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EVALUATING FAMINE AND HUNGER IN THE WORKS OF BHABHANI BHATTACHARYA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO "HE WHO RIDES A TIGER AND SO MANY HUNGERS"

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ABSTRACT

Bhabani Bhattacharya is unquestionably one of the four most recognised writers of the Indian English novel, along with Mulk Raj Anand, R.K Narayan, and Raja Rao. The Indian liberation fight and hunger have been popular themes among a lot of Indian writers in English, and Bhabani Bhattacharya stands out as one novelist who has portrayed this issue in such a distinctive way. Bhattacharya was a socially conscious novelist who had little faith in aimless art or 'art for the sake of art.' 'So Many Hungers!' and 'He Who Rides a Tiger' are the two key novels to be explored in this topic. As "weavers sold their looms to dealers from major cities who combed the countryside for deals," these books depict how poor people endure during times of hunger. 'So Many Hungers!' is structured on two intertwined plot strands: the storey of Rahoul, the protagonist, and his family, and the sorrowful storey of Kajoli, the peasant girl, and her family. Many writers, researchers, daily newspaper offices, and the Indian government contributed to the study's publications and credible sources. The novelist's profound understanding of rural life, as well as the dramatisation of the miseries of hunger and famine, are both present in this storey. The work is also a parody on Hindu orthodoxy, set against the socio-political backdrop of the Bengal famine and the liberation fight before to independence. It also demonstrates that any man who struggles against society is unable to adjust, and hence must eventually reconcile himself to it. This article also finds that, as far as descriptions of the impoverished and destitute are concerned, Bhattacharya is unquestionably unparalleled in the field of Indian English literature, and his true and poetic representation of poverty and hunger is noteworthy.

Keywords*: Novel, Hunger, Famine, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Hunger and Casteism, He who rides a Tiger, So Many Hungers! Etc.*

1. INTRODUCTION

India's rural poverty and misery has given rise to a new class of Indian-English novel called "The Hunger Theme." There are too many people in the country, and many of them have died from hunger or famine. As a result, they witness every "sinister result spilling out of such catastrophes: moral lapses, illicit trafficking, and all the appalling scenes that go along with a famine in India." People in these novels are shown to be leaving their hometown in search of food and work. As a novelist, Bhattacharya is the best example of the Hunger Theme novel. On the subject of hunger, a variety of authors have written, but none with the same intensity as

Bhattacharya did When it comes to post-independent Indian English fiction, Bhabani Bhattacharya is a rare talent. As a novelist, Bhattacharya's achievements in Indian English fiction have been extremely tenacious.

Bhabani Bhattacharya

Bhattacharya was born on November 10th, 1906 in Bhagalpur, Bihar. His mother and grandfather discovered and nurtured his talents as a precocious child. A Bengali magazine called "Mouchack" published his debut article when he was twelve years of age. Sein father, a District and Sessions Judge, wanted Bhabani to become a government employee; however, he was unaware of Bhabani's talent as a writer. A graduate of Patna University in 1927, Bhabani continued his education at the University of London (1929-1934) where he earned a B.A., (Hons. In 1934, he received a Ph.D. for his historical research. When he married in 1935, Salila Mukherji gave birth to a son and two daughters.

From 1950 to 1952, Bhattacharya served as the Indian Embassy's Press Attaché in Washington, D.C. He also worked as an assistant editor at the Illustrated Weekly of India. The Tagore Commemorative Society, New Delhi, was his employer from 1959 to 1960. The Ministry of Education, New Delhi, appointed him a consultant in 1961, and he worked there until 1967. For his novel Shadow from Ladakh, he was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award in 1967. To commemorate the birth centenary of the "Father of the Nation," he received a Ford Foundation Grant in 1968-69 to write Gandhi the Writer—The Image as It Grew. He also served on the Sahitya Academy's Advisory Board. A Senior Specialist at the East-West Center in Honolulu since 1969, he is now a visiting professor at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu.

2. MAKING OF THE BHABHANI BHATTACHARYA

The Indian-English tradition began to grow and spread when Anand and Narayan broke ground and laid the foundation in their early books. Unfortunately, the Indian-English novel has just as many repetitious, monotonous, and non-artistic practitioners as the Indian-English novel. Many competent popularizers of the Indian-English novel deserve critical consideration as well. Bhabani Bhattacharya, thesis, is arguably the most emblematic example of the type of Indian novelist writing in English now.

