novel. One of them is to explore the plight of displaced people specifically a group of refugees from Bangladesh who had found themselves in a confrontation with the Indian state in 1979. The other one is how humans communicate a complex and dangerous ecosystem with animals--dolphins, tigers, snakes, and crocodiles. In the Sunderbans, tide-country, home to Bengal-tiger, crocodiles, snakes and a few people are trying to search out a living with proper communication between them. In this novel Ghosh describes the communication of Piyali and dolphins.

Piya argues with Kanai and tells: "‘I'm telling you the truth, Kanai,' Piya said quietly. 'If I thought giving up my life might make the rivers safe again for the Irrawaddy dolphin, the answer is, yes, I would. But the trouble is that my life, your life, a thousand lives would make no difference' (HT 301-302)."

Regarding the dolphins, Ghosh remarks that: "Piya remembered a study which had shown that there were more species of fish in the Sunderbans than could be found in the whole continent of Europe (HT 301-302)."

Dolphin and its affinity with some of characters in *The Hungry Tide*, is artistically blended. There are people in this novel who have two schools of thought. One believes in help, optimism and they are kind towards animal and nature, while on the other hand some people are indifferent with nature and are pessimistic. Predominantly, the Sunderbans have two different kinds of animals-- the dolphins which are aquatic animals and the tiger which is terrestrial animals. There are some characters that observe and enjoy the aquatic sport speaking or, one may say, communicate with the eyes.

In 'A Killing' and 'Crimes', episodes in this book, Ghosh has put reality of Sunderbans and Sunderbans like places. In 'A Killing', a tiger is killed by villagers for taking revenge on and making some fear in the heart of tiger. Tiger kills man or any pet for its hunger and becomes satisfied. When a tiger satisfied, it hardly attacks on man. But in this episode, some villagers act like animal involving Fokir and Kanai's passiveness angers Piya. Fact is different. It seems cruelty. If anyone stays there, one can realize how to handle the

situation whether to kill the animal or save it. It is a debatable question and Piya cannot know Bengali language.

Speech would have been enemy of serene silence in the peaceful atmosphere of Sunderban actually here the appropriate communication can be seen without speech or noise. Good communication is everywhere in this arboreal atmosphere. Ghosh describes it very beautifully. Dolphin comes out of water and declares its freedom just like Piya comes out of house and enjoys freedom. Again there is a unique quality of dolphin working together to hunt prey. Piya also with the help of Fokir works on the animals which show their togetherness. In the beginning of novel, some forest-officers call dolphin a bird, which laughs Piya and makes her thinking on the dolphin a bird. Like bird, dolphin enjoys real freedom and Piya also enjoys the same. She always thinks of dolphin, she always communicates the animals in imagination. Dolphin is hypersensitive so is Piya and Fokir. Only because of dolphin, she could meet Fokir and because of Fokir she could research dolphin with proper communication. Only dolphin (fish) can swim against the flowing water in the sea (river), and only courageous men dare to do against the darken situation, like Piya. Her love for dolphin is real one and she believes that they know each other for long.

This novel explores terms-- humanism and environmentalism. Many characters come into these stories. Time-travel is a vital theme in this novel. As far as the theme of family is concerned, Piya's relationship with Fokir calls a different construction of familial bond hardly speaking words with each other. She doesn't know local language but she interact with Fokir with silence. One may see the pure communication between them. She was in search of home in the Sunderbans. Fokir has given her some hopes of home which requires special psychological identification. Ghosh has narrated a pure friendship of them. He has described reality of the tide country in the novel.

The Hungry Tide narrates the reality of cultural system where history, human consciousness, myth and facts are combined to form a description in the Sunderbans. Mud seems replicate multi-checked history that the Sunderbans have experienced from the beginning of human existence. History of Morichjhapi is re-written for fictional purposes by Ghosh, massacre in Bengal is reminded by Ghosh in the novel. Human bond is made to struggle in the time of extreme social pressure.

These issues of resettlement become a major issue in the novel as there are culture and ideological forces. There questions aroused that who is settlers and where is colony. There is also question about language and communication. These settlers speak Bengali in the manner of natives both worries about threat to stability of nation as the settlers may be anti-social. But his sympathy was with the people. Nirmal, a Character, in the novel works for betterment of settlers. This novel is an account of what happened in those days. It is therefore interesting to know what Ghosh is trying to do in the novel. It is not history at all. Novelist is trying to construct an artefact from the historical accounts. Record of the massacre is described in a diary of Nirmal, a character, and so that is not history but a personal record of what Nirmal had in Morichjhapi. Kusum, a character, is a symbol of fortitude in the tide country. But she is unable to protect her son Fokir. Fact of migration not only changes social structure of local people but the psychic effect can at times be devastating. The island of Morichjhapi becomes a place for an extended family that has a common case of tragedy.

Amitav Ghosh compares Kanai, a highly educated man with Fokir, an ignorant and communicative person. But Fokir has a good understanding of rules in the Island. Ghosh doesn't use myth simply to make a diasporic character to find Piya's roots but the myth helps her. Piya, a major character, in the novel shows an acute awareness of bodily presence of Fokir to whom she has attachment.

Some of the novels of Amitav Ghosh set in future and delve into past. One sees journey to unknown and a quest for immortality. Ghosh is of the view that to know something is to change and that change is for living better life. This change comes when one is doing constant movement of communication for knowing the surrounding people and developing self. That means one is journeying with active communication continuously and in journeying knowledge can be attained. One, who has knowledge, has power. That exactly happens with characters of these novels of Amitav Ghosh, so "Knowledge is power". Communication in imagination in this novel transforms into a weird, uncanny and unfamiliar world.

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