



Critical Discourse Analysis of Bapsi Sidhwa's The Crow Eaters

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Abstract- This research critically analyzes the issue of oppression and its diverse forms in Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Crow Eaters* in the light of Critical Discourse Analysis to uncover unequal power relations in the novel. The chief argument of the study is that women are oppressed physically, sexually, psychologically and financially. The main objective of this research is to explore the different forms of oppression, and to identify the linguistic choices which embody female suffrage. The paper examines the effects of male dominance and violence on female's overall life cycle. The study found that sufferings of women are due to the reasons that they are marginalized and oppressed which agonize them devastates all their potentials of womenfolk.

Keywords: oppression, linguistic choices, dominance

I. INTRODUCTION

Oppression and marginalization of women is a global issue. It has its roots in the inception of society. This concept of marginalization was originated when society started differentiating between the roles of men and women. The misconception of society led to imbalances and consequently abuse. Now, this problem has become a monster. It is affecting millions of people globally. Wife battery is one of the most important oppression in this context. In this form, women are tortured physically and mentally. Women have to suffer a lot only due to the wrong concept of superiority originated by society. Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Crow Eaters* is the most appealing writer in literary canvas. This novel has been proved an iconoclastic script ever written. This individualistic memoir mostly evokes the problems confronted by the women of subcontinent. In this novel we find a very pathetic picture of females. They are restricted. They are not allowed to have their own thoughts. This poor creature acts like puppets and always remains at the beck and call of its male partners. All female characters, in this novel, are silent buffoons. There is no one to listen to the roar of women's silence. God created women to tame men but here the situation is pretty different. Male characters have become authoritative and orthodox in the use of their power. It seems that women are downtrodden. They are the representative of stuffed creature in this novel. In *The Crow Eaters*, Bapsi Sidhwa portrayed women as a statue of pity and affection. Bapsi Sidhwa actually refers to the colorlessness and drabness of females' life. Women always have to live in under merciless dictations and instructions of their so called worldly lords. This oppression and marginalization compels women to yell. But their voice proves meaningless and trivial. Bapsi Sidhwa is the one who has jolted the span of history. She has given voice to the powerlessness of suppressed creature. It will not be wrong to say that she has become the power of women of subcontinent by using the magic of her pen. The production of *The Crow Eaters* reflects that she is an intrepid who has the lion courage to raise voice against male chauvinism. She bluntly resists all sorts of oppressions and marginalization of female community. Bapsi Sidhwa is not only the blood of Pakistan but she is also an internationally celebrated fiction writer. Her basic purpose of writing this novel is to make awake women. She wants them to recognize their rights.

The Crow Eaters (1980) indicates the image of female body. It brings to light that in the long run this image becomes the representation of the novel and will help it to impart its feminist message. In *The Crow Eaters*, Bapsi Sidhwa focuses on females inflictions experienced by the women of male dominated societies. She depicts that females are imprisoned in the cage of chauvinistic society. In this novel the leading female character revolts against male domination but this revolt becomes futile and male takes control in the end. *The Crow Eaters* makes us aware about the subjugation and atrocities of women. This novel brings forth that male dominated society does not care about any limitation. It becomes only power intoxicated and develops such laws which are used as a sharp weapon to overpower and subjugate women. These unjust laws are developed to silence the rebels. *The Crow Eaters* records universal female plight. Since ages women have been inflicted. Although this book evokes the problems of Pakistani women yet issues discussed are entirely universal.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This thesis explores how women are oppressed and marginalized as portrayed by Sidhwa in her novel, *The Crow Eaters* from a feminist point of view by applying Critical Discourse Analysis as a tool to analyze the text. The paper answers how Bapsi Sidhwa projects Female Suffering and Powerlessness in *The Crow Eaters* and what linguistic structure is used by Sidhwa to uncover the ideological and power relations in text and to explore the shortcomings and achievements of the women of third world countries. The concept of female suffering and powerlessness is very crucial as it deals with serious factors of life. It displays the functioning of two mega forces positive and negative equally. It indicates the importance of women emancipation especially in oriental society. As the literature review shows that this aspect of the novel under discussion has not been explored, therefore, it will add to the existing stock of knowledge.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