Bhattacharya, born in 1906, was an assistant editor of the Illustrated Weekly of India. He was formerly a student in London and then a press attaché at the Indian Embassy in Washington. He writes technicolour novels that read like epic movie scripts on times. Forester's keen eye for East-West contrasts, Anand's concern for social, economic, and political issues, and Naryan's humorous exaggeration are all passed down to him. Because he relies too heavily on quaintness and artificial happy endings, his achievement falls short of those of his three predecessors. Because of his well-crafted narratives, well-developed characterizations, and deft, if ultimately oversimplified juxtaposition of the worldwide and local, external and internal, ramifications of East-West divides, he deserves attention. His mature work can be found in He Who Rides a Tiger (1954), A Goddess Named Gold (1960), and Shadows from Ladakh (1966).

Despite being dubbed a linguistic pioneer, Bhattacharya's experimental coining of words has been attacked for having no basis in English or Bengali. As an experimental, this paragraph from A Goddess Named Gold demonstrates:

A phrase shot icily through his blood when he found himself in the pitch-dark-0meadow. The bhootni, the bhootni, the bhoot He had followed the path that skirted the neem tree that the bhootni haunted in his ruch. A cry from an owl added to his terror. The ghost, the species' female, had been spotted by four persons in Sonamatti, dangling skeleton legs from its perch. One of them had gone insane after being attacked by her, and had to be cured by an ojha, or exorcist, who had been summoned from Bhimtek, twenty miles away.

Looking at her as she walked by, he remembered an odd verse he'd heard at a mushaira in town, a traditional gathering where poets presented their works to an audience that applauded loudly and frequently for every heartfelt line.

Bhattacharya had ironed out the problems that married the conversation in his earlier novels by the time he penned Shadow from Ladakh. His characters speak basic, accurate English, comparable to Narayan's. There are breaches from time to time, such as the usual Indian omission of an article: “Happily would you wear a load of gilded ornaments!” Bhattacharya's treatment of curses can be as ridiculous and ineffective as Anand's:

> “Fiends! Uncanny creatures!” the Cowhouse answered.
>
> “Thrice we spit on thy faces”, one set of voices flung. “Thoothoothoo!”
>
> Three kicks we give to thy arses”, answered the other set. “Dhoomdhoomdhoom!
>
> “We ill chop off thy noses and feed them to a vulture.”

Overall, Bhattacharya is on par with Narayan in terms of “neutralising” his characters' English. While he does not considerably advance or retard the potential of the English language, he does demonstrate that it is not a barrier to understanding the Indian scenario. Gandhi, the Writer: The Image As It Grew (1969), his most recent non-fiction book, reveals a lifelong fascination with language.

Many serious Indian writers and commentators are harshly critical of Bhattacharya. Although Indians underestimate his English language abilities, they are correct in presuming he is primarily interested in the Western market.

Most colourfully, Bhattacharya writes about the kinds of superstitions that make Western readers chuckle and exclaim, "How primitive!" What a sweetheart!” His books have been “translated into 26 languages, including 14 European languages,” according to his book jackets. Although there are likely to be Indian languages among the various translations, Bhattacharya's detailed explanations of religious rituals and traditions are unmistakably Western.

Bhattacharya employs a third-person narrator who regularly goes into his characters' innermost thoughts. The indicated author's position in connection to the events or characters depicted is clear from the narrator's tone and phrases. The narrator's hatred of the wealthy is widespread, but it is justified because their callous exploitation of the masses is documented. The narrator's tongue-in-cheek assessment of the multi-wivedMotichand's moral standards in He Who Rides a Tiger is a smart shot at sexual and social hypocrisy in India. In A Goddess Named Gold, the narrator investigates Seth Samsundar's avaricious inclinations and manages to summaries the central topic of He Who Rides a Tiger as well: “However, how else could he increase the value of his restricted cloth stock? He didn't come up with the idea of cornering the market. During the rice famine in Bengal four years before, he had learned it by watching his superiors. Three million men and women had to die at the time in order for thirty new millionaires to be born, yet no one denounced the profiteers. In comparison to theirs, his current job was a child's prank.” Bhattacharya's wit and sense of proportion enable him to criticise the plainly bad characters as true villains without resorting to soapbox oratory.

Bhattacharya is surprisingly objective in evaluating the complexities of good and wrong in all of the key characters' stances in Shadow from Ladakh. There is no ambiguity about where he stands on the novel's central political matter, the 1959-1960 Himalayan boundary dispute between China and India. The focus is on India's long-standing affection for the Chinese people and her incredible tolerance with the Chinese, who "had secretly seized sixteen thousand square miles" of Indian territory. The following are some popular observations:

India was a symbol of enlightened neutrality. That was Nehru's gift to his people, and it was a gift for many peoples in the long run. 2 Geography, history, tradition, and usage were irrelevant to the Chinese. 3 The voice of Radio Peking had morphed into a growl of rage, malice, and hatred, with an unlimited supply of venom. 4

Bhattacharya's patriotism is as strong as any other Indian – English of the previous century, but it

doesn't get in the way of Shadow from Ladakh's significant character development.

