

## Evaluation of Family and Hunger in Bhabhani Bhattacharya's Works with Especial Reference "To He Who Rides A Tiger and So Many Hungers"

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Along with Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, and Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya is certainly one of the four most renowned authors of the Indian English novel. Many Indian authors in English have explored the themes of hunger and the Indian freedom struggle, and Bhabani Bhattacharya stands out as one of the novelists who has done so in a very original manner. Bhattacharya was an author who was socially concerned and did not believe in art that is produced only for its own purpose.' The two main books to be examined in this area are "So Many Hungers!" and "He Who Rides a Tiger." These books show how the impoverished cope with famine as "weavers sold their looms to dealers from major cities who combed the countryside for deals." The story of Rahoul, the protagonist, and his family is connected with the tragic story of Kajoli, the peasant girl, and her family in "So Many Hungers!" The study's publications and reliable sources were a result of the contributions of several authors, researchers, daily newspaper offices, and the Indian government. This story demonstrates the novelist's acute awareness of rural life and dramatises the suffering caused by food and famine. The Bengal famine and the struggle for independence provide the sociopolitical setting for the work's mockery of Hindu dogma. Additionally, it shows that any guy who fights against society is unable to adapt and must thus finally make peace with it. This study also discovers that Bhattacharya is without a doubt unrivalled in the sphere of Indian English literature when it comes to depictions of the poor and destitute, and his accurate and lyrical picture of poverty and hunger is outstanding.

**Keywords:** Hunger, Casteism, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Famine, Novel

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Indian rural poverty and suffering have spawned a new genre of Indian-English literature known as "The Hunger Theme." There are much too many people living here, and many of them have already perished from starvation or famine. Therefore, people see 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." In these books, it is shown that people leave their homeland in quest of food and employment. The Hunger Theme book is best exemplified by Bhattacharya as a writer. Numerous writers have written on hunger, but none with the same passion as Bhattacharya. Bhabani Bhattacharya is a unique talent in post-independent Indian English literature. Bhattacharya has made exceptionally tenacious literary accomplishments in Indian English literature.

### **Bhabani Bhattacharya**

On November 10th, 1906, Bhattacharya was born in Bhagalpur, Bihar. As a very young kid, his mother

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and grandpa identified and fostered his skills. When he was twelve years old, a Bengali journal named "Mouchack" published his first piece. Bhabani's father, a District and Sessions Judge, wanted him to work for the government but was not aware of his writing prowess. Bhabani, who received his degree from Patna University in 1927, proceeded his studies at the University of London from 1929 to 1934, where he obtained a B.A., (Hons. He was awarded a Ph.D. for his historical investigation in 1934. Salila Mukherji gave birth to a boy and two daughters after they were married in 1935.

Bhattacharya worked as the press attaché for the Indian Embassy in Washington, D.C., from 1950 to 1952. Additionally, he was employed by the Illustrated Weekly of India as an assistant editor. He worked for the Tagore Commemorative Society in New Delhi from 1959 to 1960. He was hired as a consultant by the Ministry of Education in New Delhi in 1961, and he remained there until 1967. He won the 1967 Sahitya Academy Award for his book *Shadow from Ladakh. Gandhi the Writer—The Image as It Grew* was written with funding from the Ford Foundation in 1968–1969 to mark the "Father of the Nation's" birth centennial. He was also a member of the advisory board for the Sahitya Academy. He has been a Senior Specialist at the Honolulu East-West Centre since 1969, and he is now an adjunct professor at the University of Hawaii.

## 2. MAKING OF THE BHABHANI BHATTACHARYA

Anand and Narayan created the groundwork and built the framework for the Indian-English heritage, which then grew and flourished. Unfortunately, there are just as many writers of the Indian-English fiction who are tedious, repetitive, and uncreative. Additionally, a lot of capable popularizers of the Indian-English book need review. The most representative example of the sort of Indian writer now writing in English is undoubtedly Bhabani Bhattacharya's thesis.

