



Patriarchy, Capital and the Female Body: A Marxist - Feminist Critique of *The Crow Eaters*

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Abstract

Bapsi Sidhwa is a Pakistani-American writer renowned to be highly colorful with her writing. Her novel *The Crow Eaters* can be interpreted not only as a rather entertaining tale but also as an outlook of the Parsi community, its values and customs. It is written in the form of dark comedy that raises critical society issues through wit and humor. Amid these, Sidhwa alludes to the oppression of women in the Pakistani society, whereby the male members of the family tend to deal with women as objects. This study attempts to interpret the novel in the light of Marxist-feminist theory that holds women in subordination status on the basis of financial insecurity and economic scarcity. It also seeks to discuss the subtle language work done by Sidhwa in creating female characters and the profiling of the role of money in their exploitation. Moreover, the study shows that such patriarchal attitudes commodify women to attain a material gain.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Capitalism, Marxism, Feminism, *The Crow Eaters*

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INTRODUCTION

Bapsi Sidhwa is a Pakistani American novelist who wrote four highly celebrated novels between 1978 and 1993. *The Crow Eaters*, *Ice-candy-man*, *The Pakistani Bride*, and *An American Brat*, all her four novels, are a reflection of her own experience in the Partition of the Indian subcontinent, migration to the US, exploitation of women, and belonging to Zorastrian community. In her writings, she gives tragic historical occurrences with personal poignant meanings. Sidhwa is famous for her comical way of writing. Almost all of her books hold humor and enjoyable scenes. *The Crow Eaters* is a fond and funny fictional epic on the Pakistan community of Parse published in 1978. Parses, also known as Zoroastrians are a community of rich but fading group, to which Sidhwa belongs herself. The derogative name of the novel is called the parse people as they are described to be too loud and talkative. The Book makes a commentary of the religion, culture, social traditions and behavioral characteristic of the Parse community.

The Crow Eaters too are black Comedy. Black Comedy is a sub-genre of Comedy in which serious and dangerous issues are portrayed in a humorous and comic manner. She highlights in the novel crimes such as murder, corruption, arson, sexual violence, rape and domestic violence in a lighthearted way. Moreover, she also talks about the gloomy aspect of Death, illness, and diseases in a manner that is not tragic. Besides, modern racism and sexism issues are also introduced by Sidhwa in a more informal and even humorous manner.

Besides other realities, Sidhwa has also incorporated the harsh problem of women oppression and objectification in this humorous and entertaining novel. As a keen observer of the society, she has shown the machinations and strategies which the men use to subjugate their women. Such strategies have, first, the isolation of women within four housewalls. Second, the indoctrination of the notion that woman is the one that does all the domestic chores. Thirdly, they are kept uninformed and are overworked to an extent that makes them unable to analyze and understand their situation. All the power is vested in the male characters of the novel. This gives them the power to misuse their women in most aspects. Faredoon and Behram symbolize the patriarchal thinking of our society in the novel. Meanwhile, the character of Putli and Tanya creates an impression of the oppressed and submissive women of our society. With cognizance of this fact, the novel requires a Marxist feminist critique.

Problem Statement

The study puts an emphasis on the nature of the patriarchal dominance of property and production turning women into dependents and undermining their social status by compelling them to perform domestic unpaid labor. Although women continue to make significant contributions to the family, they are not accorded ownership or respect but rather men employ their economic force to objectify, subjugate and commodify them. This study is aimed at illustrating how such dispossession and exploitation undermine the position of women in society, especially the Pakistani culture.

Research Objectives

To analyze how money continues to be exploitative of women in the novel.

To bring out the commodity of women in *The Crow Eaters* by Bapsi Sidhwa.

Research Questions

How has the concept of money contributed towards objectification and commodification of women in the novel?



In what ways women are used as commodities by the patriarchs in *The Crow Eaters* by Bapsi Sidhwa?

Significance of the Study

The reason why the study needs to be done is to make people realize the role of money in family life. It aims at attracting the attention to the subordinate status of the female characters in the book by Bapsi Sidhwa and the position of power of the male characters. The authority over the means of production is the primary origin of social construct of control over men. Biology argues that it is only through the right environment that men and women can ever achieve equal merits. The basis of this study is that women are in miserable situations because they are forced to stay at home and that the domination of men can be attributed to the presence of more sources of earning. In addition, men use women as commodities and objects to earn money because they can only regard women as consumers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Oppression is a form of injustice that occurs when one social group is subordinated while another is privileged, and oppression is maintained by a variety of different mechanisms, including social norms, stereotypes, and institutional rules.