In the early novels, Bhattacharya's criticism of the British is subdued, maybe because British control was passed at the time of their publication or because Bhattacharya couldn't afford to enrage his Western audience. Bhattacharya ties himself more with Narayan than with Anand since there is a clear affirmation of Indian ideals. In his pro-Indian views, Bhattacharya is on far more solid foundation than Forster. Superstition is either trampled on or transcended by being lifted to a symbolic peak, and all of the heroic characters pass a Gandhian test of courage and/or love.

Bhattacharya undoubtedly refutes Dorothy Spencer's claim that characters in Indian and English novels are fundamentally different. His characters are as unique and idiosyncratic as those of traditional Western authors, and they aren't simply servants to the group, class, or caste they represent. Characters are frequently outspoken proponents of specific ideals. Bhattacharya is able to break out from stereotypes. This is especially true of the female characters he creates, and his portraits of them are all the more remarkable because few Indian-English authors have been able to capture the spirit of Indian womanhood in all of its complex nuances.

On one level, each novel covers the development of an Indian woman from childhood to adolescence, as a man's love wakes her intellect and body to a new understanding of the value of her own identity and its link to the world. This trend is all the more striking because of India's ancient system of arranged weddings, which discourages and stigmatises such love encounters. It is the clearest indication that Bhattacharya's women are strong and intellectual enough to respond to life with more than a passive acceptance of their fate. The events surrounding Lekha of He Who Rides a Tiger, Meera of A Goddess Named Gold, and Sumita of Shadow from Ladakh are all too similar, but the events around them and the men who are the recipients of their affection give each treatment of this kind of relationship a unique twist. The three daughters are much more similar because each is the accidental victim of a loving father's plan to teach the Indian people a lesson.

Lekha is the precocious but mothrless child of blacksmith Kalo in He Who Rides a Tiger. Kalo is forced to leave his village and seek work in Calcutta during the devastating Bengali famine of 1943. For stealing three bananas to alleviate hunger, he is sentenced to three months of hard labour. Upon his release, he is confronted with the choice of starvation or unwelcome employment as a pimp. Meanwhile, Lekha has been kidnapped and is being held captive in a prostitution ring, which Kalo saves her from before pollution occurs.

Untouchable Kalo disguises himself as a Brahmin priest and orchestrates a "miracle" — the rise of the god Shiva from the earth. Such deception preys on people's religious sensibilities, and while Kalo revels in duping unscrupulous businesspeople into helping him build a temple, Lekha frets sick about the impoverished who put their faith and money in the hands of deception. Dazzled by his accomplishment, Kalo rides this falsehood "as if it were a tiger that he couldn't dismount lest the tiger pounce on him and devour him up." Unwillingly but obediently, the compassionate Lekha agrees to be deified as the temple's Mother of Seven-fold Bliss, ironically at the same time that she is growing into a woman and trying to come to terms with her feelings for B – 10, a social reformer who has renounced his Brahminism to lead the destitute in their struggle for food.

The plot's fruits of wild superstition stretch the imagination, but the psychological changes in Kalo and Lekha's mental attitudes are psychologically convincing and tenderly etched. Both Kalo and Lekha eventually punish themselves by resolving to do acts of enormous personal sacrifice, but Bhattacharya saves them at the last minute to ensure that evil is defeated and good triumphs. Even when the smaller characters are clearly righteous or corrupt, Bhattacharya manages to bring them to life. Two instances are the elderly Viswanath, who causes a ceremonial crisis at the temple by feeding starving kids the milk needed to bathe Shiva's stone image, and Sir Abalabandhu, the rice hoarder and chairman of the temple trustees, who admires Kalo's "business sense" even after discovering the deception.

Meera, the protagonist in A Goddess Named Gold, is a strange mix of precocious Gandhui-ism and idolatrous Hinduism. Bhattacharya uses the supernatural to weave a finely knit yet highly supestitious and emotive tale once more. Gandhian kindness, of course, triumphs over superstition, and everyone lives happily ever after. Despite the novel's manufactured ending, Bhattacharya goes extensively into Meera's tormented mind as she becomes "now an unconscious tool for evil, now a conscious instrument for good." His portrayal of the other characters' evolving attitudes about Meera, as they come to fear the implications of her acts of kindness, acts that are supposed to cause their copper to be transmuted into gold, is equally believable.