The Illustrated Weekly of India's deputy editor, Bhattacharya, was born in 1906. Prior to becoming a press attaché at the Indian Embassy in Washington, he was a student in London. He creates technical books that sometimes read like epic movie screenplays. He inherits from Forester the strong eye for East-West contrasts, the concern for social, economic, and political themes, and the hilarious exaggeration of Naryan. His accomplishments fall short of those of his three predecessors because he leans too much on quirkiness and manufactured happy endings. He merits recognition for his well produced storylines, well-developed characters, and skilful juxtaposition of the global and local, external and internal, repercussions of EastWest divisions, even if it is ultimately oversimplified. *He Who Rides a Tiger* (1954), *A Goddess Named Gold* (1960), and *Shadows from Ladakh* (1966) are examples of his mature work.

Despite being hailed as a linguistic pioneer, Bhattacharya's experimental word creation has come under fire since it lacks an English or Bengali counterpart. This passage from *A Goddess Named Gold* serves as an experiment.

He heard a sentence when he found himself in the pitch-black field, and it icily stung his blood. The three bhootnis: bhoot, bhootni. He had taken the route that went around the neem tree that the bhootni had been known to haunt in his grove. His anxiety was increased by an owl's screech. Four people in Sonamatti had seen the ghost, the species' female, hanging skeletal legs from its perch. After being assaulted by her, one of them became mad and needed to be treated by an ojha, or exorcist, who had been called from Bhimtek, 20 miles away.

Looking at her as she passed by, he recalled a peculiar lyric he'd heard at a local mushaira, a customary event when poets read their works in front of an audience that cheered vociferously and regularly for each moving stanza.

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By the time he wrote *Shadow from Ladakh*, Bhattacharya had fixed the issues that had marred the dialogue in his prior books. Similar to Narayan, his characters speak simple, correct English. There are occasional violations, such the customary deletion of an article in Indian: "Happily would you wear a load of gilded ornaments!" Curses may be treated by Bhattacharya in a silly and futile manner similar to 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 multiwived Motichand'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 summarise 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 longstanding 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:

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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 sense of patriotism rivals that of any other Indian-English of the past century, yet it does not obstruct the considerable character growth of Shadow from Ladakh.

Bhattacharya's criticism of the British is muted in his early works, maybe because British rule had already ended at the time they were published or because he couldn't bear to offend his Western readers. Since there is a strong declaration of Indian principles, Bhattacharya identifies more with Narayan than with Anand. Bhattacharya is far more grounded in his support for India than Forster is. All of the heroic characters pass a Gandhian test of bravery and/or love, and superstition is either disregarded or transcended by being raised to a symbolic pinnacle.

Dorothy Spencer's assertion that characters in Indian and English books are essentially different is certainly refuted by Bhattacharya. His characters aren't just slaves to the group, class, or caste they represent; they are as distinctive and eccentric as those of classic Western writers. Characters are usually vociferous defenders of certain values. Bhattacharya has the ability to transcend prejudices. This is particularly true of the female characters he writes about, and his depictions of them are all the more impressive since so few Indian-English writers have been able to capture the essence of Indian femininity in all of its nuanced complexity.

As a man's love awakens an Indian woman's brain and body to a new knowledge of the worth of her own individuality and its connection to the world, each story on one level follows the growth of an Indian lady from infancy to adolescence. Due to India's traditional system of arranged marriages, which discourages and stigmatises such love meetings, this rise is all the more startling. It is the most obvious proof that Bhattacharya's women are intelligent and powerful enough to react to life in a way other than by passively accepting their lot. Even if the circumstances surrounding Lekha from *He Who Rides a Tiger*, Meera from *A Goddess Named Gold*, and Sumita from *Shadow from Ladakh* are all too similar, the circumstances around them and the men who are the objects of their passion give each portrayal of this kind of relationship a distinctive spin. Because each of the three girls was an unintended victim of a loving father's scheme to teach the Indian people a lesson, the three are considerably more similar to one another.

