

A fundamental feministic study of the Crow Eaters Novel of Bapsi Sidhwa

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Abstract:

This article briefly explains Bapsi Sidhwa's novel The Crow Eaters with fundamental feministic lens. In a patricidal society, feminism is a move to stop the sexist and oppressive use of women. The idea of feminism is complex, and has huge differences in meaning and connotation for people through generations of social classes, moral ideologies, various cultures, nationality. The history of feminist research provided heterogeneity in feminist thinking. Radical feminism stresses that gender inequalities and inequality are the main cause of women's subordination. According to the diversity of radical feminists, radical feminists are divided into three main subfields into two fundamental camps: radical feminists and feminists of liberating radical women. We will discuss Bapsi Sidhwa's "The Crow Eaters" and research the connections between men and women in a patriarchal society with extreme feministic thoughts. Bapsi Sidhwa is a keen social observer and represents cultural patriarchy. The characters of her husband work out those men exploit women for social, economic, sexual and mental dominance. Man's coverage zone for girls has been redistricted. Women are placed in a position where she sees the twofold norm of culture in her novel The Crow Eaters. The patriarchy ideology is trapped in her female characters such as Putli, Jarbanoo, Rodabai and Tanya.

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Key words: Feminism, Radical feminism, Bapsi Sidhwa, Patriarchy.

Introduction:

Feminism is a study of the domination or subordination of women because of male power. Radical feminists argue that the women of patriarchy were oppressed by men. Company creates differences among women and men and most of them create these differences. The fundamental causes and inequalities for this sex judgment are examined by radical feminists. People with cultural, psychological, economic and political superiority are abused by women.

Radical feminists rather than reformers see themselves as revolutionaries. They reject patriarchal ideologies and wish to improve the status of women. Feminists assemble here and share their experience as a woman. Fundamental women agree that sexism is the most profound form of human oppression.

This article discusses the radical feminist views of Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Crow Eaters*. In a patriarchal society, Bapsi Sidhwa depicts her woman characters to explore subordination to women. Within four walls of the house, she describes the limitation on women. In *The Crow Eaters*, she portrays women's characters as double standards throughout society can be seen. Within her female characters, she brings a sense of justice. Faredoon Junglewalla oppresses women as heads of her family with her novel, the leading men character. The patriarchal mentality is rooted in her female characters such as Putli, Rodabai, Jerbanoo and Tanya.

Literature review:

Feminism is an attempt by women to change patriarchal order in order to promote equality between men and women (Larson, 1997, p. 157), (Freeman, 2001, p. 1) (Thompson, D, and 2009: 5) (Jones. D, 2014, p. 5). Feminism has a long history till the 18th century. In 1792, she proposed that gender inequality should be abolished with same education for boys and girls (p. 158). Mary Firestone was the first feminist who published *A Vindication of Women's rights in 1792*. Women's subordination, male strategies to maintain their superiority, and methods to end

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such cruelty to women in patriarchal society, are explored by feminists. This means that women are feminized (Butler, 1990, p. 1). In the second wave of women's advocacy, French feminists, such as Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixos, discussed in their works key ideas for women (Rivkin. J, & Ryan. M, 1998,p. 776).In her essay, "One isn't Born a Woman," which states that biologically, men and women born equal by childhood, but that it is our social setting, the social set of which create unequal distinction between women and men (Witting, p. 1981). Witting is the only way to challenge patriarchy. Feminists have various views on the empowerment of women in the dominating society in a second wave of feminism (Rivkin. J, & Ryan. M, 1998,p. 776).

The second feminist wave of radical feminism was the result of feminists raising radical system questions (Maynard, 1995, page 259). Radical feminism was founded in the 1960s as a subset of feminism that focused on man's role in violence against women and gender inequality (Jones. D, 2014, p. 5). Different radical feminists have different perspectives to define radical feminism. Women are traveling with radical feminism (Daly, M., 1978, p. 1). Mary Daly claims that radical feminism is a declaration from the women's movement to understand its originality and opposes father reconciliation (p. 39).It attempts to develop new methods of theorizing relationships between women and men and highlights men's strategies for controlling women with violence and heterosexuality, while men are responsible for oppression of women (Maynarad, 1995, p. 260). It means that people have the responsibility of oppressing women, the patriarchal system and those women, for the sake of equality, reject this system. Radical feminists consider that men benefit from the oppression of women and the dominance of exploited women (p. 5). Feminists stand to constantly resist statues of male privileges (Thompson, 2009, P. 17).

