

Fundamental Motives in Hungry Tide by Amitav Ghosh

Ramen Goswami,
Research Scholar
Magadh University, Bodh Gaya
Email- eros.ramen2012@gmail.com

Abstract:

Literary depictions of hunger had been a strong motif within the writings of the many writers across the planet. Because the act of eating takes such an important place within the day-to-day lifetime of the humans yet as within the universal struggle for survival, the motif of hunger becomes a robust force that drives the action and plot of the many works of art. Indian writers in English also are no exception during this regard. In Indian English literature, within the field of fiction, novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Bhabani Bhattacharya and Kamala Markandaya had expressed their concern for the poor, the hungry and therefore the destitutes in their novels. Anand in his two novels *Untouchable* (1933) and *Coolie* (1936), R. K. Narayan's *the Guide* (1958), Bhattacharya's *Hungers* (1947) and *He who Rides a Tiger* (1956) and Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a very Sieve* (1954) and a couple of *Rice* (1966) have raised their influential voice against the matter of famine and malnourishment. Paul Verghese correctly comments that "Food is that the primary requisite of human dignity; hunger debases and dehumanises man. That's why hunger is that the theme of an oversized number of Indo-Anglian novels" (qtd. in Rai 6). Though the motif of hunger employed by the novelists isn't a brand new one, Amitav Ghosh has attempted to use it in an exceedingly different manner. This paper is a shot as an example how Ghosh has used the motif of hunger within the literal sense of the word still as within the suggestive sense in his novel *The Hungry Tide*.

Keywords — hunger, tide, dwellers, poverty, deprived

I. INTRODUCTION

Amitav Ghosh, one among the foremost Indian English writers writes his works in tune with the world changes, multicultural environs and cosmopolitanism. But at the identical time, he has not didn't portray the darker sides of the 000 India in his novels. His novel *The Hungry Tide* tells the sad tale of the agonies of the low class refugees and therefore the harsh realities of the lifetime of the Sundarbans islanders. Regarding the motif of hunger, Ghosh has used it both within the literal sense and within the suggestive sense within the *Hungry Tide*. C. L. Khatri distinguishes between two types of hunger: "the hunger of the rich, black-

marketeers, the oppressors for pleasance and therefore the hunger of the poor to fulfill the bare needs of life" (61). While the novels of Bhattacharya and Markandaya cater to the theme of hunger within the more literal sense of the term, the Decadent poets have exemplified unrequited love as a form of starvation. As an example, in Swinburne's "Laus Veneris", the speaker refers to his sensual love in terms of hunger. He depicts his bodily longing as 'a feverish famine in my veins'. Though Ghosh doesn't connect hunger for sexual cravings, he suggestively refers hunger in terms of friendliness.

Ghosh portrays hunger within the literal sense of the word as he shows how the poor islanders fight with the calamitous environment to urge their daily single meal. When Nirmal and Nilima first came from Calcutta to induce settled in Lucibari - one in every of the islands of the Sundarbans - in 1950, they were astounded by the poverty-stricken condition of the tide country. The soil tire poor crops; the floods and storms rendered the ground sterile. Most of the families subsided on one day meal. "The destitution of the tide country was like to remind them of the terrible famine that had devastated Bengal in 1942 - except that in Lucibari hunger and catastrophe were some way of life" (HT 79). The settlers of Lucibari were drawn to Lusibari within the beginning of twentieth century by the promise of free farmland by a Scottish visionary Sir Daniel Hamilton. The dwellers were mainly peasants but hunger drove them to hunt, fishing and honey collecting. The result was catastrophic - many died of drowning; many were killed by tigers and crocodiles: "No day perceived to pass without the news of somebody being killed by a tiger, a snake or a crocodile" (HT 79).

For the sake of some of rice, the boys had to risk their lives within the process of foraging for food. As a result such a large amount of young men perished leaving their young wives widowed and their children fatherless who spent "a lifetime of dependence and years of abuse and exploitation" (HT 81). One in every of the central characters of the novel Kusum lost her father when she was just five years old. Her father was killed by a tiger when he visited forage for firewood within the reserve forest. Her mother was cheated by a person called Dilip Choudhury and was sold at a brothel. When Kusum was wanted by the identical man who pushed her mother into a lifetime of abuse, she was helped to flee by the nice offices of her fellow islander Horen.