In *He Who Rides a Tiger*, Lekha is the gifted but mothless kid of blacksmith Kalo. During the terrible Bengali famine of 1943, Kalo is compelled to leave his village to seek employment in Calcutta. He receives a three-month term of hard work for stealing three bananas to satisfy his hunger. Following his release, he must decide between famine and the unfavourable prospect of working as a pimp. Before pollution happens, Kalo rescues Lekha from a prostitution ring where she is being kept hostage after being abducted.

Untouchable Kalo creates a "miracle" by pretending to be a Brahmin priest and raising the deity Shiva from the soil. This kind of fraud preys on people's religious sensitivities, and although Kalo takes great pleasure in tricking dishonest businesses into helping him construct a temple, Lekha worries hysterically about the poor who place their trust and money in the hands of trickery. Kalo is so proud of himself that he mounts this lie "as if it were a tiger that he could not dismount lest the tiger pounce on him and devour him up," as he puts it. Ironically, as Lekha matures into a woman and tries to come to terms with her feelings for B-10, a social reformer who has renounced his Brahminism to lead the poor in their fight for food, she reluctantly but obediently consents to be deified as the temple's

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Mother of Seven-fold Bliss.

The plot's crazy superstition-based outcomes strain the mind, yet Kalo and Lekha's mental attitudes alter in ways that are psychologically believable and sensitively carved. Kalo and Lekha finally decide to exact revenge on themselves by committing acts of great personal sacrifice, but Bhattacharya intervenes to rescue them just in time to guarantee that good prevails over evil. Even when the minor characters are obviously evil or saintly, Bhattacharya succeeds in making them believable. Two examples are the elderly Viswanath, who disrupts the temple's ritual by giving starving children the milk required to bathe Shiva's stone image, and Sir Abalabandhu, the temple trustees' chairman and a rice hoarder, who still praises Kalo's "business sense" in spite of knowing about the fraud.

The main character of *A Goddess Named Gold*, Meera, is an unusual amalgam of idolatrous Hinduism and precocious Gandhian-ism. Once again, Bhattacharya employs the paranormal to craft a skillfully woven story that is both tremendously suspenseful and evocative. Of course, Gandhian compassion wins out against superstition, and everyone has a happy ending. Despite the book's predetermined conclusion, Bhattacharya spends a lot of time inside Meera's tortured head as she transitions from "now an unconscious tool for evil, now a conscious instrument for good." Equally convincing is his depiction of the other characters' changing views towards Meera as they start to worry about the repercussions of her acts of generosity, which are meant to turn their copper into gold.

The majority of the other characters in Bhattacharya's least artistically satisfying book, *A Goddess Named Gold*, are less believable. The punchline of Bhattacharya's jokes is too often Seth Samsundar, the affluent and extortionate textile trader displaying his ostentatious English bathrobe and parasol and three times the unfortunate victim of superstitious, get-rich-quick schemes. Although he has a vibrant personality, he still comes out as a weak Margayya in Narayan's *The Financial Expert*. His beautiful wife Lakshmi plots against him much too often to be considered seriously.

Sohanlal, Meera's beloved, is a witty but flat reincarnation of B-10 from *He Who Rides a Tiger*. He is an alleged city snob and a former soldier. The enigmatic Montreal, Meera's Granpapa, is a *deus ex machina* with too moralistic insight and overly staged appearances. The only person who can completely complete Meera is her grandmother, a still active freedom warrior with a great sense of humour, maternal instincts, and practical insights. Both characters agree that Meera's Grandma is the reason for her own idealistic and loving nature.

Despite the obvious symbolism, these are all real-world depictions, and Bhattacharya adds a slew of secondary characters that are far more compelling than those in *A Passage to India*, including matchmaker Mrs. Sarojini Mehra, carnal ex-stewardess Rupa, who "mothers" five Chinese girls during the border crisis, politician Bireswar Basu, a practical but devoted friend who delivers his parliamentary speeches in eight-lives verse. *Shadow from Ladakh's* characters are all a touch too polished and obvious, but there's no denying that they all fit within the social-realism genre that dominates Indian and English literature. Many of the characters are more complex iterations of those from his previous works, but Bhattacharya gives them more life and realism.