Radical feminism opposes the mechanisms of men to control women and attempts to delight women. Sexism and male domination are terms related with radical feminism, human violence, patriarchal system and genre (pages 48–49). To be persuaded, these terms must be defined by various feminists. Patriarchy is a worldwide religion and it is challenged by radical feminism in rejecting paternity and promoting relations between daughters and mothers which are strangled

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by patriarchy (p. 29). The patriarchal system controls women with various mechanisms, such as sexual superiority and social condition. In any society which shows differences according to class, class and ethnicity, Patriarchal bargain is used as a term in which to identify these mechanisms and these agreements open new fields of gender talks (Kandiyoti, D. 1988, p. 275). The patriarchy structure in South Asia has been described as a classical patriarchy; women react in a passive manner toward men and young girls in marriage in fatherly houses give away in the patriarchy, and women give up in marriage under the leaders and men's families (p. 278); Patriarchy uses feminism as a father's rule, establishing relationships of power between men and women (p. 60).

Social values surrounding male sexual dominance in a patriarchal society should be changed to remove male power. As Rosemarie Tong (2009) suggests, discrimination based on gender, in particular sexual orientation, position and personality should be abolished (p.52). Domestic violence against women is also used by individuals to achieve power and dominance in society. In the sense of female oppression, sex / gender structures play a vital role, as Gayle Rubin (1975) claims that it is a series of relationships that use sex changes as a human commodity (p.159). The patriarchal system establishes a distinction between males and females and empowers males and females (p. 64).

Bapsi Sidhwa is a well-known Pakistani novelist who explores in her news the Parsi community. She sees him as a postcolonial feminist novelist (Mahajan, A., 2016, p. 20). Bapsi Sidhwa describes her efforts to explore the marginalization of women in Pakistani communities, as well as in minority communities (Bapsi Sidhwa, 26 April 1998, the Hindustan Sunday). Sidhwa shows her woman's character in reaction to the patriarchal classical system. Her texts can be explored by means of the term "gynocritical" used by Elaine Showalter, who refers to women as producers of meaning and literature by women (Srivastava, S. & Singh, K, A. 2015, p. 154).

Research methodology:

It is a qualitative study of the novel *The Crow Eater* by Bapsi Sidhwa with radical feminist theory. This study uses textual analysis. Bapsi Sidhwa's analysis of her characters from a feminist point of view analyzes this novel with the radical point of view of feminists. This paper

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explores Bapsi Sidhwa as a feminist author with a radical feminist-theoretical framework and how the understanding of the leading character of *The Crow Eater* is improving from a radical feminist point of view since Bapsi Sidhwa's novels are important to consider with fundamental questions about the male status and the patriarchal system. This article only examines Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Crow Eater* with radical feminist viewpoints.

Discussion and commentary :

The women's lives and cruelties of the patriarchal system are portrayed by Sidhwa as feminist writer. She explores the problems of women, which are the development of men in society. Their female characters have two cultural, economic, political and religious norms with their male dominance. The patriarchal system in South Asia is classical patriarchy in Kandiyoti (1988). In this way, women react passively towards men and under this patriarchy young girls give in their marriages to their fathers and women to subordinate themselves both to men and to women in their families (p. 278). She wishes to highlight the atrocities of the patriarchal system such as Putli, Jerbanoo, Jasmine, Rodabai and Watson by portraying her female characters.

