

A Critical Study on Psycho- Social Struggles of The Outsider and In the Insider Land - Readings from Bapsi Sidhwa's the Crow Eaters.

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Abstract

The ongoing boom in the diasporic study of South Asian migrants is traversing the globe, with that the concepts of alienation, a rootlessness that grows between the two, results in a new perspective of categorizing it as an Insider/ Outsider sensibility. Each country has its varied culture and tradition to cherish, as outsiders to the newness that surrounds the immigrants; they face the difficulty to manage to change the retrospective imbalance. It is identified that people experiencing diaspora strongly undergo the dilemma of being an outsider in the insider world. This concept has been influenced majorly by the women writers of the South Asian region. Acclaimed to this, Bapsi Sidhwa, the most talented writer of her era contributes to the paradigm of indigenous tradition and culture. In all her writings, her emphasis was on outsider conflicts in correlation with cultural distress and issues of the immigrants in diversified nationalities. Being a Pakistani writer, she carries the light of her identity to touch upon her works with her characters closely walking with issues of an outsider. The author adapts her quest to find the solution for the lost identities of culture and related predicaments. Therefore, the diasporic elements among the transnationals are given priority in her works to highlight the struggles of the immigrants. This paper envisages the differences that are been made in the world of insiders by the decisions that are by an outsider and as a diasporic community to deeply dwell on the inner self towards the quest of attaining the unattained.

Keywords: Insider, Outsider, Cultural Clash, Displacement, and Immigrants.

Diasporic Literature has gained importance among the settling immigrants of displaced communities in the 20th century. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, "diaspora is the temporary or permanent movement of people" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin,73)

Dispersion happens from known to the unknown land for various reasons. In today's world enhancement of millennial ennui and technological takeovers, has made diaspora, sentimental. Diaspora denotes extensive meaning with variants. D. S. Sujaritha in her essay "A Reading of Diaspora Literature" mentions Martin Bauman's definition,

"The idea of Diaspora has been celebrated as expressing notions of hybridity, heterogeneity, identity, fragmentation and (re)construction, double consciousness, fractures of memory, ambivalence, roots and routes, discrepant cosmopolitanism, multi-locationality and so forth". (Baumann, 2000)

Recent studies comprehended that diaspora is mainly a voluntary change to make a better lifestyle and to experience newness. The new stream of Inside/ Outsider theory knocks on the cultural clash faced by the immigrants in the new land in different dimensions. Marlize Rabe in one of his articles expresses the outsider and

insider perspectives of diaspora with the three major concepts, power, knowledge, and economy. The power is involved in the relationship between the immigrants and the aborigines, predominantly focusing on the supremacy of the natives towards the migrants. It's in the insider's environment where the outsiders are oppressed by the authority. Since cross-continental moves become so common, the psychological essences of diasporic writing are seemingly increasing, where the immigrants have multiple identities resulting in duality.

The South Asian writers feel the turmoil psychologically and try to incorporate their sufferings in their works. There, they find a constant thrust between the present and the past and where they lag in living the moment, especially women writers of the diaspora who fail to maintain a balance of the past and end up as victims of psychologically internalized diaspora. The major canvass is kept before the writers to create a rational perspective with irrational thoughts. It fabricates their sense of being attached to the homeland and it's connect. Ground-breaking writers like Bharati Mukherjee, Reetika Vazirani, Tarfia Faizullah, Bhanu Kapil, Alok Vaid-Menon, Vivek Shraya, Imtiaz Dharker formed their identity by experiencing the diaspora in day-to-day life, the experience is as fresh as daisy to them hence, the writings gained larger audience across the world. The emergence of the novel has undergone a major transition. Cultural entities initiate a recurring pattern of behavior.

Bapsi Sidhwa, a Pakistani- Parsi- Punjabi writer, essayist, and playwright pens down her interest in writing at the age of twenty-six. She is one of the celebrated writers of Pakistan, currently living in America tossing her emotions with a blend of personal touch to express the hard realities. She is the first Pakistani women writer to gain international recognition. Having her roots in Pakistan, she has undergone subjugation in her life and was forced to silence her emotions. Bapsi explains the multiple identities that influence her thoughts and her writing vehemently talks about it in her interviews. In one of her interviews with Bachi Karkaria: She disclosed herself as, "a Parsi first, then a

Pakistani, specifically a Punjabi. I am a woman simply by gender. I don't feel American at all. My consolidated 3 P identity has enriched my writing". (karkaria,2005).