*Shadow from Ladakh* is one of the most thorough and in-depth analyses of East-West differences. The anti-British "Quit India" movement is the sombre background against which *He Who Rides a Tiger* is situated. "A simple slogan was on every prisoner's lips." Indian victory. Thank you. The captives described the British government's careless response to the fatal famine, saying that "the municipal authorities have leased military vans and trucks and set up what they call evacuation squads." They reply to our requests in this manner. The country is once again filled with hunger. There, it will be

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concealed. Because *A Goddess Named Gold* takes place just before India becomes independent, there aren't many offensive allusions to the British, particularly the Red Turbans, and the novel instead focuses on the emerging political issue of how India's common people would usurp power from their own affluent citizens. According to Iyengar, Meera stands in for India, and her taveez is a symbol of 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

Bhattacharya argues in *Shadow from Ladakh* that political disputes between the East and the West are not necessarily as implacable as those between the East and the East. Despite the fact that China and India are engaged in a bitter conflict, the discourse maintains both traditional and contemporary elements of East-West political conflicts. Mrs. Tung Pao of Peking growls at Suruchi at the Moscow Peace Congress, saying, "The delegate from India does not agree with me." This makes sense. Her nation has turned into a weak puppet after selling its just won freedom to imperialist powers. She trembles and brands Suruchi a "shameless lackey of Anglo-American capitalism" in response to her cool answer. Later, India's Minister Without Portfolio warns Satyajit that "China now is as self-centered, as chauvinistic, as Britain used to be in the height of its colonial expansionism." Read the diplomatic messages Peking has been sending us; their arrogance is utter ugliness. The East-West political divide dialectic is still helpful for analogies and comparisons. The narrator states, "Now it was not the white man — it was Asian versus Asian," implying that the propagandistic claims are the same whether made by Masco Tse-tung or Robert Clive. Neo-Napoleonism existed throughout Asia, but more violent, dedicated, and atavistic."

Bhattacharya's dramatisations of picturesque or outmoded Indian societal values that block or inhibit the formation of human relationships, which are sometimes irritably explicit, are typically restricted to personal-social differences. There is hope that these barriers will be overcome in *Shadow from Ladakh*, where Bhashkar Roy, "a twelve-year-in-American man," chooses Sumita over Rupa, a girl who spins and has the straightforward virtues and values of a "Indian of the epic age," despite the fact that Rupa is a very modern girl and a seemingly compatible mate. Another promising aspect is the warm reaction of the five young Chinese girls, who see Rupa as a sixth sibling and Bhashkar as a second father and who want to spread the goodwill of the Indian people among their compatriots.

There are racial tensions, but politics downplays them. The cultural differences between the East and the West are brought to light in *Shadow from Ladakh*, especially in Steeltown's determination to engulf Gandhigram. The actual cultural, religious, and philosophical dilemma is "the weak old-world wheel of wood placed against the huge machineries of the contemporary age." Bhattacharya approaches this contradiction with reality and in-depth knowledge, but not subtlety, as the two geographical names imply. Bhashkar Roy argues in favour of steel, progress, and the physical well-being of man whereas Satyajit and Sumita support the spinning wheel, tradition, and the human soul.

The biggest accomplishment of the story is how these people are eventually forced to reassess their one-sided loyalties, change their positions, and cooperate cordially.