This part sheds lights on the previous studies related to powerlessness and marginalization. This thesis is further evaluated in the light of various standpoints of other writers, critics and scholars. Chaudhary (2013) elucidates the works of Pakistani female novelists Bapsi Sidhwa, Qaisra Shahzad and Umera Ahmad and evaluates how female figures are projected in a male dominated set up of Pakistani society. Gardner (2012) states that the novel highlights the issues of the repressed communities in third world countries and represents their silence by not having any courage to raise their voices against the male. Similarly, the female gender in *The Crow Eaters* plays a pivotal role in not raising their voices against the monopoly of male gender. Marwah (2008) also traces the issues of women and their sufferings and inflictions. In her novels the image of the female body runs through like a red thread. Priyanka Singh (2012) observes that the concept of wifehood and motherhood have been glorified in the novel. She argues that man tends to make woman an escape-goat and blames her for the entire crisis. Moreover, Puri (2014) finds women in Bapsi Sidhwa's novels belonging to the upper strata and the lower strata of society however, in both sections of the society; they are dominated by men, though they struggle for their survival till the last breath of their life. *The Crow Eaters* mainly deals with such factors that are involved in marginalizing the women.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study postulates the concept of female suffering and powerlessness. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that is also used as a theoretical framework for the study. The framework of CDA has three dimensions of discourse which deals with formal characteristics of text, relationship between texts and interaction and with the relationship between interaction and social context. The description stage is concerned with linguistic properties; the interpretation stage investigates the effects of the text on interpretation and explanation stage expose ideological and power relations in texts. Critical Discourse Analysis is a critical theory of language which evaluates language as a form of social practice. It tells us that social practice is tied to certain historical contexts. It is a source to reproduce or contest various relations and due to this social practice miscellaneous interests are preserved. The framework stands for the oppressed and it has a profound relation with power. The paper thus investigates the conditions of the oppressed through three different ways by evaluating how the analysis of the text identifies the unequal power relations such as oppression and marginalization of women due to a patriarchal system in *The Crow Eaters*.

V. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This paper has collected data from the speeches of characters of the selected novels by applying Fairclough's 3 D which critically analyses the whole text on the basis of three aspects. It first gives the description of linguistic features used in that particular text. Secondly, it tries to interpret the relation of that particular text with the interaction, and thirdly it explains the link of interaction with the broader socio-political variables. This paper first explores linguistic properties as vocabulary, grammar, and cohesion and text structure in the forms of tables, then the discursive practices are identified which are further used for socio-cultural inferences.

The nouns suggesting a patriarchal system are divided into two sub-categories: the oppressors and the oppressed. The characters of women are nominated in the category of the oppressed ones and the characters of males are nominated as oppressors.

Table 1 Nouns Suggesting Patriarchal System

The Oppressed	The Oppressors
Jerbanoo, Putli Faredoon Jungle walla	
Tanya	Billy
Rosy	Yazdi
Rodabai	Sir Easy money

Table 2. Nouns, Verbs, and Adverbs Indicating Male Dominance

Nouns	Verbs	Adverbs
Patriarch (Freddy)	Forbidden (Jerbanoo)	Marched Naked (Putli)
Donkey (Jerbanoo)	Cried (Jerbanoo)	Promptly (Rodabai)
Head of the family (Sir easy money)	Sobbing, shrieked (Jerbanoo)	Carefully nurtured ignorance (entire society)
Servant (Rodabai)	Walk a step ahead of (Putli)	Intelligently brought up, dumbly in love, utterly confused (Tanya)
Hira Mandi girls (Billy)	Directed (Freddy)	Endlessly (Freddy)
Kama Sutra (Billy)	Prodded, poked, pushed (Freddy)	Zealously guarded (girls)
Sex (Billy, Tanya, Rosy and Yazdi)	Trapped, credited, at the beck and call (Rodabai)	Savagely punished (girls)
Pre-marital experience (Billy)	Obsessed, devastated, confused, undefined (Tanya)	
Dogs, Nose-less Lapper, Beggars, Mongrel (Rosy)	Incumbent on, discussed sex (Billy)	
Loving and obedient slave (Tanya)	Envisaged (Jerbanoo, Putli)	
Loss of Identity and Independence (Tanya)	Protruded, loving, obedient (Tanya)	
Department (Tradition)	Obey, Jump (Freddy)	
Handy improvisation (Freddy)	To enslave (Freddy)	
A gigantic conspiracy (entire society)	Disturb, Never require (Freddy)	
Nurtured ignorance (High ups)	Switch off (Freddy)	
Identical fantasies (Putli, Jerbanoo)	To shake hand (Putli)	