(Taylor, 2016)

The oppression of women is not a sudden occurrence; neither does it only occur in a single culture. Women in all countries including the civilized and uncivilized, developed and underdeveloped countries are being dominated by men. Literature has not been left behind in playing its role where there have been numerous movements and rallies in the cause of women rights. This tradition of Women subordination in art and literature has been highlighted by a number of renowned writers Toni Morrison, Sylvia Plath, Simone de Beauvoir of the west, Kamila Shamsie, Qaisra Shahraz and Bapsi Sidhwa of eastern part. They have made known in their writings the unenviable condition of women and their oppression by the patriarchs. *The Crow Eaters* by Bapsi Sidhwa may be considered one of the novels in which all the female characters are not viewed as people but as objects, commodities and tools of the male lot.

At the face of it, the story in the novel is that of a parse family the Junglewallas, their rise and fall in life. According to S.S Chawla (2017), Sidhwa as a Parse has engaged solely with her community and its social milieu and mores(3). Analyzing the novel, Chawla has pointed out the belief system of Parses, religion, their dressing customs, their weird and unusual marriage and death rituals and numerous other minute details which have been given by Sidhwa. She herself is a Parse, so she has been keen in describing the customs, norms, and beliefs of her community. According to R.K.Dhawan and Novy Kapadia (1996), Bapsi Sidhwa stands out as one that is concerned with the Parses, their customs, rites, rituals, traditions, loyalties and mannerisms...(25). Moreover, Sidhwa is also a Pakistani Parsi so she can also symbolize the Pakistani norms and culture in her novel. As Bashkar (2015) observes;

"What is most remarkable about her work is her dual perspective which is based on both the Pakistani and the Parsee point of view. She speaks both for the Pakistanis and the marginalized Parsee community. She picks some significant incidents from her own life or from the lives of other people and fleshes them out to create a larger reality of fiction." (55)



Reading through the book, the readers may see *The Crow Eater* as a funny and entertaining novel on the life of the people of the Parse community. There is more to the novel, though, than meets the eye. Sidhwa, in this light, artfully brings out the theme of women objectification in this humorous and entertaining story of a Parsee family. According to Marwah (2008), the novel reveals that women are oppressed and violence against women occurs directly in the heart of the Junglewalla family (7).

Although there is no direct incidence of violence or suppression in the novel, all the female characters are complacent about their lives- except Tanya. Nevertheless, with her description of Putli, Tanya, and Rosy Watson, she throws light on the misery of women in Pakistani culture. As Priyanka Singh (2012) writes:

"Putli is one character.... in a traditional role, but it does not suggest that she advocates patriarchal ideology. Her characterization of Putli accounts for Sidhwa's sensitivity to raise the aspirations of women by bringing about a realization of the manacles that bind her, which she has to break"(4)

Singh has illuminated upon the tactful manner in which Sidhwa describes the female characters and their lives in which the women themselves contribute greatly to their own subordination. These values and rituals have been instilled in women since childhood and form a certain notion of the women in their minds. It is through the socialization and enculturation process that a woman has created certain images in her mind concerning herself; she has been taught about cultural values. She is not prepared to do so because of which these images of her will be torn. It is in these that as a woman aims to attain the topmost position in the society she must meet her obligation, which the society dictates. She attempts to fit herself in that image"(Chhatre, 125). In citing Chhatre, she has emphasized how culture and society has contributed to the oppression of women.

The novel so far has been regarded as the spokesperson of the Parse people; their culture, religion and beliefs. It has also been discussed in the eyes of feminism. The current study targets the analysis of the novel in the Marxist feminist approach. According to Ehrenreich (1976)

"Marxist feminism refers to a set of theoretical frameworks that have emerged out of the intersection of Marxism and feminism. Marxism and feminism examine forms of systematic inequalities that lead to the experiences of oppression for marginalized individuals" (65-70)

According to Marxist feminism, domestic chores and household activities of women are regarded as unpaid labor and the economic dependence of women on men is the primary factor that virgin women with oppression, subordination, and objectification. The theory has been applied by many researchers in various novels.