Fareedon Freddy, who governs his family in the patriarchs, is the leading male character of this novel. As Sidhwa (2005) says Freddy regulates absolutely his family, opposes Putli's preparation, desire and decisions, including his "benevolent retribution" for his wife (p. 5). Sidhwa portrays her female characters along the imaginary lines of carnality and points to dual social standards. Freddy exploits women not as much as his mother in law Jerbanoo and also uses economic superiority to subordinate them to women. Singh (2015) states that Fareedon Junglewalla symbolizes the parish patriarchal authority. In classical patriarchal system, their female characters fail to act and respect themselves. However the radical feminism of Sidhwa is described by Daly (1978) as a woman's journey. Jerbanoo exposes her own daughter to the cruelties of Fareedon. Jerbanoo's reaction to Fareedon is explained in Sidhwa (2005)

"But don't imagine that I'm going to always dance to your songs. I came for the sake of my daughter, and this nonsense I'm not going anywhere! Are you listening to me?" (p. 10). Putli can

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not, however, reject the system of patriarchy because she claims to be with Freddy always. For appearing in public only for the benefit of the holder of her home, she must wear “mathabanas” of a white kerchief in society. Mahajan (2016) examines the female characters of Sidhwa as per male desires. One reason for this type of position of women in Pakistani society is the traditional patriarchy system. Beauvoir explains how the married woman supports her wife and keeps her household(p. 419).

As a patriarchy system to control women, Sidhwa explore sex. Rubin (1982) suggests that the authors must use critical language to assess the barbarism of sexual abuse in order to assess sexual differences (see p. 9). Male character profile in Hire Mindi reveals sexual harassment and male philosophy against women as Sidhwa depicts male sexual violence. “She moved through the time of her dancing-girl's gestures and movements, swayed hips, made her eyes slanted, and grinned with a grassy mechanical impassiveness” (p.131).

Rodabai is also a victim of male domination in society through the mechanism of the patriarchy system. She is empowered, but as an active member of society she can't gain freedom as a Putli. Women should be regarded as radical feminists, but the fundamental rights of women are not contained in this novel. In this novel, however, young girls are supervised to protect their own chastity but, on the other hand, they even go to Hira Mindi and read the book Kama Sutra. In this novel the patriarchal system is based on moral standards.

The Crow Eaters deals with women's problems, particularly in the Parsi community, in Pakistani society. Even Sidhwa tries to show some resistance for women because of the traditional patriarchal structure in Pakistani society. At the end of the novel, even female patriarchal structures can not be seen as their femininity. Women in this novel do not have the radical feminist mindset. It means that in this novel they have escaped their own social, political and cultural identity. As Sidhwa (2005) shows in party Putli as passive

“On long tapestries Freddy aimed her to the garden. He wasn't just guiding her. Each step of the way he prodded, poked and moved her. To see Freddy's affectionate arm around his girlfriend, no one would have thought the intensity in him was pushing it forward. Profoundly rooted in a

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wife's tradition of three steps behind her husband; her conduct was just as humiliating for Putli that she was publicly nude. Her legs are as rigid as stilts under the graceful folds of her sari" (p. 186). This limits women's ability to fundamentally appreciate their femininity and society's sense of sexual satisfaction.

Males consider women to be slaves and even lower than them, they use women's bodies to gain a social standing. Tanya's portrayal of Behram and his comments on Tanya as a sex object is as elegant and rewarding as some of the most beloved bandits (p. 198). In addition, Tanya's chastity is illustrated by Sidhwa as showing Tanya in her unknissed and untangled sexual thinking which guarantees Tanya's virginity (p. 206). Radical feminists believe that men are the beneficiaries of the oppression of women and that their dominance is exploited. Faredoon enjoys sexual liberty as head of her family, but women on the other hand have their face covered with mathabanas publicly (Sidhwa, 2005, p. 15).

The patriarchal system creates a distinction between men and women and also gives empowerment to women and men. In addition to removing patriarchy, radical feminists also set up a separate system of women where political, economic and social independence prevails within society. But in this newsletter under colonialism women fascinate with British countries, and although they draw comparisons between Indians and British leaders in the past, Sidhwa (2005), describes Putli and Jerboon as fascinating with British land and Queen Victoria's status in England (p. 249). But this novel is a columnist's novel.