Female Body Witnessing Male Brutality

The male brutality is observed against women in these lines. Jerbanoo, Freddy's mother-in-law is victim to male chauvinism. Jerbanoo, in a 'cat and mouse game' between her and her cunning son-in-law, Freddy often finds Jerbanoo irritating and cantankerous and he harms her for the sake of insurance money. Freddy grumbles at to her daughter Putli, wife of Freddy "And now my own son-in-law is calling me a donkey! Shrieked, Jerbanoo!" Donkey is an animal but Freddy uses this noun to degrade his mother-in-law. Moreover, donkey refers to the person who is not sane, and almost weak in exercising his power.

Freddy suppresses Jerbanoo by irritating her which compels to leave the limited periphery of Freddy's villa. While departing home, she bursts into tears in front of her daughter, Putli crying "And now I'm forbidden even to talk in this house!(Sidhwa, 1980, p.29). Here 'forbidden' refers to threaten and to stop somebody by using force. Here, Jerbanoo words indicate how helplessness she is that she has to beg her daughter to take her back to her childhood village.

Moreover, Freddy is not fair in his relation with his wife and uses her for different material gains she exposes his materialistic and hypocrite to her. He cajoles her in grand parties to get his own interests which

Putli does not like as stated in the passage: "What revolted Putli most was the demand. The verb 'revolt' is to resist. Here, the verb is used to show Putli's resistance. She struggles against the pretentious acts of her husband. She cannot depart from the ritual of walking three paces behind the husband but she is compelled her though she often feels insulted and painful as she cannot afford going naked in public as stated: "Deep-rooted in the tradition of a wife walking three Paces behind her husband, their deportment was as painful to Putli as being marched naked in public. (188). The adjectives 'painful' means something that hurts, aches and pinches". Here this word shows the traumatic situation of Putli. The departure from the rituals was the most heartbreaking, and the phrase "march naked" means walking undressed tread". Putli is so much powerless that she cannot anything and has to sacrifice her chastity and honour only to preserve the dignity of her worldly lord. She is bound to follow her husband as she is supposed to be "A dutiful, husbandly pinch, a little up and to the right, was to remind her to shake hands (189). "Dutiful" is an adjective referring to expect regular performance on some specific task, and "Husbandly pinch" is an adverbial phrase which refers to a woman who is irritated by husband.". It means Putli is very irritated by the authoritative attitude of her husband but she is compelled to do everything for the sake of his pleasure and satisfaction. This puts women to consider them as inferior.

Like Putli, Rodabai is also marginalized and is a victim of male domination. Although she is given some prestige, has to obey her husband promptly. But her role is no more than a servant as stated in the passage that she is 'similar to Putli, Rodabai too is trapped by the patriarchal ideology. Like Putli, Rodabai is at the beck and call of her husband, Sir Easymoney. She stands by his side like an attentive servant (220). The verb 'trapped' refers to a person seduced by someone as Rodabai is seduced by the male domination. She acts like a trained and the most loyal servant.