Most of the other characterizations in A Goddess Named Gold, Bhattacharya's least gratifying novel from an artistic sense, are less credible. Seth Samsundar, the opulent and extortionist cloth merchant, flaunting his showy English bathrobe and parasol, thrice the hapless victim of superstitious, get-rich-quick scams, is too much the punchline of Bhattacharya's gags. He's a colourful character, but he's still a pale imitation of Margayya from Narayan's The Financial Expert. Lakshmi, his lovely wife, conspires against him far too frequently to be taken seriously.

Meera's sweetheart, Sohanlal, is a clever but one-dimensional reincarnation of B – 10 from He Who Rides a Tiger. He is an ex-soldier and reputed city snob. Meera's Granpapa, the mysterious Montreal, is a deus ex machina with too moralistic wisdom and too manufactured appearances. Meera's Grandma, a still vigorous freedom fiftieth with a wonderful sense of humour, loving instincts, and pragmatic insights, is the only person who can truly complement Meera. Meera's Grandma is, in fact, the source of Meera's own idealism and kindness, as both characters remark.

Despite the overt symbolism, these are all flesh-and-blood pictures, and Bhattacharya adds a slew of secondary characters far more compelling than those in A Passage to India : Mrs. Sarojini Mehra, the matchmaker; Rupa, the carnal ex-stewardess who "mothers" five Chinese girls during the border crisis; politician BireswarBasu, a pragmatic but loyal friend who delivers his parliamentary speeches in eight-lives verses; and several lively and distinguishable representatives of the village Gandhigram, progressive Steel Town, and cosmopolitan New Delhi. All of the characters in Shadow from Ladakh are a little too slick and transparent, but there's no doubt that they belong in the social-realism mainstream of Indian – English fiction. Many of the characters are more elaborate versions of those from his earlier works, but they are given greater vitality and plausibility by Bhattacharya.

One of the most comprehensive and detailed studies of East-West contrasts is Shadow from Ladakh. He Who Rides a Tiger is set against the bleak backdrop of the anti-British "Quit India" campaign – "A simple solgan was on every prisoner's lips." India has won. Jai Hind. “The municipal authorities have leased military vans and trucks and set up what they term evacuation squads,” the detainees said, referring to the British government's reckless stance towards the deadly famine. This is how they respond to our demands. Hunger has been returned to the land. It will be hidden there.” Because A Goddess Named Gold takes place on the cusp of Indian independence, there are few unpleasant references to the British, especially the Red Turbans, and instead the focus is on the new political problem: how India's masses will reclaim power from their own wealthy countrymen. As Iyengar points out, Meera represents India, and her taveez represents liberty: “Meera the compassionate mother is ready with her gold and wealth; and yet, it is not his gold and wealth, - not this priceless gift of freedom, - but what we do with it all that will determine our and mankind's future.” 5

In Shadow from Ladahk, Bhattacharya demonstrates that political conflicts between East and West are not always as intransigent as those between East and East. The rhetoric perpetuates old and new components of East-West political tensions, despite the fact that the fierce confrontation here is between China and India. During the Moscow Peace Congress, Mrs. Tung Pao of Peaking growls at Suruchi, saying, "The delegate from India does not agree with me." It's understandable. Her country has sold its newly gained independence to imperialist powers and has

become a helpless stooge." In response to Suruchi's calm explanation, she trembles and calls her a "shameless lackey of Anglo-American capitalism!" "China now is as self-centered, as chauvinistic, as Britain used to be in the heyday of its colonial expansionism," India's Minister Without Portfolio tells Satyajit later. Read the diplomatic notes we've been getting from Peaking; their hubris is pure vulgarity." For metaphors and parallels, the dialectic of East-West political divisions remains useful. "Now it was not the white man – it was Asian versus Asian," the narrator says, indicating that the propagandistic statements are the same whether said by a Robert Clive or a Masco Tse-tung. It was neo-Napoleonism in Asia. But more atavistic, ferocious, and committed."

Bhattacharya's often irritatingly explicit dramatisations of picturesque or obsolete Indian social ideals that impede or stunt the evolution of personal relationships are generally limited to personal - social disparities. In Shadow from Ladakh, where Bhashkar Roy, "a twelve-year-in-American man," rejects Rupa, a most modern girl and seemingly compatible mate, in favour of Sumita, a girl who plies the spinning wheel and possesses the simple virtues and values of a "Indian of the epic age," there is hope that such barriers will be broken down. Another encouraging point is the loving response of the five young Chinese sisters, who consider Rupa to be a sixth sister and Bhashkar to be a second father, and who wish to tell their countrymen about the friendliness of the Indian people.