Technically, Satyajit's vision succeeds, but only because he realises that his own righteousness has been exalted while he has ignored Gandhi's true teaching: "No Culture can live if it seeks to be exclusive." My home shouldn't be completely encircled, and there shouldn't be too much space between my windows. I want my home to be a cultural melting pot. We must add new experiences to our customs in order to strengthen them. On the other hand, the soul of the soil will have an impact on the alien components. Harmony would not arise from one dominating culture absorbing the

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others; instead, imposed oneness and artificiality would ensue. We do not want it at all. The novel's successful merging of the two philosophical extremes, Gandhigram and Steeltown, is just as important as Suruchi and Bireswar's ongoing, though sometimes restricted, efforts to keep the lines of communication and love open. The novel's finale may seem too optimistic, yet it is required to balance out the gloom and gloom that permeate many Indian books. Rabindranath Tagore, India's Nobel Laureate poet, and Gandhi's objectives are both encapsulated in *Shadow from Ladakh*: "Integration of the simple and the sophisticated; the ancient and the modern; city and village; East and West."

Bhattacharya's main shortcomings are oversimplification, quantity, exploitation of the Gandhian character and topic, and a lack of inventiveness. He nonetheless succeeds in proving that the English-language novel is a valid medium for Indian fiction authors, just as Anand and Narayan have done. His vocabulary is adequate but not original, his satire is biting without being spiteful, and his female characters are given considerably more development than Indian women in Indian English books. Finally, one of the most in-depth analyses of the multiple effects of the East-West war may be found in *Shadow from Ladakh*. With more ingenuity and imagination, and less desire to just satisfy the appetites of the novel-buying West, Bhattacharya's perspective on India may be portrayed in a more symbolic and challenging way.

The subject of political, economic, and social exploitation is explored in Bhattacharya's first book, *So Many Hungers*, which is set against the background of the "Quit India" movement and the Bengal famine in the early 1940s. The phrase "so many hungers" in the title alludes to the need for political freedom, imperial expansion, financial capitalists who hoard food to make it appear scarcer than it actually is, food, sex, human dignity, and self-respect, as well as the use of hunger as a spiritual weapon by prisoners who engage in hunger strikes, with "Devata" even fasting to death. The passages depicting the destruction caused by the famine among Bengal's rural poor are among the strongest illustrations of social realism in Indian English literature. The author has done the best job of dealing with the issue of hunger. As if a young and defenceless girl could practise the latter profession in the concrete jungle of Calcutta without ultimately getting drawn into the former, Kajoli attempts to earn a livelihood by selling newspapers instead of trading her body. Samarendra, a businessman, and his father, "Devata," a person associated with Gandhi, are the novel's other two key characters.

There are two levels of intricacy in *Mohini's music*. It chronicles the story of Mohini, a "city-bred, village-wed girl," and how she adjusts to her new life on a more personal level. The narrative illustrates an effort to "link culture with culture... Our ancient Eastern way of life with the new semi-western way of life" on the social level via the union of the "horoscope" and the "microscope." The book fails as both a domestic drama of marital adjustment and a cultural statement of the EastWest encounter due to a jumbled and shallow handling of the pertinent subjects. Mohini's spouse Jayadev is presented as a charming synthesis of the best of Indian tradition and Western intelligence, yet he is still a mysterious figure. The author's trademark vivid realism is evident in the scenes describing the Hindu marriage at its many phases, starting with the "bride-showing," yet the "music of the title" ultimately turns out to be the banal sounds of an organ grinder.

*He Who Rides a Tiger*, unquestionably Bhattacharya's greatest book, tackles a lot of weighty issues via either an engaging story or a funny reversal. Like *So Many Hungers*, "A Howl from the Core of Bengal" tells the tale of Kalo, a destitute blacksmith who swears revenge on society after spending time in jail for stealing a number of bannas. He presents himself as a devout brahmin who has been blessed with a miracle vision of a Siva statue, and he gains advantage from the fraud until he learns the age-old

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reality that he cannot get off the imaginary tiger without damaging himself, but that he must get off for mental tranquilly. Throughout, there are references to themes like appearance and reality, the wealthy and the poor, and religious hypocrisy. In the exposure's last moment, when the audience cheers Kalo on on its own, Bhattacharya allows himself a passionate contact. At times, he even thinks of using Kalo as his loudhailer, although the narrative's rapid-fire pace glosses over a lot of these points.