Her works are remarkable for the dual perspective grounded on the Parsi and Pakistani view points. Her writing style is analytic, unbiased, and rational. Bapsi Sidhwa in this novel particularly highlights the different aspects of individual issues finds the need to represent the ongoing problems of women in society, turmoil as a community of outsiders in the land of the insider, and their experience in daily routines.

This novel revolves around the characters giving a picturesque impression of their psyche as individuals representing their Parsi's cultural belongingness and attributes. The *Crow Eaters* admits starting with nostalgia as one of the major themes of diaspora. It outstretches the life of the Faredoon Junglewalla aka Freddy, the story is addressed to the younger generation of the Parsi community. It is narrated posthumously to motivate them to reach greater heights in life taking example of Freddy. The *Crow Eaters* enlightens with themes of adjustments, dislocation, gender inequality, and migration. This novel is recited comically to bring the humor to light for the audience to understand the nature of the characters. The story starts with Freddy's family shift from Bombay to Lahore; he is accompanied by his mother-in-law and his wife. In the initial stages of settling down in a new place, Freddy the breadwinner of the family was forced to find a good income to provide the basic needs, it coherently exhibits the expedition and tussles of an outsider to reach recognition, acceptance, and reputation in the acquired land. The Insider and Outsider theory is well explained by Assar Linbeck and Dennis Snower, (Swedish and German economist) brought in to light on economic strands laid by privileged over under-privileged society. The economical agents who determine the wages and employability are the firm and the insider. Here, in the novel, Freddy the outsider faces the disparity among the insiders' results in vain in accomplishing during the start of establishing a business.

Bapsi brings in the concept of gender light-heartedly to portray the roles and efficacy of characters in the Parsi community. She takes delight in differentiating the outsider and insider conflict of the individuals and how it changes as generation goes by with the changed circumstances because of the modernized thoughts and exposure. Her analysis of the characters with the gender gaps signifies the perspective of women who dominates the family with the authority. In the novel, Putli's mother Jebernoo shows her dominance constantly by frequent insults and accusations on Freddy. Their initial stages of adaptation and to kick start a business in an alien land creates pitiful trauma among the members of the family which result in constant verbal abuse of Putli's mother over Freddy. The struggle between survival and managing the crisis with Jebernoo is a herculean task for Freddy. Thus, the dominance of Jebernoo over his son-in-law is picturized in the initial stages of the novel. In the Parsi regime, mothers-in-law are treated with care to respect their presence; in addition to that the stubborn and authoritarian aspect of Putli in deciding on familial issues is also quite common.

Fictional works rarely escape the power struggle which silhouettes the character's originality. After the marriage of Billy and Tanya, the struggle between powers arises as Tanya belongs to a wealthy family from India, Jebernoo always tries to find fault with her works and picks conflict now and then to spoil the peace in the family. In one of the incidents, Jebernoo tried to pick up quarrel by influencing Putli to establish the authority over the newly wedded bride. Her influence is as follows:

“At the flat she worked upon Putli: ‘Do you know what that dumb, senseless daughter-in-law of yours is up to now?’ she began. And though Putli made excuses for the girl to Jebernoo, she couldn't help chiming in herself with an occasional criticism”. (188)

During her initial days' mother-in-law, Putli tries to defend her daughter-in-law in various ways but when Billy establishes his love and care over his wife by protecting her from

unwanted quarrels and conflicts, it creates enmity among the family members and results in Putli shows authority over her daughter-in-law because of the constant influence of her mother, Jebernoo. For Tanya, things may not seem to happen according to her whims and fancies, but she withheld everything as her life in Freddy's house is not abusive and demanding. Tanya tries her best to harmonize with everyone at home for the sake of Billy. She knows the reputation that his family holds respond to the quarrels in chimes. Tanya is celebrated in Freddy's house for her beauty and the reputation of her family.