Racial tensions exist, but they are downplayed by politics. In Shadow from Ladakh, cultural disparities between East and West are highlighted, particularly in Steeltown's desire to absorb Gandhigram. In reality, "the weak old-world wheel of wod placed against the huge machineries of the contemporary age" is the cultural, theological, and philosophical challenge. As the two location names suggest, Bhattacharya deals with this opposition with realism and deep knowledge, but not with subtlety. While Satyajit and Sumita advocate for the spinning wheel, tradition, and man's spirit, Bhashkar Roy makes the case for steel, development, and man's body. The pressures of personal and political tensions gradually compel these characters to reconsider their one-sided allegiance, adjust their stances, and work together amicably, which is the novel's greatest achievement.

Sayajit's vision is technically victorious, but only because he recognises that he has been exalting his own righteousness while ignoring Gandhi's genuine message: "No Culture can live if it seeks to be exclusive." My house should not be surrounded on all sides, and my windows should not be crammed. I want my house to be a melting pot of cultures... We need to add to our existing traditions by incorporating fresh experiences. The foreign components, on the other hand, will be influenced by the soil's soul. One dominant culture absorbing the rest will not result in harmony; instead, it would result in artificiality and forced oneness. That is something we do not want." Suruchi and Bireswar's constant, if often restrained, work in keeping the avenues of communication and love open is just as crucial as the novel's blending of the two philosophical extremes clearly represented by Gandhigram and Steeltown. Though the novel's ending is unduly hopeful, it is necessary to counteract the pessimism and scepticism prevalent in many Indian novels. Shadow from Ladakh encapsulates not only Gandhi's goals, but also India's Nobel Laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore's lifelong quest: "Integration of the simple and the sophisticated; the ancient and the modern; city and village; East and West.".

Oversimplification, quantity, overuse of the Gandhian character and theme, and a lack of creativity are among Bhattacharya's key flaws. Nonetheless, he succeeds in demonstrating, as Anand and Narayan have, that the English-language novel is a suitable vehicle for Indian fiction writers. His sarcasm is sharp without being vengeful; his language is sufficient but not new; and his female characters are far more fleshed-out portrayals than those of Indian women in Indian-English novels. Finally, Shadow from Ladakh is one of the more thorough examinations of the many consequences of the East-West conflict. Bhattacharya's view of India may be rendered in a more symbolic and provocative manner with more

inventiveness and creativity, and less ambition to just feed the cravings of the novel – buying West.

So Many Hungers, Bhattacharya's debut novel, is set against the backdrop of the "Quit India" movement and the Bengal famine of the early 1940s, and deals with the issue of political, economic, and social exploitation. The title's "so many hungers" refer to political freedom, imperial expansion, money capitalists who create artificial food scarcity by hoarding, food, sex, human dignity and self-respect, and hunger as a spiritual weapon used by freedom fighters who go on hunger strikes in jail, with "Devata" even fasting to death. The novelist has done the best job of dealing with the hunger for food, and the scenes illustrating the devastation wreaked by the famine among Bengal's rural poor are among the best examples of social realism in Indian English fiction. Kajoli tries to make a living by selling newspapers rather than bartering her body - as if a young and defenceless girl could ply the latter trade in the concrete jungle of Calcutta without eventually being dragged into the former. The novel's other main characters are Samarendra, a capitalist, and his father, "Devata," a Gandhian figure.

Mohini's music has two layers of complexity. On a more intimate level, it tells the narrative of Mohini, a "city-bred, village-wed girl," and her adaptation to her new existence. On the social plane, the story depicts an attempt to "link culture with culture... Our ancient Eastern way of life with the new semi-western way of life" – a marriage of the "horoscope" and the "microscope." Due to a muddled and superficial presentation of the issues at hand, the story suffers on both levels, and the novel thus fails as a home drama of marital adjustment and a cultural statement of the East-West encounter. Jayadev, Mohini's husband, is portrayed as a pleasant blend of the finest of Indian heritage and Western intellect, yet he remains a shadowy character. The vivid realism of the scenes illustrating the Hindu marriage at its different stages, beginning with the "bride-showing," is typical of the author, yet the "music of the title" turns out to be the commonplace tones of an organ – grinder in the end.

Many serious questions are explored in He Who Rides a Tiger, undoubtedly Bhattacharya's best novel, either a compelling narrative or hilarious reversal. „A howl from the bowels of Bengal, like So Many Hungers, the novel follows the story of Kalo, a poor blacksmith who pledges vengeance on society after being imprisoned for stealing a bunch of bannas. He pretends as a pious brahmin who has been granted the miraculous vision of a Siva idol and prospers from the deception until he finds the age-old truth that he cannot dismount the tiger of his own invention without ruining himself; nonetheless, he must dismount for mental peace. Themes such as appearance and reality, the haves and have-nots, and religious hypocrisy are intertwined throughout. In the closing scene of the exposure, where the crowd spontaneously supports Kalo, Bhattacharya permits himself an amorous touch. He also considers making Kalo his megaphone at times, but the narrative, which moves at a breakneck speed, glosses over many of these issues.