This is exactly what the slow-moving allegorical exercise *A Goddess Named Gold*, in which a fake magic amulet raises lofty expectations that are finally dashed, fails to accomplish.

The 1967 Sahitya Akademi Award-winning movie *Shadow* from Ladakh seems to be a failure for a different reason. The representation of a surface-level conflict between two ideologies is further enhanced by the inclusion of the traditional romance theme of one adversary's daughter falling in love with the other. The 1962 Chinese invasion of Ladakh serves as the setting for the topical book *Shadow From Ladakh*. It contrasts Bhashkar, Chief Engineer of Steeltown's scientism with Satyajit Sen of Gandhigram's Gandhism. The two daughters in Bhashkar's life, Rupa, the half-western kid, and Satyajit's daughter, Sumita, are likened to the spinning wheel and the turbine. One can hardly say that the narrative, which has a questionable ending, did justice to the topic at hand.

In *A Dream in Hawaii*, Bhattacharya revisits the subject of East-West encounter, setting the story in Hawaii, which he refers to as "no better meeting ground of East and West." The conference will fail because the West is still commercialised and bewildered while the East, for all its spirituality, has not yet achieved complete mastery over the body. Swami Yogananda stands in for the East, while Dr. Swift and Dr. Gregson, two Americans who wish to utilise Yogananda to build a successful spiritual centre and protect permissive society, respectively, are supposed to symbolise two aspects of contemporary American culture. Despite the fact that the Ameircans in the book seem to be all very "flat" people, it is heartening to see Bhattacharya resist the need to adopt a predetermined conclusion.

Bhattacharya's literature has been translated into more than a dozen European languages. A picture of India that fits well with preconceived foreign conceptions of the country may have been the consequence of his grasp of the storytelling method, the reality of the environment, his careful use of Indianisms, and his instantly recognisable character types. It's questionable if he has succeeded in creating enduring suspense except from *So Many Hungers* and *He Who Rides a Tiger*.

### 3. FAMINE RESULTING IN HUNGER AND CASTEISM

Bhabani Bhattacharya's *"So Many Hungers"* presents a devastating portrayal of society throughout history, delving into the lives of both individuals and communities. It explores the dual hunger for sustenance and independence, drawing inspiration from a deep awareness of these desires. The narrative centers on the themes of hunger, servitude, and liberation, weaving a tale that addresses slavery, various interpretations of hunger among different social classes, and the pursuit of political power, prestige, and desire. The story revolves around a group of people who share common struggles, along with a few individuals determined to break free from societal constraints.

This work vividly illustrates the internal conflict faced by individuals as they grapple with societal issues and attempt to solve their country's economic challenges. It underscores the social and mental obstacles individuals encounter, guided by their conscience toward the right path. It serves as a reflection of impending change that often goes unnoticed. The story begins and ends with a yearning for freedom, yet it places a significant emphasis on the basic need for sustenance. The depiction of the Bengal famine within the narrative is both terrifying and skillfully executed. Through its central

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characters, the story strikes a poignant balance between the heartbreaking portrayal of hunger and poverty and the awe-inspiring depiction of resilience and determination.

Famine and starvation are recurring themes in Bhattacharya's works, with "So Many Hungers!" and "He Who Rides a Tiger" offering a stark portrayal of the Bengal famine in 1943. In his own words, Bhattacharya describes the dire circumstances during the famine, highlighting the absence of food grain restrictions, price controls, and the unchecked exploitation by profiteers. The situation led to empty barns, peasants selling their grain, vacant markets, and the hiding of grain. The dire economic situation forced weavers, artisans, and fishermen to part with their livelihoods, resulting in immense suffering.

Bhabani Bhattacharya's narratives consistently paint a grim picture of hunger-stricken rural India, depicting its suffering, uncertainties, deprivations, and challenges related to poverty, famine, disease, traditionalism, and casteism. His writings evoke profound empathy and sorrow for the impoverished and oppressed, striking a chord in the hearts of readers.