The marriage ceremony of Tanya and Billy happened in a striking manner in India, where Freddy's family was dumbfounded by the way Tanya's family celebrated the wedding gathering. Easy money, the father of Tanya is a well-known businessman, extravagantly married her daughter to Freddy's son Billy. The events involved in the wedding were pleasing to Freddy's family and the return gifts presented are numerous that Freddy has to set up a new bungalow to accommodate. It is a luxuriously wedding from Easy money which highly gives the glimpse of the power and prosperity Tanya holds. Few of the representations given in the novel on the wedding are:

“Five thousand guests had assembled to witness the wedding ceremony that took place on a flower-bedecked stage. Tanya, wearing a white satin sari, heavy with silver and pearl embroidery, sat demurely on a carved chair. Billy sat on an identical chair wearing a tall, dark pagri-hat, and white coat and pyjamas”.(170)

Back in Freddy's family, she finds restrictions on her spending that reminds of her wealth and power.

“The family bore down upon her. Couldn't Putli knit? Couldn't Jebernoo, Hutoxi and Katy sew? Was Tanya so high and mighty and hoity-toity that she preferred garments made by ...God knows what kind of dirty hands to their efforts? And the shame of it, throwing money away!”(189)

Habitual actions of Tanya's life are being interrupted by her mother-in-law and constant abusive criticism forces her to meet Faredoon, privately in his office to narrate on the incidents that happens in daily routine, which torments her psychologically.

That sultry evening Tanya quietly sent for a hired tonga and rode off to visit Freddy. In his office, she let herself go and gave full expression to her hysteria. Freddy soothed his daughter-in-law and she returned home assured that her troubles were over. (190)

Tanya has been characterized as a modern iconoclast woman of diaspora where she creates an image of Westerner in her looks after her wedding. There were few hiccups in their relationship between Billy and Tanya on her looks, but they both find ways together as an ideal couple to break the barriers of culture and tradition. Billy has been portrayed as introvert to social groups and community. But by the efforts taken by

Tanya on her frequent visits and catch ups with the ideal couple of their mind set made Billy mingle with people groups. Tanya is exposed to the societal groups of different religion and culture from her childhood that makes her life ease at Lahore in Freddy's family.

Life takes a turn by stirring to aspire better and to reach the unreached goals which simultaneously drags to engage with the present and then longs with nostalgia hoping to return to the land of nativity. The constant urge for better life portrays the immigrants as victims of cultural clash; they try to better the harsh realities of life with a hope to gel in the new land and to feel rooted in the new culture. The cultural differences experienced by Freddy are expressed at the beginning of the novel. As a marginal community in India, they face cultural cringes and assimilation. According to Mary Louise Pratt, culture is a "social space where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power". The cultural differences from one generation to another are observed to mark the differences in values and behavior. In the novel, the generation gap is identified as a

barrier when the culture moves from the oldest to the youngest in the family, the gap is wide between the generation and the youngest misses the essence value of the culture and tradition but finds delight in establishing the relationships among different people, vandalizing the practice of religion, and specified education patterns. Tanya being exposed to the modern culture in Parsi community, kept her strong in the harsh ill-treatments from the in-laws especially from Putli and Jebernoo for the implementation of thoughts against the family dynamics.

Freddy is a wealthy businessman who anticipates a peaceful life and is open to newness around him, hence decides to look for a bride suitable for his son Billy. He is aware of the differences in Tanya and is ready marrying Billy to Tanya. As days goes by after their wedding, the women of the house, Putli, and Jebernoo being emotional and orthodox, fail to appreciate Tanya's works and her decisions that leads to the problems in the family. That's when Freddy decides to shift his business franchise in London; he offers to take Jebernoo and Putli with him to create a peace life for Tanya and Billy. Both of them agreed to move with him and their long-time fascination to live in foreign country is accomplished. As an insider they anticipate a change and adoption for newness in London later as days pass by they start to grumble on the differences and the difference which seems a captivation for them.

The involvement of Tanya in the family dynamics creates the problems when the intervention and execution of decisions that leads to the sudden changes in the regular flow of family affairs. In general, the latent matrix of relationships is being documented by Riley M.V and Riley J.V evident on the fissure between the generations in a same family. This new form is exposed and detailed between generations. The immigrant's exposure to matrix of relationship remotely from the family broadens the social mobility, standard of living and of the social status, for which immigrants move from the nativity. Here once Tanya daringly comments on the vague and monotonous talk by Jebernoo of her age, achievements and contentment of life. Tanya compares her relation to Jebernoo, and

tries to intrude the behaviours by nullifying her achievements in life. Tanya says

She was to carry this enthusiasm into widowhood and old age, never losing her

attraction for the marvels of technology. They were for her part of the wonder of life.