Sexual Unawareness of Women

In *The Crow Eaters*, girls are shown to be sexually unaware while the boys are not restricted from such experiences. A girl is supposed to be a virgin physically though the purity of her mind and thought was also considered essential as stated that, 'the wealthier the family, the more ignorant the daughters. This carefully nurtured ignorance had a high market value in the choice of a bride (229). The adverbs "Carefully" and "cautiously" indicate how the girls are kept like animals. But such restrictions were designed for young boys who are supposed to have pre-marital experience as is observed in case of Billy, who being a boy, 'it was incumbent on him to be knowledgeable in matters of sex(230). "Incumbent on" shows male chauvinism, while for Billy, no restrictions for visiting places like Hira Mandi where he goes for three times and he has also read *Kama Sutra*, the most detailed script about sexual awareness". Billy discusses the affairs of sex with his friends in a very amusing way and without feeling any sort of shame.

This reality can be noticed in the character of Yazdi as well who loves Rosy Watson very much. He does not know anything about her. When his father tells him about Rosy that she is a call girl, his feelings for her are utterly changed and begins to resemble Rosy with meaner objects and even with dogs: You cannot expect to marry the dogs you pity! (127) "Pity" is a verb which refers to feel sorry for someone". Freddy uses the word "mongrel" which means "the dog of indefinable race or a crossed breed" to show the inferiority of Rosy. The selection of lexeme shows his hatred for the meaner creature and also manifests male authority.

Use of Pronouns

The use of pronouns in the novel unravels the patriarchal norms and women's helpless and powerless. First person singular "I" is being used by Jerbanoo to show the helplessness and powerlessness of a woman and "and now I'm forbidden even to talk in this house! (29). Second person singular "you". In communication, when 'You-attitude' is used, it means that the listener is more important. Freddy uses YOU time and again for his son to tell him that he is more important than the girl as stated 'You love her? No my child; you want to marry her because you pity her. But you cannot marry all those you pity (127). Similarly, the third person singular pronoun "he" is used to show manly power and authority as can be noticed in the lines: 'He not only succeeded in carving a comfortable niche in the world for himself but he also earned the respect and gratitude to his entire community (9) and then 'He did not merely steer her (188). The third person singular "she" is used to show the subjugation and helplessness of female characters. Some instances can be found in the text as 'What revolted Putli most was the demand that she, a dutiful and God-fearing wife' and the sentence, 'she cried, flinging her arms around Putli and sobbing on her breast' (29). The use of "He Vs She" suggests that she has little space not only in society as well as in narration. She has no scope to assert herself. The "He" is man of action and is considered all in all. "She" has just become a tool

in the hand of her male partner. “She” does not have any achievement and credit to be proud of. “She” is just a facilitator for her male partner.

Apostrophe with ‘Freddy

The use of apostrophe with Freddy points out that everything is in the possession of him. For example: No would have thought, to look at Freddy’s affectionate arm encircling his wife, the strength in it propelling her forward (188). No one guessed the surreptitious business of Freddy’s fingers beneath the sari at her waist. (189)

Voices Showing Male Chauvinism

Most of the active sentences are being used for the male characters while the female gender is discussed in passive voice mostly. Examples are given below:

Table 3 Active Voice showing Male Dominance and Passive Voice Showing Submissiveness of Women

Active Voice	Passive Voice
Freddy directed her along the long red carpets to the garden.	Similar to Putli, Rodabai too is trapped by the patriarchal ideology.
He did not merely steer her.	A gigantic conspiracy was practiced by an entire society to keep its girls ridiculously ‘innocent’.
He prodded, poked, and pushed her each step of the way.	In the India of Billy’s days, girls, like jewels, were still being tucked away and zealously guarded by parents, brothers, grandparents, aunts and uncles.
He was entitled to a lot more pre-marital experience.	Even the innocent horse-play of children was savagely punished.
Thou and thy children shall not disturb me.	A tin plate and spoon, reserved for the occasion, were handed over by the servant boy.