In Bhattacharya's exploration of an individual's struggle with self-identity and society, we see the difficulty of living under a false identity. The character Lekha, a Brahmin girl, grapples with her own inner demons daily as she assists Kalo in his plan. She keenly observes the disparities in societal wealth and status, serving as a goddess and spiritual healer in the temple for ordinary people, yet perplexed by the uneven distribution of God's blessings. The narrative highlights the poignant questions raised by the less fortunate, questioning the worth of wealth and the distribution of resources.

Bhattacharya underscores the importance of truth in his work, emphasizing that while telling a lie may be easy, maintaining one's true self hidden is a far more challenging endeavor.

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

The first book by Bhattacharya, *So Many Hungers!*, tackles the dual themes of desire for food and longing for freedom. The Bengal Famine of 1943 and the Quit India Movement of 1942 were socio-political events that occurred in the country just before independence that inspired Bhattacharya to write this book. Thus, it tackles the problem of hunger and poverty brought on by the Bengal famine. Rahoul, the protagonist, and his family's story form its two connected storyline threads. The tragic tale of Kajoli, the peasant girl, and her family is also featured. Bhattacharya talks on the misery brought on by the famine, which claimed more than two million lives. The never-ending struggle of man against famine provided pictures of both the best and worst aspects of man. The story therefore portrays the two evil forces of war and famine, which drank the blood of the poor. He conveys the Bengal famine tragedy in a very clever and beautiful way, much to the satisfaction of profiteers and illicit merchants. Here, Rahoul's life stands in for the struggle for freedom, and Kajoli's terrible story mirrors the grief of the millions of people who perished due to man-made famine and the foreign Government's callous indifference.

Countless desires The story has two plots: one concerning SamarendraBasu's family, with little Rahoul serving as the main character, and the other focusing on a small child named Kajoli who is from a peasant family. This is the tragic story of the two million innocent people who perished in Calcutta and Bengal due to hungers that were mostly caused by humans. Is the pre-independence era book *So Many Hungers!* by Bhattacharya chiefly concerned with the tensions and conflicts surrounding the liberation struggle? This piece has something to say about both the British people and the foreign government. Bhattacharya has strong criticism for the British government's policies

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towards the populace and the nation's issues. The ironic allusion made by Bhattacharya to the Atlantic Charter highlights the ruler's hypocrisy in professing to work towards democracy while denying India democratic freedom. The government's forceful actions against people with nationalist ideologies are discussed in this book.

At the beginning of the story, Rahoul is a Cambridge University student and researcher who has no connection to India. He is, nevertheless, very disturbed by the history of the Bengal famine and the millions of Bengalis who perished as a result. But what makes him a wonderful man are his high goals and profound views on life and the human condition. Due to her faith and wide outlook on life and society, she hopes to bring about societal change.

His hope that his optimism in man and woman would not be mistaken and lead to a shift in the Bengal famine and the deaths of millions of people is expressed in the way *So Many Hungers!* opens, with a beautiful new day. He so provides free support to the needy and destitute individuals who are the victims of a significant human tragedy, despite the fact that he is the son of a rich businessman who has benefited. His younger brother Kunal, like his brothers Rahoul, is a young guy who is active and adventurous, who also has strong morals and a pleasant attitude, although he only appears in the first part of the story. When he departs from his family to serve as an army officer in North Africa and Italy, nobody is aware of him.

Although Bhattacharya holds the poor responsible for their situation, he believes that their trust in God gives them the willpower to conquer hunger. It is obvious that the father and son are at odds when Rahoul runs a free meal for the poor during a drought. His father, on the other hand, wants to sell rice. He joins the black market in order to do that. Rahoul describes his pain:

...Rahoul realised 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 connections between the themes of freedom and hunger are more obvious, and the material of the issue of hunger is more extensive. Thus, against the background of Gandhi's Satyagraha struggle, Bhattacharya depicts the unadulterated suffering of famine-stricken peasants.