Ghosh contrasts the act of eating of the two characters that have come from different

backgrounds - Fokir, a poor fisherman and Piya, a cetologist from the US. Though Fokir is in his twenties, hunger and poverty had given his "skeletal frame a glance of utter destitution" (HT 46). Being a poor fisherman he could scarcely satisfy the requirements of his family. As a scientist working within the field Piya had to be doubling cautious in her eating habit. For her surveys, she prepares herself with intake water, high-protein nourishment bar etc to stay her bodily fit. During her first journey in search of the river dolphins, she happened to stay in Fokir's boat. When Fokir was cooking the feast with spices, the "smells were harsh on Piya's nose" (HT 96) which she felt were like "phantoms... clawing at her throat and her eyes" (HT 97). When Fokir gave her a portion of rice and cooked crab, she refused his present. But he "accepted her refusal with a readiness that surprised her... and gave the plate to Tutul [Fokir's five year old son] who devoured it greedily" (HT 97). Tutul's voracious devouring of meal could also be contrasted with the prosperous children's tradition of eluding from their snack.

While Bhattacharya paints a gruesome picture of starvation and death in such a lot of Hungers! Which portrays the Bengal famine of 1942, Ghosh's rendition of the scene of starvation is relatively mild. He makes it mild by presenting it through used information. The Morichjhapi butchery that happened in 1979 unfolds through Nirmal's journal. a bunch of Bangladesh refugees who escaped from the concentration camp-like situation reached one in every of the islands of Sundarbans to form a distinct segment for themselves; after they confronted the state Communist government which was in no mood to tolerate their presence, they were ruthlessly drained from their loved soil in an event called 'Morichjhapi massacre' of 1979.

So as to evacuate them from the island, the govt. used force within the process. The police first used the bludgeon of hunger against the deprived refugees. They believed that if the refugees were pushed into starvation, they'd surrender their fight.

Previously the govt. had imposed a ban on Morichjhapi under section 144, the law accustomed quell civil disturbances. The refugee settlers were forcibly prevented from bringing rice or potable to Morichjhapi. As a result, many folks died of hunger and starvation: “despite careful rationing, food had run out and also the settlers had been reduced to eating grass. The police had destroyed the tubewells and there was no potable water left; the settlers were drinking from puddles and ponds and an outbreak of cholera had broken out” (HT 260).

The government’s appetite for money that pours from the world-wide financial support agencies which attempt to protect the scarce Bengal tigers and which make the deprived islanders to be scapegoats will be emblematically compared with the popular fable of the tide country. Bon Bibi is taken into explanation to be the protectors of the woods by the tide country people. She left one a part of the wilderness to be ruled by the demon Dokkhin Rai; the opposite part she claimed for herself to form it safe for human settlement. All was healthy until human gluttony intruded to distress this order. When a person called Dhona entered the domain of Dokkhin Rai, the demon proposed a pact to him – Dhona had to supply a young lad named Dukhey as food to Dokkhin Rai who sometimes takes the shape of a tiger; in exchange he would give Dhona an excellent cargo of honey and wax. Dhona agreed to the cut price. But Bon Bibi came and saved Dukhey at the minute. Thus Bon Bibi became the protectress of the islands. Here Dhona’s greediness will be compared thereupon of the govt. But the sad irony is that while Bon Bibi came and rescued Dukhey from the upcoming mishap, nothing and nobody saved the unfortunate refugees from the tragedy. Within the massacre at Morichjhapi thousands of individuals were ruthlessly murdered by the personnel. Ross Mallick estimates that “as many as 17,000 people died” (114) within the massacre including those that “perished of cholera, starvation, disease, exhaustion, in transit while sent back to their camps,

by drowning when their boats were scuttled by the police or shot to death in Kashipur, Kumirmari and Morichjhanpi by police firings” (Jalais 6). Nobody knows obviously the amount of deaths during the eviction. No investigation or enquiry was conducted to search out the culprits who were involved within the violence.

Bengal tigers, the much feared predators are enthusiastically secluded by various global environmental groups. But within the name of tiger conservation, human lives are threatened by the state. Ghosh argues that human lives are valued somewhat less than those of tigers. The tigers of the tide country have urbanized a odd habit of man-eating. There are numerous theories to prove how that they had developed a taste for human flesh. Encroachment of individuals that led to the loss of habitat and therefore the tigers’ confusion regarding territory thanks to the tide’s washing away of tigers’ scent markings are said to be the first reasons for the attack of tigers.

During her meeting with the Sundarbans dwellers, the canvasser Annu Jalais was often told that the most bases why the tigers had become man-eaters can be traced to the aggressive events of Morichjhapi. “The villagers explained that tigers, annoyed at the disturbances caused by the unleashed violence within the forest had started attacking people which this was how they ended up getting a taste for human flesh. Others argued that it absolutely was the corpses of killed refugees that had floated through the forest that had given them the taste. Morichjhanpi was a turning extra point which man-eating became a part of the tiger’s ‘nature’ or ‘behaviour’ ” (Jalais 9).

