

Exoduction: A Pretrusted Culture Identity

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Bapsi Sidhwa is widely recognized as one of the most prominent Pakistani-Anglophone novel writer. She was raised in the Parsi community, a religious and ethnic minority in Pakistan. Critics regard Sidhwa as a feminist postcolonial Asian author, who provide a unique perspective on Indian and Pakistani history, politics and culture. Her characters are caught up in the historical events surrounding the geographical and social division. Her recurring themes are: human relationships and betrayals, the coming of age and its attendant disillusion. Bapsi Sidhwa skillfully links gender to community, nationality, religion and class demonstrating the ways in which these various aspects of cultural identity and social structure. This novel has garnered positive critical attention for providing a unique Parsi perspective on the culture and politics of the partition of India. *The Crow Eaters* has received compliments as an entertaining social farce. It is the most significant and striking novel which represents the Parsi culture in true manners. Sidhwa throws light on various aspects and features of Parsi community.

In the opening chapter of the novel Sidhwa tells about the historical background of Parsees. They were migrated from Persia to India with their sacred fires at the time of the arrival of Arabs thirteen hundred years ago to save their religion. They are the followers of Prophet Zarathustra, their religion known as Zoroastrianism. It was founded around 2000 B.C. In the latter chapters of the novel she writes about the religion, its beliefs, appearance, culture and ceremonies of the Parsees.

A culture is truly recognized by the language and living style of its individuals. This novel shows that Parsi style of speaking is much louder just like yelling on others. The word yelling has often been used in the novel referring to the way of speaking of Jerbanoo and Freddy especially when both are shown talking to each other. The title of the novel shows the capacity of too much talking of Parsees. *The Crow Eaters* follows a proverb that one who talks too much is supposed to have eaten crows. Since the novel is about Parsi community the title very aptly justifies its selection for the book.

Being the hallmark of Bapsi Sidhwa's work, this novel depicts historical facts interweave with ironic fiction and lampoon which aptly recreates the Parsi milieu and yet makes for delightful reading. The authenticity of Sidhwa's work is evident as she was born in Karachi in 1936, was brought up in Lahore for generations, had migrated in the last Century. So Sidhwa belongs to the third generation of Parsi settlers in North Indian cities. Hence her description

exploits of Faredoon Junglewalla and his family is not just historical fiction but contains a strong autobiographical element.

Bapsi Sidhwa has made a clever use of irony; the use of irony also prevents the novel from becoming either admiring or disapproving, an inherent danger when an author writes about his or her own community, both the short comings and achievements. Wealth and status is the ultimate aim for Faredoon Junglewalla. He achieved this ambition but at what cost is considered more important. This novel is considered to be a black comedy by a number of critics as Sidhwa has been successful in infusing a comic or humorous tone while treating some hard subjects in this novel. The long presence of the Parsi's in the Gujarat and Sindh areas of India distinguishes them from the smaller Zoroastrian Indian community of Iranis, who are much more recent arrivals, mostly descended from Zoroastrians fleeing the repression of the Qajar dynasty and the general social and political tumult of late 19th and early 20th century Iran. The term Parsi, which in the Persian language is a demonic meaning "inhabitant of Pars" and hence "ethnic Persian", is not attested in Indian Zoroastrian texts consistently use the Persian-origin terms Zartoshti or Vehdin of the good religion. The first reference to the Parsi's in European language is from 1322, when a French monk, Jordanus, briefly refers to their presence in Thane and Bharuch.

It is generally accepted that a Parsi is a person who is directly descended from the original Persian refugees and has been formally admitted into the Zoroastrian religion. Parsi is an ethno-religious designator, whose definition is of contention among its members. The Parsi community consists of Parsees who are descended from the original Persian emigrants and who are born of both Zoroastrian parents and who profess the Zoroastrian religion. Parsees are generally not very concerned with the theological study aspect of their religion. Most Parsees know their religion because it is tied into their identity. The main components of Zoroastrian Parsi community are the concept of purity and pollution, initiation, daily prayers, temple worship, funerals, and general worship.

The ancient rules of the Parsi community had been changed. But the name of the community still exists. Due to migration the Parsi people lost their root of self identity and cultural identity. They were mixed up with the people of the native land with certain restrictions. At present mixed marriage is allowed in Parsi culture, inter caste marriage is also permitted. Some of their own traditions are followed to some extent till date. The small religion could not have a much vocal rise towards the ruler therefore they were ought to adopt the background settings and the rules laid by the governing parties.

Though the Parsi culture was diminished they were very much successful in their living. This was reflected in the novel of Sidhwa through the protagonist Faredoon Junglewalla. He migrated to Lahore and struggled hard to setup his living with his family. Then he overcame the difficulties and had a standard, rich and wealthy life. The Parsi rituals were well focused; the event of marriage is beautifully portrayed. If the drinking water tasted of salt, it meant the children in the house wanted to get married. The novel aptly reveals the Parsi milieu in the throes of change. It is not only the migration that changed the life of Parsi's but also the impact on western education. The young generation of Parsi in the novel, the children of Faredoon

Junglewalla were sent to English medium school. Jerbanoo, the eldest Parsi women of the family had much passion towards their tradition though she created troubles. She want to place herself in the Tower of Silence after her death, hence the vultures will share her flesh which leads to charity.