The main characters in this story are quiet, apathetic observers of starvation's effects. They accept the situation without a struggle or objection. The novel's artistic success is founded on the realistic portrayal of the miseries of hunger and famine, as well as the author's deep awareness of the lives of Bengal's rural, peasant residents and the rich splendour of life that is veiled there.

As a consequence of their convictions, they live an active living that is full of energy and courage. The outcome of the exploitation is that they are strengthened rather than diminished. The piece deftly portrays starvation and exploitation via the behaviours of different persons. Thus, it may be inferred that the theme of hunger is prevalent throughout *So Many Hungers!* that of Bhabani Bhattacharya.

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

His second book, "He Who Rides a Tiger," is comparable to his first, "So Many Hungers!" The 1942 Quit India Movement and the 1943 Bengal famine also played a part, but less significantly than in the earlier subject. It is an attack on those who gained from the famine's suffering of the populace as well as those who used them to further their caste system. The Bengal famine and the struggle for independence provide the sociopolitical setting for the work's mockery of Hindu dogma.

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The story of Kalo's triumph against society and his realisation that honesty is the pinnacle of human success is told in *He Who Rides a Tiger*. He doesn't tell his buddy Biten in praise until he is free of the chains that have held him: "Your narrative will be a legend of liberation, a fable to inspire and awaken."

Bengal's hunger is crushing the people to death.

Kalo also observes the issue while spending days on end doing nothing at his forge. He is worried that Lekha "may have to scour the fields with hundreds of others, digging up soft wild roots for a meal, like a starving animal." Without being able to see his daughter suffer from hunger, Kalo decides to go to Calcutta in search of work and a better life. His eyes are the ripe fruit inside the cabin, bringing him great suffering as he rides without a ticket with hundreds of other homeless people who are clinging to the footboards. He steals three ripe bananas, gets caught, and is charged with a felony. Kalo pleads guilty and provides an account of his activities.

"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".

*He Who Rides a Tiger*, the title of the book, relates to the problem of hunger. The expression "riding on the tiger" refers to man's desire to ride on hunger. Hunger is a ferocious animal that kills people in much the same manner as tigers do. The two main characters, Kalo and Lekha, fight with hunger and end up losing everything. They decide to ride the tiger of hunger to earn a living as a consequence.

Irony in the book may be seen in how malnutrition and hunger are portrayed. On the one hand, the underprivileged are famished and destitute. The affluent, profiteers, and black marketers, on the other hand, are hard at work accumulating money by whatever means necessary. The wealthy desire sex and money, while the poor seek maize:

"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*,"

The greatest writing of Bhattacharya addresses the problems of famine and complete helplessness. It shows that every guy who fights against society is unable to adapt and must thus finally make peace with it.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The artwork successfully depicts society, people, and events. It highlights the disparity between the classes of capital and labour as well as the need of social balance. Our society's deeply ingrained caste system, which divides individuals into various groups and often fosters animosity among them, is the foundation of many problems.

The malnourished and famine-stricken people of India, who have suffered immensely at the hands of man, machine, and nature, have been tried to be shown in Bhattacharya's works with a surprising degree of reality.

He incites his characters to revolt against injustice and to take their frustration out on those who have caused them pain. In addition to showing the suffering brought on by the hunger for the Bengali people. His books have also shown how a person from a marginalised and unhappy sector of society

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may undergo enormous changes in their life. The author has provided us with a peek of the kind of society he sees when discussing such developments. In this culture, caste-based superiority or inferiority means very nothing. It is a civilisation where moral principles and uprightness prevail over petty, hypocritical feelings, leading to the ultimate victory of good over evil and the truth over lies.

He is unmatched in the realm of Indian English writing when it comes to depicting the oppressed and the impoverished. His accurate and exquisite portrayal of the famine and misery is notable. There are still many hungers in society today, but the emphasis has changed. Currently, desire for sex, greed for power, and hunger for wealth are the three most prevalent hungers. There are 'a few' Devesh Babus and B-10s who are battling their hungers and fighting for the nation's downtrodden and degraded people among these hungers.

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