Muhammad Ismail Abbasi (2015) has used the Marxist feminism theory in relation to three works of an Afro-American author, Alice Walker. His studies have been grounded on the idea of Frederick Engels that is regarded as the father of Marxist feminism. In his work, he has provided an extremely elaborate explanation of Marxist feminism with regard to how the theory can be applied to the situation of women of inferiority and commodification. The idea of Engels that the transition of public to private property and polygamy to monogamy is the main reason why women are oppressed has been elaborated on. The hypocrisy of men in which they demand strict monogamy and faithfulness among their wives whilst they promote polygamy by having sexual relations with other unrelated



women has also thrived due to the cause that women are economically and financially dependent on the patriarchs of the society. The female characters presented by all the novels, which he has selected, belong to the demoralized stratum and are mistreated, mistressed and treated as objects by the male members of the family. Although he has been sharing the lives of Afro-American women in the novel, he has not remained silent on the issue of Pakistani women who equally suffer in their patriarchal societies. Abbasi has written in the conclusion of his studies that women emancipation can only be achieved through financial independence. The novel needs further exploration through Marxist-feminist critique of the female characters and the tale.

METHODOLOGY

The current study will attempt to analyse the novel through Marxist Feminism. The theory originates in the concept of Karl Marx. The patriarchs of the society to the Marxist feminists are considered as the capitalists who possess all the sources and means of production. The reason why a lot of problems were mentioned above in the novel is money. Money is a central part of the life of JungleWalla. Faredoon and his son Billy are the main characters who have a single purpose in life to get rich and everything they do is aimed at attaining this purpose. The wealth acquired makes them influential and hence, they take advantage of their privileges to dominate the underprivileged individuals. Money is also crucial in exploitation and objectification of women. Therefore, the female characters will become a primary focus of the research henceforth. Marxist Feminism considers the patriarchs as the bourgeois and the women as the proletariat. The novel will be used as the main source of data. The researcher has also examined a number of research articles, papers and thesis that are grounded on Marxist Feminism and commodification of women as secondary data.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Feminism theory has gone through numerous developmental phases giving it various dimensions. Marxist Feminism is among the notable forms of Feminist theory. It is connected with the fact raised by philosophers such as Karl Marx concerning the exploitation of the poor by the rich according to the economy. The theory of economic determinism by Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels sees economic relationships as the foundations on which other political and societal relationships are founded in society. These philosophers view human society as being subdivided into various groups according to the material possession. The class that owns and owns the means and sources of production is called the Capitalist class also referred to as the bourgeoisie and owns the other one the low wage earner or the proletariat. Therefore, Marxism emphasizes struggle and agony of the lower classes in the hands of the capitalists. Fredrick Engels goes on with the theory of Marxism and introduces another concern which is the position of women in various periods of historical events. "Engels was among the first to realize the importance of gender in human history" (A Pelz 123).

Engels proposed Marxist Feminism in the book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), which explained the oppression of women in relation to historical and economic transformations. Millet considers this piece of work to be the most detailed account of history and economy of patriarchy. Engels follows the status of women in the era of savagery up to civilization and how they changed their role. The rights of women were secured and they were given high status in early tribal society, which was organized by the gens system (blood-related groups dominated by either men or women).



They ran their homes, shared in work, were in charge of their own children and were respected- even by their husbands. According to Engels, in the “Gens tribal system,”

“Usually, the female portion ruled the house; the stores were in common,... No matter how many children or whatever good he might have in the house, he might at any time be ordered to pack up his blanket and budge; and after such orders, it would not be healthful for him to attempt to disobey. The house would be too hot for him” (Engels 60)

Organisations in early societies used to share land, which was held communally by the tribe and caused no conflict. As civilization emerged, there was more production and a surplus and even individual ownership was possible. Men wanted land and power, which provoked inter-tribal clashes and oppression by more prosperous tribes. Such change substituted the gens system, which rendered men economically superior and led to the decline of the women position.