This is precisely what A Goddess Named Gold, a slow-moving allegorical exercise in which a phoney magic talisman builds high hopes that are ultimately disappointed, fails to achieve.

The film Shadow from Ladakh, which won the Sahitya Akademi prize in 1967, appears to be a failure for a different reason. The use of the age-old romantic motif of one adversary's daughter falling in love with the other further enhances the depiction of a superficial contrast between two ideoloties. Shadow From Ladakh is a timely novel set against the backdrop of the 1962 Chinese invasion of Ladakh. It compares Satyajit Sen of Gandhigram'sGandhism with Bhashkar, Chief Engineer of Steeltown's scientism. The spinnning wheel and the turbine are compared to the two girls in Bhashkar's life: Satyajit's daughter, Sumita, and Rupa, the half-western child. The story, which comes to a shaky conclusion, can scarcely be said to have done justice to its intended issue.

Bhattacharya returns to the theme of East-West contact in A Dream in Hawaii, this time in Hawaii, which he describes as "no better meeting ground of East and West." The meeting is doomed because, while the East, with all of its spirituality, has yet to fully control the flesh, the West remains commercialised and perplexed. Swami Yogananda

represents the East, and the two Americans — Dr. Swift, the organisational guy who wants to use Yogananda as a tool in establishing a flourishing spiritual centre, and Dr. Gregson, the defender of permissive society – are meant to reveal two elements of modern American culture. Though the Ameircans in the novel appear to be uniformly "flat" characters, it is encouraging to see Bhattacharya avoid the temptation to embrace a preset answer at the conclusion.

More than a dozen European languages have been translated into Bhattacharya's fiction. His command of the narrative technique, the realism of his setting, his careful use of Indianisms, and his easily identifiable character types may have resulted in a portrayal of India that fits wonderfully with preconceived foreign perceptions of the nation. It's debatable whether, other from So Many Hungers and He Who Rides a Tiger, he's managed to build lasting tension.

3. FAMINE RESULTING IN HUNGER AND CASTEISM

Bhabani Bhattacharya's So Many Hungers is a devastating depiction of society's genuine face throughout history. It examines both the life of a person and the life of a society, providing a balanced knowledge of both. The work appears to have been inspired by a close awareness of hunger, notably desire for food and hunger for independence. The storey concentrates entirely around the two hungers, with special emphasis on hunger, servitude, and escape. Slavery, which was unavoidable, hunger, which had its own set of connotations, and liberation, which everyone sought. Hunger was understood differently by different social classes. Some want sustenance, while others desired political independence, power and prestige, and salacity. The plot revolves around a community of people who share shared struggles and sufferings, as well as a few aware individuals who are seeking to break free from societal obligations. It illustrates an individual's inner battle as he or she attempts to combat societal ills and solve the country's economic problems. It talks about a person's social and mental obstacles, as well as a conscious that steers him in the right direction. It's a reflection of change that's just around the bend yet is going unseen. The tale begins with a flotilla of longing for freedom and ends with the same; yet, the plot favours the need for sustenance. The scenario representing the Bengal famine is both frightening and well-executed. Through its main protagonists, the storey finds a striking balance between a heartbreaking depiction of hunger and poverty and an awe-inspiring description of fortitude and perseverance.

Famine and starvation are prominent themes in Bhattacharya's books. In So Many Hungers! and He Who Rides a Tiger, Bhattacharya paints a terrible depiction of Bengal famine in 1943. To paraphrase him, "... the scourge of hunger in the midst of conflict... no restriction of food grains, no price control, no choking of enormous sharks that play a fantastic cornering game... barns are empty – the peasants had been convinced to sell up their grain. Markets are vacant, and the grain has been hidden away... And now when rice was five times as expensive as before, weavers sold their looms to dealers from major towns... artisans sold their equipment. Fishermen's boats were cut up for firewood... The disease washed up on the beach amid high tides " (He Who Rides a Tiger, p.15).

Bhattacharya's stories paint a severe and bleak image of hunger-stricken rural India, with all of its misery and travails, uncertainties and privations, agonies and disappointments. The topics mainly involve poverty, famine, disease, traditionalism, casteism, and India's attempt to overcome these issues. His compositions strike a chord in our hearts, evoking grief and pity for the impoverished and downtrodden.