Definite and Indefinite Articles suggesting Male Dominance and Female Submissiveness

Definite and indefinite articles are used to specify and to generalize something. Most of the definite articles are used with male gender to certain their authority and some of the definite articles are used with female gender to assert their submissiveness. Examples are given as “The undisputed head of the family (Sir Easymoney), The rare distinction (Freddy), The patriarchal ideology, The wealthier the family, the more ignorant the daughters, the carefully nurtured ignorance, at the beck and call of her husband (Rodabai), the Governor, the undefined cravings of her body (Tanya), the Hira Mandi girls (Billy), the Kama Sutra (Billy), The mangy dogs, the beggars (Rosy), in the India of

Adjectives Showing Male Chauvinism

Adjectives are used with males and females are very selective. Bold and prominent adjectives are used with males to describe their qualities. Females are passive in this novel, henceforth; passive adjectives are used with female gender to describe their qualities as shown in the table below:

Strikingly handsome	Dutiful
Dulcet-voiced	God-fearing
Majestic	Husbandly pinch
Grey-haired patriarch	Loving and caring
Hypocrites and pretentious	Sincere and obedient
Materialistic	Contented
Modern	Conventional
Authoritative lords	Attentive servant

VI. INTERPRETATION AND EXPLANATION

1. Psychological Oppression and Marginalization

Psychological oppression and marginalization can be found in The Crow Eaters as that in case Putli. Her husband, Freddy, intimidated her to walk three pace ahead of him which she revolted but in vain.

The elements of threats and harassment are found in the character of Jerbanoo, mother-in-law of Freddy. She is continuously harassed by her son-in-law even her son-in-law banned her speaking in his house. He uses abusive and degrading language against her. He calls her donkey. Freddy does not care about her feelings and emotions. He threatens her to leave his house. He tries to kill her burnt alive. This situation compels Jerbanoo to shriek in despair and, that's why, she wants to go back to her childhood village instantly. She is mentally pre-occupied and obsessed. Jerbanoo feels distresses, stressed and fearful all the time. These lines reveal the mental condition of Putli and Jerbanoo how they have high hopes as they imagine an orderly kingdom under the munificent authority of a British Monarch based their knowledge of the gigantic statue of Queen Victoria.

2. Physical Oppression and Marginalization

In this novel, *The Crow Eaters*, women are physically oppressed. Freddy uses his better half, Putli, as a show piece to get prestige and empowerment from the British Lords. He coaxes her in tea parties which pinch her a lot. She feels painful. He also attempts to burn her alive to get insurance money Rodabai also suffers like Putli. She acts like a robotic slave in front her husband's hand. Yazdi exploits Rosy physically and withdraws himself from her when reality comes to light.

3. Sexual Oppression and Marginalization

The textual clues also indicate that in *The Crow Eaters*, girls are kept ignored about any sex policy and are prepared market value. Tanya embodies this grave issue who has always been in wavering condition in matter of love. She is "protruded most heavily gorgeous, up thrust pair of brassierd bosom." (201). Moreover, male are free whatever they crave for as Billy visited Hira Mandi girls three times, but in case of his wife, Tanya, he was very possessive. He did not want her to look in people's eyes directly. This thing indicates orthodox man attitude towards their views: Her union with the man does not elevate her position but rather she loses her identity and her independence (219).

4. Economic Oppression and Marginalization

Freddy uses Putli as a status symbol and urges her to attend tea parties with him though She does not feel convenient but she is forced to work for the chauvinistic fame and name. Freddy and Billy try to enslave their wives and both were in order of preference. They used their women only material gains as they are the sole earners. Women are not allowed spend money or to give them the account of expenses.

VII. CONCLUSION

The analysis and discussion show that *The Crow Eaters* have patriarchal norms where women are shown as the marginalized, the oppressed, the helpless and the powerless. All women characters have become victim of long practiced tradition and male supremacy. The protagonist, Freddy is the emblem of a patriarchal society. All male characters in the novel exploit women throughout the novel. Freddy uses Putli to get worldly pursuits and has become blind in the addiction of power and authority. The paper explores that women are oppressed psychologically, physically, sexually and economically. It also explores the linguistic choices which help identify the situations and words which signify oppression and powerlessness of woman, and masculine and chauvinist approach. The use of pronouns, articles, passivity, lexemes and transitivity in the text analysis opens the ways of thinking of the time. Moreover, the application of Fairclough Model made the reader to perceive the sensitive issue of oppression. On the whole, Bapsi Sidhwa points out women are marginalized and oppressed only due to the patriarchal system which mars all the abilities and capabilities of womenfolk.

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