Engels in his book follows matrimonial relation stages. He describes the cases that the ancient societies had the consanguineous type of family, whereby males and females had no definite spouses, only relations across the generations were forbidden, and ancestry belonged to the female. The punaluan family then came after, which prohibited incest among siblings and kinsmen. This was eventually followed by the development of pairing or even monogamous marriage which was attached to the privateness of land and wealth. In this system, the man took over the family, women were deprived of participation in production and new sources of livelihood including cattle keeping and farming made men dominate. As Engels asserts,

“The herds were the new means of gaining a livelihood, and their original domestication and subsequent tending was his work. Hence, he owned the cattle, and the commodities and slaves obtained in exchange for them. All the surplus now resulting from production fell to the man; the woman shared in consuming it, but she had no share in owning it” (151)

The financial security of men, in turn, entailed the replacement of the maternal ancestry by the paternal one. Men enforced strict monogamy and fidelity towards their wives in order to move their wealth to their rightful owner. However, “Polygamy for men remained in practice as it did not cost any material loss to them in future” (Engels 70).

Men were able to have an elevated social status because they controlled production and formed patriarchal systems, which excluded women. Women were left as dependants; they were dependent on men to get their basic needs yet men were capitalists who exploited them hence the oppression of women. “The wife became the first domestic servant, pushed out of participation in social production” (Engels 80).

The responsibility was placed on the shoulder of the man as men became the owner of the children and family. Men began to exploit their women so as not to die. They began to treat them as commodities and objects to make financial benefits. Women, on the other hand, who had no other livelihood choice had to yield to his authority.

The difference among men is brought to the fore by Marxist Feminists philosophers and female is not a biological but a social. Furthermore, women are in a disadvantaged position because they are restricted to the domestic matters and their absence of outdoor activity. The patriarchs retain the women in a financial state of dependence and



consequently dominate them. In addition, they also make them objects and commodities to acquire material wealth.

DISCUSSION

Objectification of women in the theory of Marxist feminism is linked to the contemporary civilization. Frederick Engels claimed that during the olden days, women were prosperous, free and had equal rights. In the communal societies, the sexes were equally divided in the task they were to perform and no one was regarded as being superior or inferior. The rise of civilization and the notion of personal property made men gain more wealth. Raising of cattle, farming and all of the outdoor activities were placed in the hands of men with women remaining indoors. Therefore, opening the world to men, new technologies, and business prospects was an advantage to them and the balance which used to be in the past, collapsed. According to Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family* (1884/1972) which was a seminal work in Marxist feminism, it was believed that the transition to private property involved the replacement of matriarchy by patriarchy and that it was the starting point of women subordination and oppression (McHugh 79). Gradually, men acquired control over all the production sources and became coercive and financially stable. Consequently, they began to exert their control on the less fortunate and economically weak individuals and this, together with the low class included women as well.

In addition, males exercised polygamy on unrelated women and monogamy on their wives to ensure that they preserved their wealth and property and were transferred to the rightful heirs. They begin to lock their females in the four walls. Consequently, the position of women was gradually reduced to that of slaves who just had to follow orders, have babies, and provide the home. Women have become a commodity, an object upon which a man enlarges his lineage, satisfies his sexual needs and possesses a slave in the figure of a wife as they go and accumulate more fortune. They had to carry out housework which is categorized under unpaid labor as determined by Marxist feminism.

Although *The Crow Eaters* by Bapsi Sidhwa may be funny and entertaining in the way it displays Parsi culture, it also reveals the subordination of a woman in the patriarchal society. Sidhwa brings out the commodification and objectification of women through the life of Faredoon Junglewalla (Freddy). Freddy, being the only bread winner in the family makes all the major decisions without consulting his pregnant wife when he unilaterally resolves to move to Lahore without considering her health condition. His wife, mother in law and daughter are referred to as belongings; this makes them objects and not members of his family. In the long trip, as the women are ill and in pain, Freddy is just interested in satisfying his sexual urges, leaving his wife Putli as a means of pleasure. Further on, women are also called beasts, as bulls draw a cart- without linguistic agency and under the control of a patriarch. By this subtle technique of using language, Sidhwa dehumanizes her female characters in a subtle way to highlight their devalued status and value in a patriarchal society.