In every culture, sexual literacy is crucial to understanding social repression. Contemporary Pakistani feminists explain this subject in their novels, because sexual abuses in society must be examined. Radical feminists see separation as a male-dominated process of economic and social liberty, but women do not have a sex education in *The Crow Eaters*. Sidhwa (2005) says the rich families keep young girls undeniably aware of sexual knowledge to maintain them innocent, which he sees as good bride ignorance (p. 226). Analphabetism about sex considers it a ridiculous situation to protect virginity. On the other hand, men come to Hira Minda for sex as Sidhwa (2005) shows that three times Billy is coming to Hira Mind, reading *Kama Sutra* and

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speaking to his friends on sexual issues (p. 227). Sidhwa contrasts both men's and women's sexual freedom and explores men's sexual abuse.

In women's exploitation, the sex / gender system plays a key role as Gayle Rubin (1975) argues that it is a group of systems that use the human product of sexual differences (p. 159). Sidhwa develops this sex system which marginalizes women and sees women as objects for the achievement of sexual desires as the visit to demand markets is described in Sidhwa (2005)

“The fair girl was bolder. There was an extraordinarily depraved air about her; cynical and insensate. She pass away through the time-worn signs and expression of the dancing-girl, influential her hips, glancing challengingly through oblique eyes, and laughing with an impassivity that was uneven and mechanical” (p. 131). This shows that in this novel women respond not because of economic reasons to male dominance. At this time, marxism links radical feminism and women must hurt because they have no production means. For instance, Jerboon also leaves fire on the plains of Freddy in her home but elderly Jerboon demonstrations that male characters use women to gain prosperity.

Radical feminism rejects the systems of men that control women and seeks to please them. Sexism, masculine supremacy, aggression in men, patriarchy and sex are concepts linked to radical feminism. The novel prevents women from revolting against men under a patriarchal patriarchy as they are so tyrannized by male dominance. Sidhwa presents as 'two silver spittoons by reclined people,' given the fact that Rodabai does not respond in contradiction of her father, Sir Easy money, symbolized by her body language as her servant' (p. 217). The title itself of Sir Easy money suggests that he makes money and that her wife works as a prostitute without difficulty. It also shows that classical patriarchal practices can humiliate and oppress women for profit. Sidhwa's novel does not discuss a radical feminist stance because radical feminism challenges male dominance and seeks to create a separate women's sexual discrimination structure by gaining liberty.

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The second key move is to bring up consciousness into the direct struggle and the often strained group behavior according to Rhodes (2005) radical feminists see social awareness as the first point of autonomy (p. 17). But in *The Crow Eaters* female characters are not only unaware of social and political setup, but are also used for sexual purposes. Faredoon is fighting against Jerboon even when he wants to kill her, but she reacts ridiculously against him, as it seems like Sidhwa (2005) depicts Freddy's reaction. He seems to be an entertainment source "yes ...but you look so indestructible—so devilishly pink-checked and healthy—I don't think you will ever go" (p. 280). His remark confirms again that in this novel, men see women as a subject not and that Jerboon resists the novel's cruelty but does not leave their home or try to achieve autonomy in male oppression. Jerboon's characterization is somehow rebellious, but it is not on such extremes to build a separate system for women.

Conclusion:

Bapsi Sidhwa highlights various issues related to women's patriarchal systems, sex-related lack of education, men's humiliation and domestic violence in *The Crow Eaters*. The sexual objects are seen by female characters such as Jerboon, Putli, Rodabai, Tanya and Rosy, but they analysis the fact that women are exploited under classic patriarchy with a radical feminism lens. As a patriarchal structure, classical patriarchy does not give room for independence and women's equality. Women must bear the cruelties of male members and their exploitation. Failure to educate women gender is another issue in this book, since without a strong sense of sexual distinction women can not cherish their womanhood.

Women are not revolting against male dominance because of a lack of awareness in this novel. The fact that women don't fight for their rights increases their political, economic and social dependency. The character of Faredoon and Billy shows abuses of power in this novel. In this novel, domestic violence is the subject of fights between Jerboon and Freddy. However, the positions of radical feminists on social and political freedom appear deliberately to be ignored.

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Sidhwa is a problem of women, but it is not radically feminist in her novel that she describes her female characters.

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