Bhabani Bhattacharya has depicted an individual's fight with self and society to achieve perfection. Fighting under a fake identity is tough for an individual. Lekha, a Brahmin girl, could never accept herself for who she was. Every day, she fought her own demons in order to assist Kalo in carrying out his plan. Lekha was highly aware of societal income and position discrepancies. She had become a goddess and a spiritual healer for the regular people in the temple, but she was confused by the unequal distribution of God. "What good is all our wealth?" cried a childless rich woman who hoped Lekha would bless her with a child one day. "Who will eat the delectable fruits that we neglect" (221). Another woman, who had nine children and was scared of having more, pleaded, "Mother, how can I keep creating children for whom I have no means of feeding or clothing?" (221). Bhattacharya emphasises the value of truth. It is easy to tell a lie, but it is far more difficult to preserve one. One cannot conceal one's genuine self.

4. FAMINE AND HUNGER IN "SO MANY HUNGERS! (1947)"

So Many Hungers!, Bhattacharya's debut novel, explores the dual themes of hunger for food and yearning for liberation. Bhattacharya was motivated to create this novel by the socio-political events of the nation shortly preceding independence, namely the Bengal Famine of 1943 and the Quit India Movement of 1942. As a result, it addresses the issue of hunger/poverty caused by the Bengal famine. It is structured on two intertwined plot strands: the storey of Rahoul, the protagonist, and his family. Also included is the heartbreaking storey of Kajoli, the peasant girl, and her family. Bhattacharya discusses the suffering that resulted from the famine, which cost the lives of over two million people. The relentless battle of man against starvation presented images of both man at his finest and at his darkest. As a result, the tale depicts the two demonic powers of war and starvation that devoured the blood of the poor. His tragic tale of the Bengal famine and the delight of profiteers and black traders is very intelligently and artistically conveyed. Here, Rahoul's life represents the battle for independence, while Kajoli's tragic narrative reflects the sorrows of the millions of men and women who died as a result of man-made starvation and the callous apathy of the alien Government.

So many cravings! The narrative features two plots: one about SamarendraBasu's family, with little Rahoul as the primary character, and another about a young girl, Kajoli, who comes from a peasant household. This is the terrible narrative of two million innocent individuals who died as a result of primarily man-made hungers in Calcutta and Bengal. So Many Hungers!, Bhattacharya's novel dealing with the pre-independence period, is one most concerned with the freedom fight with the tensions and conflicts? This work has something to say about the foreign government and the British people. Bhattacharya is harshly critical of the British government and the ruler's attitude toward the people and the country's problems. Bhattacharya's sarcastic reference to the Atlantic Charter alludes to the ruler's hypocrisy in claiming to strive for democracy while denying India democratic freedom. This novel refers to the government's coercive measures against nationalistically minded individuals.

Rahoul is studying and researching at Cambridge University at the start of the storey and has no ties to India. However, he is deeply saddened by the history of the Bengal famine and the deaths of millions of Bengalis. But it is his lofty ideals and sophisticated concepts about life and human life that distinguish him as a great man. She aspires to effect social change as a result of her religion and broad perspective on life and society.

So Many Hungers! begins with a bright new day, indicating his hope that his optimism about man and woman would not be misplaced and will lead to a change in the Bengal famine and the deaths of millions of people. So, despite the fact that he is the son of a wealthy trader who has gained, he gives free assistance to the poor and needy people who are victims of a big man-made human tragedy. His younger brother Kunal, like his brothers Rahoul, is a vibrant and adventurous young man possessing good values and a joyful personality, but his appearance is restricted to the earlier half of the narrative. Nothing is known of him when he leaves home to serve as an army officer in North Africa and Italy.

Bhattacharya blames the poor for their predicament, but he feels that their faith in God provides them the strength to overcome hunger. When Rahoul operates a free kitchen for the needy during a draught, it is clear that the father and son are diametrically opposed. On the other hand, his father intends to sell rice. For that goal, he enters the illicit market. Rahoul conveys his anguish:

> …Rahoulrealised that the empty stomach was not due to a natural calamity or agricultural failure. It was man-made scarcity, for the crop had been good, and even if the Army bought up large stores, there could be enough food for everyone with proper rationing. However, there was no rationing.(105).

The interwoven themes of freedom and hunger are more apparent, and the topic of hunger exceeds the other in content. Thus, Bhattacharya displays the raw agony of famine-stricken peasants against the backdrop of Gandhi's Satyagraha fight.

The protagonists in this storey are mute and passive viewers of the ravages of starvation. They submit to the circumstance without a fight or a protest. The novel's creative success is based on the enactment of the horrors of hunger and famine, as well as the novelist's great understanding of the existence of the rural, peasant inhabitants of Bengal and the rich splendour of life concealed within it.