Sidhwa emphasizes the pathetic situation of the female characters in the journey with the help of the character of Jerbanoo, the mother-in-law. She has created Jerbanoo as a rather rebellious figure who does not readily reconcile with Freddy. This way they end up hating one another. In other scenes in the novel, Sidhwa uses Jerbanoo to speak as her mouthpiece in order to bring to the fore the tyrannies of Faredoon. As an example, in the middle of their journey Jerbanoo refers to Faredoon as an obdurate devil and a cold-hearted monster! And strives to make him conceive how we (they) are afflicted, and how he is indifferent to your (his) wife and child? (10). She is the only character who opposes such



authority albeit in a partial manner. It is she who had been opposed to the journey at the very first moment (9). Besides this, she is also the one to question the decisions made by Freddy on different occasions. In the journey, she is getting tired of being patient as they face the threat of wolves attacking them, and she finds herself unable to restrain herself, questioning why they have to agonize. As she says;

"Now we are to be devoured by wolves! Why? Because your majesty wishes it! We are to spend the night in this forsaken place, at the mercy of wild beasts! Why? Because our simple village ways were not good enough for you!" (10).

Not only is the cry and ranting of Jerbanoo ignored but also the attitude of Jerbanoo towards her son-in-law is condemned. One of the female characters, Soonamai, who is submissive and leads a life at the mercies of her son-in-law accuses Jerbanoo of not getting on with Freddy and preaches to her that she, Jerbanoo, needs to make some effort and tact with him, that she needs to save him choice bits of food and that she must always give him precedence over her daughter and herself in all matters. All he was the breadwinner.... By Soonamai, the family members of Faredoon are to place him above all since he is the one holding the economy. However, the character of indomitable Jerbanoo cannot make herself a slave of her son-in-law and give in to his power. She is so unsubmitting that Faredoon cannot bear to see her and eventually he even goes so far as killing her. Having an insurance plan that he aims to use to his advantage, he arsons his shop, house and intends to murder his mother in-law by burning his shop and house. This incident shows how far the patriarch can take it should the females not yield to his/her authority.

Jerbanoo, who never abandons her habit of snarling her son-in-law at all times, Freddy in such a case would call himself only to his astute and scandalizing wife, and Jerbanoo flipped down into restful martyred repose (11). The wife of Freddy is a compliant character, Putli, who is under the gentle rule of her husband and totally controlled (5). The word Putli (in Urdu language) denotes a puppet. Sidhwa has been careful again here in naming her characters. The wife of Faredoon is Putli: a puppet which dances to the rhythms of her husband. He sells her in many forms: as a domestic slave and as a machine of reproduction, sometimes even as a means to fulfill his economic demands. Indicatively, at one point, in the pursuit of money, during his visit to the home of a Governor he not only compels her to accompany him but also makes her dress in a sort of sari that she is not comfortable with. This, too, he compels her to shake hands with other men. Freddy does not attach importance to the inconvenience of his wife. All that he is thinking about is money and profit. Marriage in the modern society has been commercialized, men no longer seek a co-wife, but a slave dressed in the form of a wife. Engels believes that the formation of the modern family implies a union between a man and a woman and in the case of a woman, it makes the marriage an act of selling her body permanently as a slave free of payment (102). The issue is the nature of marriage and the problems of marriage that Sidhwa has made immortal by presenting her portrait of the life of the two couples Faredoon and Putli and Behram and Tanya. In addition, there are also a couple of glimpses of patriarchy through the marital relationship between Sir Easymoney and Rodabai.

The marriage of Behram and Tanya shows the similarities of norms and traditions of marriage within our society, as pointed out by Bapsi Sidhwa. Another objectification of women that is dominant in our society is brought out by Sidhwa in their marriage. In her book, Feminism and Domination (1990), Sandra Bartky describes the process of objectifying women with the help of Karl Marx theory of alienation. One of the aspects of Marx



alienation theory is the disintegration of human beings. The labour and the product of labour cannot be separated according to Marx. But in the capitalistic system workers are not the product of their labour and therefore their person is torn apart. Sandra also finds women to be fragmented by the Patriarchs in a similar manner that they are too closely identified with the body, that their whole being is identified with the body, a thing that has been seen as less inherently human than that of the mind or the personality (Bartky 1990, 130). An Intellectual ability, mentality as well as other factors of a girl are not recognized in marriage proposals. Where the Groom is seeking the riches and dowry in the novel, the Groom himself is seeking only the body of the bride. The only basis of her acceptance and rejection is her looks. Behram gets married to Tanya because he spotted firm globules of her behind and the small coca cola bottle pinch of her waist. There was nothing above the waist like the up thrust pair of brassiered bosoms the most heavily gorgeous of them all (187). Along with this, the ugliest of all his siblings Behram, rejects Roshan, the elder sister of Tanya, simply because she is not pretty enough. Behram tells Putli that you are being silly, Mama! When he hears Putli discussing his and Roshan marriage. You suppose I am going to marry that withered, pockmarked, expiring Bombay-duck? (190). the above quotation leads to another deplorable truth. Girls are displayed as objects and items where the Groom has to select them in marriage proposals. Men have the right to choose the girl of his choice because of social and economic status.