‘Old? Old?’ she rebuked Jerbanoo once when Jerbanoo entertained her to a soliloquy

on the worthlessness and misery of her great age. Tanya was thirty at the time.

‘You’re not old!’ she protested. ‘What is eighty years in the span of millennia?’

A hundred years of life is nothing, a snap of the fingers – like that –

over in a second. If I live three hundred years then, maybe, I will get fed up with life and feel old. You are young!’ (186)

Tanya protests for newness, courage, and boldness as a woman to push through the limits. Her life was at stake when she finds the stingy behaviour of her husband. The outspoken behavior and the influence of western culture made to cling on to it. Their independence is the trigger modernistic thoughts and relate to the elite environment. In the novel, after the wedding when the couple sets up a new start, generously of their own, they find a community of English speakers identical to their thoughts and in accord with them.

“AWAY of life was imposed upon Tanya and Billy by the locality in which they lived, by their independent bungalow, and by their new possessions. They made friends with modern couples equally determined to break with tradition. It amounted to no more than a fanatical faith in the ways of English society in India and a disciple's knack at imitation. They were not of the masses, this young crowd. If their wealth did not set them apart, their ability to converse in English certainly did”.(187)

Though Tanya being identified as Parsi woman broke the tradition driven thoughts and implements a friendly environment where as a

couple, they set their family dynamics of their own not being carried by the orthodox influence from their parents. Tanya is at ease in fellowship with people from different religious and social backgrounds.

“They made friends with modern couples equally determined to break with tradition.... They were utterly ashamed of traditional habits and considered British customs, however superficially observed, however trivial, exemplary.”(187)

In contrary, to the thoughts of the younger generation of the Junglewala family, the novel pinpoints the stereotypes and customs followed by the older generation, leading to a difference of opinion that ends in the path of misconception and chaos. A demystified analysis is done to the feelings and sensibilities of the minority community especially to the older generation Freddy and Putli’s chitchats with their rigid fellow-beings with the same mindset for longing with wants and desires but when an opportunity is at hand, they fail to cease it, and this barrier is in the minds of the insiders, where once outsiders in Lahore. Their life journey is all about the change they anticipate for better life materialistically but not psychologically.

The Parsi Community is outranked as a hybridized sensation involving two different cultures European and Parsi together. *The Crow Eater* is highly satirical and humorous, where the character now and then mocks on the tradition and culture. Bapsi exhibits the unbiased position in communal conflict during the partition. So the community is open for inter-caste marriages as their population seems to vanish away.

It is essential to look at the perspectives of the Outsider struggle in the works of Bapsi Sidhwa. She is an internationally acclaimed writer of the Parsi community who reflects on the retrospect of the minority and the issues of women. Each community has its own beliefs and faith to glorify; she brings that in every work of her art. Few of the characters like Jebernoo, Putli, and Yasmin exhibit the ideologies of patriarchy. On a whole the cultural hybridity and longingness

have characterized the immigrants as an outsider facing the trauma in all the aspects specifically culture, power, assimilation and historical differences. This paper analyzes the struggles of immigrants in an alien land, where Sidhwa, as an outsider and one of the representatives of the trapped individuals during the Partition struggle exhibits the desire to attain better life from the clutches of poverty to the betterment in life. During the partition of India, she has faced the shunts between life and death. The Outsiders of the marginalized community undergo cultural clash and become victims of the harsh realities of the exposed land. The search for a better life is a haunted reality for them and hence it creates misery. The novel touches on the crooked behaviors of Freddy in the initial stages of settlement in Lahore, which stems from the anticipation of a good life. The tussle and the problems corrupted the characters psyche, with the effect of constant reproach that flashes in the minds of characters. By kneading the gestures of the immigrant self, the characters highlight their strengths by suppressing their weaknesses in the novel. The desiccated understanding of the present brings rattle among the minority groups and fortifies the concept of disconnection among the family groups. Throughout the novel, the essence of humour as parody kindles thought-

provoking ideas to think beyond the extremes, not only for survival but to achieve a social recognition and to find happiness in day-to-day activities. The idea of an outsider is an economic term but has a greater influence in the area of literature, as the writer personally experiences the trauma of being an outsider; they deem it as a right to dictate on the problems run out being in an alien land and also the influence of the native land. She has also intensified the need for the research area of Outsider and Insider conflict internally reciprocating in her works.

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