They embody a vigorous existence full of vitality and boldness as a result of their beliefs. They are enhanced rather than weakened as a result of the exploitation. Through the behavioural patterns of numerous individuals, the work skillfully depicts hunger and exploitation. As a result, it is possible to deduce that the subject of hunger is widespread throughout So Many Hungers! Bhabani Bhattacharya's.

5. FAMINE AND HUNGER IN "HE WHO RIDES A TIGER (1955)"

Bhattacharya's other work, "He Who Rides a Tiger," is similar to his first novel, "So Many Hungers!" The two themes of the Bengal famine of 1943 and the Quit India Movement of 1942 have also played a role, but not as prominently as in the former. It is an assault against those who benefited from the agony of the people during the famine, as well as those who exploited them as caste rulers. The work is also a parody on Hindu orthodoxy, set against the socio-political backdrop of the Bengal famine and the liberation fight before to independence.

He Who Rides a Tiger is the narrative of Kalo's victory over society and his discovery, via many events, that honesty is man's greatest achievement. Only when he is free of the fetters that bound him does his companion Biten say admiringly, "your narrative will be a legend of liberation, a fable to inspire and awaken."

Bengal's hunger is crushing the people to death.

Kalo, too, sits idle in his smithy for days on end, watching the situation. He is concerned that Lekha "may have to scour the fields with hundreds of others, digging up soft wild roots for a meal, like a starving animal." Unable to bear witness to his daughter's hunger, Kalo chooses to travel to Calcutta in the hopes of finding employment and earning a life. Traveling without a ticket on the footboard of a train, with hundreds of other homeless men and women hanging to the footboards, his eyes are the ripe fruit inside the cabin, causing him an awful anguish. He snatches three ripe bananas and is apprehended and prosecuted for his crime. Kalo enters a guilty plea and explains his actions:

> "I was hungry, sir. A madness came upon me. It was because I thought I had to eat or I would die. A madness came upon me. I had to live".

The novel's title, He Who Rides a Tiger, alludes to the issue of hunger. Riding on the tiger alludes to man's ambition to ride on hunger. Hunger is a violent beast that kills humans in the same way as a tiger does. The two key protagonists, Kalo and Lekha, struggle from hunger and lose everything as a result. As a result, they resolve to ride the tiger of hunger to make a livelihood.

The novel's irony is found in the portrayal of the starvation and hunger. On the one hand, poor people are starving and impoverished. On the other side, the wealthy, profiteers, and black marketers are hard at work amassing fortune by whatever means necessary. The poor want maize, while the privileged want money and sex:

> "Two huge hungers had gripped the country of Bengal in the aftermath of war: the hunger for multitudes of people uprooted from the ancient ground and converted into beggars, and the appetite of the all-owning few for pleasure and greater pleasure, the raging fever of the times." Uprooted ladies with this sort of hunger had to use their bodies to temper the blazing pleasure: fever. "He Who Rides a Tiger," Bhattacharya's best work, deals with the issue of starvation and absolute powerlessness. It demonstrates that any man who struggles against society is unable to adjust, and hence must eventually reconcile himself to it.

6. CONCLUSION

The work effectively captures society, persons, and events. It emphasises the imbalance between the capital and labour classes and emphasises the value of societal balance. The strongly embedded caste system in our society is the root of many issues, since it separates people into distinct groups and usually generates enmity among them.

Bhattacharya's works have attempted to show with remarkable authenticity the conditions of India's starving and famine-stricken people, who have suffered greatly at the hands of man, machine, and nature.

He causes his characters to rebel against injustice and to lash out at those who are the source of their anguish. Aside from depicting the misery inflicted on the people of Bengal by the famine. His writings have also highlighted tremendous transformations in the life of an individual who belongs to a downtrodden and unhappy part of society. While presenting such changes, the author has given us a glimpse into the type

of society he envisions. It is a society in which caste-based superiority or inferiority has minimal meaning. It is a civilization in which moral ideals and uprightness win over frivolous and hypocritical emotions, resulting in the final triumph of good over evil and truth over lie.

In terms of describing the downtrodden and the destitute, he is without a doubt unrivalled in the field of Indian English literature. His honest and beautiful depiction of the starvation and suffering is noteworthy. Even now, there are numerous hungers in society, but the priorities have shifted. The dominating hungers in the current situation are hunger for riches, hunger for power, and greed for sex. Among these hungers, there are 'a few' Devesh Babu's and B-10's who are slaying their hungers and speaking up for the country's oppressed and humiliated masses.

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