There are also two things that the wives in the novel have in common with each other despite the vast difference in their lives: domestic slavery and that they are breeding machines. Speaking of slavery at home, Putli is a kind of an obedient and submissive wife, who, however, does not even ask a question, what she is told to do. Her existence is limited to the four walls where she has nothing but to make babies and work round the clock, doing all the chores of the house and taking care of the children. Being a puppet in the hands of her husband as her name implies, she struggles with her life. Same with Lady Rodabai Easymoney; this is the reason Putli identifies her as a woman, just like herself. Nonetheless, this is not the situation with Tanya, the daughter-in-law of Putli. The examples of master-slave relations are rather clear in the marriage of Behram and Tanya. Behram, or in other words, Billy, does not have anything to live but to earn money. He is in love with money and this is why he is calculative and systematic in all matters of life. Therefore, he stages out a marriage life plan also which includes;

"Phase one was to arouse and stimulate Tanya, phase two to consummate the marriage, and phase three, the details of which were still vague, to establish an idyllic relationship with his wife. He did not expect too much but convinced of his superior and gentle wisdom, she was to become his loving and obedient slave" (216).

Among men in our society, marriage is the reason to have sexual gratification. Tanya is seen as a person who is too extravagant at the onset of their marriage. In the same vein, time and again, Billy compels her to spend less and to be more cautious. In three years of marriage, the life of Tanya turns out to be miserable. Lokaneeta argues that the family or the domestic mode of production relies upon the unpaid labour of the wife and generates hostile relations of production between husband and wife. This is what underlies the patriarchal exploitation in which the men become the exploiters.... (1410). Although, Tanya does all the housework, she is not even told to have the right over the money. Billy



dismisses her demands of money by simply stating that she wants to know what she wants with money. I will bring thee anything thou seekest! Thou hast only to demand! (255). Although she is the wife of the wealthiest man, she is not satisfied with her fundamental needs and demands. Tanya, a well-educated, free-spirited girl is degraded into a compliant slave, and she, at one last, succumbed to his (Billys) oppressions. The only means of satisfying Billy was to be absolutely submissive to him (259). It is Billy who dictates the house with Tanya.

"His commandments were directed at her.
 Thou shalt not spend money!
 Thou shalt give me a minutely detailed account of expenses.
 Thou shalt obey thy husband, and jump to his bidding.
 Thou shalt bring up thy children to obey and to love me more than they do you.
 Thou shalt never require anything.
 Thou and thy children shall not disturb me.
 The commandments continued endlessly" (261)

Based on the commandments given above, it is easy to notice that they are biased towards one individual who happens to be Billy. These commandments also allow one to deduce the status of Tanya in the life of Billy, as she is a robot who is responsible to reproduce, caretake and upbring the children in a manner that is more convenient to Billy. But as she carries all these huge responsibilities, she is not to seek money, neither is she expected to need anything.

Women too, like other commodities, are consumed and have use values. Childbearing is imposed physically on women. Pregnancy and the complications of childbearing continue to be the leading cause of death among women all over the world (Hartsock, 16). The novel shows that all the wives are breeding machines used by men. Their marriage is only for their sexual pleasure and to procreate their own blood. An example here is in the novel where sir Easymoney is famous because of the quantity of his offspring. Nobody could make out how many his children there had been, or even judge of their number, at any rate, as of those who survived to grown age, both before and after the plague, of whom sixty had passed away; Twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two?" (181). On the one hand, lady Rodabai is treated as a servant, who is a family event, on a single signal by her husband, "bring two silver spittoons here, and place them beside the reclining men promptly (205) on the other hand, lady Rodabai is treated as some kind of machine of reproduction. And in the same way to Freddy Putli contentedly continued to breed...babies. There were two daughters and three sons altogether (87). In the case of Billy, the only telegram concerning his wedding ceremony that touches his heart is the one of Harilal stating, May God grant you son at his earliest convenience (211). Nevertheless, as they get their wives to have as many children as possible, the health, needs, and requirements of their wives are not taken into account.