This novel has used the flashback technique; the novel opens with the flashback with the narration of Freddy and ends in the present. A flashback is an interjected scene that takes the narrative back in time from the current point in the story. Flashbacks are often used to recount the events that happened before the story's primary sequence of events to fill in crucial back-story. Bapsi Sidwa effectively used the humor element throughout the novel. Humor is a literary tool that makes audience laugh, or that intends to induce amusement or laughter. Its purpose is to break the monotony, boredom and tedium, and make the audience's nerves relaxed. The writer uses different techniques, tools, words and even full sentences in order to bring to light the new and funny sides of Parsees life.

A person's identity will reflect their cultural identity. If the cultural identity is lost self identity will also be lost. Therefore, people should give importance to their own culture and traditional values. Both the negative and positive aspect of the migration is skillfully focused by Sidhwa in this novel. Due to migration the family of Freddy fined some new neighbors and well settled in their living. But they had lost their cultural values and nativity of the Parsees.

In the present status, there were only 69,000 Parsi's in India and 5,000 Parsi's in Pakistan. Gujarati with Parsi dialect or else English with Indian dialect are the languages used by them in the current scenario. The traditional wears of them were rarely used in some of their cultural functions, but mostly they were stuck to the western tradition. All around in the world there are 1, 38,000 Parsi's who are successful in their living. These numbers are gradually diminishing due to the loss of their culture. Through this novel, we can see that the Parsi community is displaced and people lose their cultural roots. Still these people adapt to their new surroundings and are successful in leading a happy life. Displacement and migration are integral to the Parsi way of living. This novel of Sidhwa helps to reaffirm all these cultural attributes.

Culture cannot be kept untouched by others, where it has to go side by side with humans. The minority always faces problem in keeping itself aloof and detached with others, Parsi's too face this problem. This novel aptly reveals the Parsi milieu in the hard struggle of their cultural change due to migration. The change in social milieu and identity crisis which Sidhwa accurately depicts was distinctively visible amongst Parsees in British India and this is the problem faced by minorities in the social community.

The cultural identity of the Parsees had been diminishing due to their struggle of living; they lost their own identity and followed the existing culture of the society. Few of their traditions are valued but most are destroyed. The various themes of this novel are analyzed in the study, the Partition crisis, the suffering for living, the novel ends just before partition, Fareedoon Junglewalla the protagonist gives his decisions to the young generation to overcome the crises. According to him the sweetest thing in the world is one's need and to lead a life without facing

troubles one should obey the rules laid by the ruler, only then human can find harmony in their living. The Parsi milieu refers to the Parsi's community setting in the novel. Throughout the novel the readers can view the Parsi milieu because the writer belongs to the Parsi background and the autobiographical element is very much found in the plot constructed in the novel. The other themes are migration, the theme of marriage and the life of the minority community.

Jerbanoo, the widowed mother-in-law of Freddy may call a villain in this novel, which she has the habit of poking nose into every matter. She is much worried about the trace of their cultural identity. She wants her to be placed in the 'Tower of Silence' after her death. 'Tower of Silence' is the highest tomb in which the dead ones laid as a food for vultures and other wild animals. This cannot be found in the places where they migrate to safeguard their living. Therefore life should be kept adjusted according to the place of living.

Fareedoon Junglewalla who is short called Freddy is gifted with soft-spoken manners. He had strong belief in astrologers and fortune tellers. He wants to add his name in 'Zarathusian calender'. It is a calendar used in important Parses ceremony like thanks giving and death anniversaries, name of the great departed Parses are invoked with gratitude. After Freddy's death his name is invoked in all major ceremonies performed in the Punjab and Sindh. Putli the wife of Freddy was six years younger than her used to wear the Mathabana and the sacred thread around her waist and love to walk at least three steps behind her husband. Billy and Yazdi were belonging to the young generation, who were the children of Freddy. They do not have much passion to follow the traditional values of their culture.

Change in culture is considered to be the great disaster, the young generation has less panic in cultural change thought migration is the reason for the shift in their culture they should have respect to their cultural values. Mixing up with other culture in the society is not the solution for living, one have to voice out for their rights. The conclusion given by Freddy to his next generation was to make the successful living not to bother about the partition who ever the ruler may be the Parsi's should stand on the strongest side to lead their life. If the cultural identity is lost the person self identity will also be lost. Therefore people should give importance to their own culture and traditional values. Though the Parsi culture is diminishing it is still exist in the society.

Though Sidhwa penned this novel to brighten their cultural values even she stepped into the modernity. Culture change is predominant; during migration gluing in traditional values is the major discomfort. The elder generation people hold much passion on their culture this creates great distress. The younger age band people can easily access the change and easily fit inside the modernity. Thus human life changes as per the wants of the generation. Therefore the idea given by Freddy in this novel is acceptable; one should live life to satisfy their needs and to obey the ruler for the merriment. The happiness in living is up to the mind of the human. Holding the cultural values is optional. The individuals should decide the necessities for the future betterment and should follow certain values. This novel is written by Bapsi Sidhwa exclusively to raise the vocal power of her own community to get awakened.

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