If the tiger’s hunger makes it enter the human habitat, it’s the human’s hunger that forces him to seem for food within the animal’s territory. Divya Anand is true in her observation that, “if it’s the tiger’s hunger that keeps encroachers treed and protects the forests, it’s hunger that drives men into illegally entering the forests” (35). If a person gets

killed by a tiger within the reserve area, there won't be any compensation for his bereaved family; instead the forest officials would exhort a significant penalty for the dead trespasser's family. At the identical time, if a tiger preyed on a village and got killed, the punishment administered by the govt authorities to the villagers would be very severe.

similar to the animal's hunger, nature's hunger is mentioned within the novel at various places. The treatment of nature within the novel is kind of unlike Wordsworth's adoration of the identical. Sometimes nature is also as disastrous and heinous as a violent beast that's hungry to devour human lives. The inhabitants of the Sundarbans often encounter the life-threatening dangers, posed naturally within the type of storms and cyclones. Ghosh's depiction of nature doesn't contain any false sentimentalism. The novel's title 'Hungry tide' stands for all the catastrophic aspects of scenery.

The 'hunger' within the novel's title has several layers of meaning. On the external or primary level, it's indicative of the hunger of individuals still as of nature within the type of tigers and storms. Metaphorically, the title of the novel refers to the emotional tide, within which most the characters of the novel are caught. The key issue significantly touched by Ghosh within the novel is that the man-woman relationship. Most the most important characters of the novel are engulfed by their hunger or passion to ascertain a relationship with each other.

Beyond the stereotyped verbal story, Ghosh displays the tie between Piya and Fokir that doesn't necessitate speech or language. Love is a tempting force that had inspired both Fokir and Piya, while they were kept separately by language, class, literacy and by the communal institution of marriage. Kanai became jealous towards the sort of relationship between Piya and Fokir. "The three main characters [Piya, Fokir and Kanai] are immensely memorable, with their edgy exchanges,

attraction, involvement, even hunger – for every other" (Roy 69). Kanai who always "liked to think that he had actuality connoisseur's ability to both praise and appraise women" (HT 3), considers himself to be the natural choice of Piya. On account of this deceiving notion about himself, he makes attempts to conclude an association with Piya; but fails. He's jealous of Fokir, who is in a position to determine an affecting contact with Piya despite the statement barrier between the two.

Fokir's warmth and child like naive simplicity bind him spontaneously to the ladies. Moyna, his wife, grows nervous, when she finds the nearness of Piya and Fokir. Moyna knows well that Fokir's innocence is certain to form emotional ripples in Piya. She is frightened that she might be beaten Fokir to Piya. Both Kanai and Moyna became jealous thanks to their possessive nature and their love towards Piya and Fokir respectively. Rakhi Nara and Ghanshyam rightly denote, "Love when not responded in equal measure develops insecurity in relations and there arises a negative emotion of jealousy.

The love triangle of Kanai –Piya –Fokir is comparable thereto of Nirmal –Kusum –Horen. Similar to Kanai who with all his learning couldn't enter the guts of Piya, Nirmal couldn't enter Kusum's heart. Kusum chose the uneducated Horen over the cultured Nirmal. Nirmal on the conflicting hand finds himself to be torn between his wife Nilima and Kusum: "I felt myself torn between my wife and therefore the woman who had become the muse I'd never had; between the quiet persistence of everyday change and also the heady excitement of revolution – between prose and poetry" (HT 216). The moving entanglements between the characters show that the starvation of love is present in every human heart.

Though jealous initially, Kanai within the end realizes his true adore for Piya and expresses it in his departure letter. After reading the memo Piya knows that within the lowest point of her heart "she

would always be torn between the one [Fokir] and also the other [Kanai]" (HT 360). Because the storm approaches, Kanai returns to Garjantola to rescue Piya and Fokir. It shows that he has turned out to be a distorted man. Nature within the type of a powerful storm gives Piya and Fokir one chance to induce united:

Their bodies were so close, so finely merged that she could feel the impact of everything hitting him; she could sense the blows raining on his back. She could feel the bones of his cheeks as if that they had been superimposed upon her own; it absolutely was as if the storm had given them what life could not; it had fused them together and made them one. (HT 390)

The tempest resulted with the passing away of Fokir who had saved Piya's life. Because the novel's title *The Hungry Tide* indicates, the tide's hunger had devoured the possibly rich love of Piya and Fokir. At the identical time, the novel holds the likelihood of future relationship between Kanai and Piya as they return to the Sundarbans to resume their work.

Ghosh's portrayal of hunger and starvation of the poor people of the tide country, his description of nature's hunger within the style of tiger and storm and his metaphorical use of hunger in terms of affection constitute the 'hunger motif' a predominant feature of *The Hungry Tide*.

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