Among the patriarchs in the novel, infidelity is the common practice of practically all of them. In the novel, the medicine of any type of distress of the male lot is the breasts of the irrelevant women. As an example, Mr. Charles P. Allen, a friend of Fareedoon, who could not endure the heat in Lahore, and who was sore uneasy and agitated, was immediately cured of his troublesome symptoms! When shown a squadron of buxom dancing-girls and Dimple Scotch (3). Besides this, taking a tour of the Hera Mandi, the diamond market, where the prostitutes live, is another common activity among the male



characters in the novel. Economic power, on the one hand, enables them to enslave their wives; on the other hand; it also enables them to exploit poor, needy and helpless women. Through the introduction of the world of prostitution in the novel, Sidhwa emphasizes the oppressions of the patriarchs over young girls such as Rosy Watson. Pity Rosy Watson. She was thrashed not only by her stepmother, but also by her father. They were kept in her room, without food, or water, bound to her bed. All kinds of men had been admitted in the room by them (113). On the one hand, due to poverty, she becomes a commodity and is coerced by her father to become a prostitute; on the other hand, some men such as Faredoon and Mr. Allen through paying to receive such sexual pleasures ensure that such tyrannies continue to exist. Engels argues that one man and one woman cohabit, but in this way, polygamy and partial infidelity are the privilege of men, however, the fidelity of the woman is strictly maintained at the time of cohabitation, and infidelity by her is severely punished like cruelly (59). In one scene in the novel this fact and biasness of men is depicted when A bunch of ... Sikhs were ready to stare... The Parsi women" (45) "Freddy looked at the Sikhs. Caught by the owing look of their eyes, the muscles of his jaw tightened. He could not have his women stared at (45). It is the Freddy who, not to say the least, does not like his women to be eyed, organizes visits to Hera mandi to all his fellows, and himself engages in various dirty affairs. This reveals one more very foul idea of patriarchs in our society. They are ready to keep decency and modest women as their wives but they use less fortunate and poor women as their sexual partners. They desire a good, clean and dirty woman to continue their race, however, bad, dirty, and unclean it may be. The example of such a mindset can be best represented by Faredoon. When his son Yazdi comes up to him and tells him about his feelings towards Rosy Watson and also how he wants to marry her, the answer that Freddy gives to this question is appalling. He says;

"But you cannot marry all those you pity. I pity the mangy dogs on our street, the beggars, the noseless leper who comes every Friday – do you expect me to marry them? Your heart is too soft. You cannot expect to marry the dogs you pity!" (144).

Rosy Watson— who at the Hera Mandi was thought to be a gem (diamond) —when it comes to marriage, Freddy compares her to a dog. This represents the extreme hypocrisy not of Freddy alone but the male community at large. Freddy, while explaining to Yazdi the disadvantages of marrying rosy Watson, furthers add,

"What kind of a heritage are you condemning your children to? They might look beautiful but they will be shells – empty and confused; misfits for generations to come. They will have arrogance without pride – touchiness without self-respect or compassion; ambition without honour... and you will be to blame" (116)

Various methods are used to exploit women in the novel men utilize women like Rosy Watson in sexual intercourse but cannot offer them the right to marry, and even respectable wives turn out to be slaves who do not have their rights. Finally, the male economic and social status makes them the capitalists that exploit women when the latter depend on the former and remains confined in the domestic environment.

CONCLUSION

Marxist Feminism, as interpreted by Engels, explains the oppression of women by the fact that they depend entirely on men economically and that their subordination is likened to the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeois. Bapsi Sidhwa uses humor and satire in



The Crow Eaters to expose these ugly realities in how women are objectified and dehumanized by labeling them as belongings, beasts and dogs. The novel shows how women are slaves at home who are not paid and are restricted to home chores and are not allowed to share wealth which they contribute to maintain. Tanya, as an example, becomes commodified by Billy who does not care about her basic needs even though she is devoted to him. Money also comes out as one of the most important tools of exploitation when Freddy kills in order to get insurance, Jerbanoo is manipulated by Freddy and the father of Rosy Watson compels her to become a prostitute. These examples highlight the way women are commodified by the patriarchs to achieve money. Finally, the novel also shows the Marxist Feminist perspective that women oppression is a product of society based on the aspect of financial dependency and that the only way to liberate women is to be economically independent.

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