



An Study of Canadian author Bapsi Sidhwa

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Abstract: Some people refer to the moniker "Woman Writer" as a "consolation prize" for female professionals in the field. It's true that this used to be the situation. Consolation is gradually being eliminated from the phrase at this point. Women have contributed much to literature. Women's labour is a complement and a supplement to that of males, offering a perspective that is fundamentally different. Male and female are the two equally proportionate half of the life cycle. Bapsi Sidhwa is a well-known author from Pakistan who has lived abroad. Based on her personal life experiences, including the partition of the Indian subcontinent, the oppression of women, immigration to the United States, and involvement in the Parsi/Zoroastrian community, she has penned four English-language novels. The third novel by Bapsi Sidhwa, *Cracking India*, delicately combines the story of Lenny, a little girl of eight years old, with the rumblings of the Partition as it moves from political planning to fact. The events in this book are seen through the eyes of a young kid, yet there are also clues of an older Lenny reflecting.

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INTRODUCTION

"Woman Writer" has been compared as a "consolation award" in the past. True, such was the case in the past. The word "consolation" is progressively being shed from the phrase's current meaning. Women have made enormous contributions to literature. With a viewpoint fundamentally distinct from that of man, woman's activity is a necessary complement to his. She is the equally powerful opposite "self." Life is like a brilliant circle divided into two equal half.

Emotions and sentiments are the first and most important prerequisites for everyone who wants to write. Both sexes experience this at some point in their lives. Women, on the other hand, are more susceptible to psychic vibrations due to their inherent delicacy and sensitivity. However, despite this fact, the production of female artists has been sparse until lately.

Having raw materials isn't enough, either. In addition, the capacity to articulate one is an important piece of equipment for shaping the raw material. Even if one has the capacity to express one's thoughts and sentiments in a sophisticated manner, one may not be able to do so if they are not allowed by an affluent society. Feminine sensibility, which has the ability to compete with male creativity, has been smothered by these forces. Women's creative abilities have been stifled by society's socioeconomic institutions and cultural norms. In addition, her traditional position as the primary supporter of home peace in a male-dominated culture has left her with little time for her inherent artistic sensitivities to fully blossom. In other words, women in prior ages "were denied an opportunity to acquire the required technological instruments that may have helped them concretize their sentiments". [1-3]

As a result, the society's attitude toward women and their position in society has improved greatly in the previous 30 years or more. The majority of women's experiences and impressions of the world are influenced by their gender, and this is reflected in their work. With the rise of feminist philosophy, the patriarchal assumptions that have long governed society have been called into question. Both how women have been depicted in literature and their current writing style have been the subject of substantial debates due to the application of new notions about women to their conceptions. There is no gender gap when it comes to literary contributions. There have also been a number of female English writers from the Indian subcontinent going back to the 18th century. These authors prove that they can be as imaginative as the Western women writers of the past thanks to their diverse range of skills, hobbies, and writing styles. [4-7]

Bapsi Sidhwa is an up-and-coming author in the Commonwealth literature scene. The best English-language author in Pakistan is also hers. Pre-colonial India and post-colonial India are the subject of her work. It's clear that she's coming at the story from two different places: from the Pakistani and Parsi perspectives. She advocates for both the Pakistani people and the disadvantaged Parsi minority.

According to Pratap Singh, she prefers to be referred to as a Punjabi-Pakistani-Parsi lady despite the fact that she is really a dual citizen of India, Pakistan, and the United States. Though her characters and stories are set in India, there is an air of exoticism about her that draws in readers from throughout the world, as Reshmi Gaur attests.[8]

She was born in Karachi in 1939 into a prominent Parsi business family. Her parents Peshotom and Tehmin Bhandara migrated to Lahore soon after her birth, when the Parsi population was little over a hundred and fifty people in total. Thus, the family was shut off from Parsi society. She tells Feroza Jussawala everything about her Lahore childhood:

My upbringing would have been very different if I had been raised in Karachi, which is also a part of Pakistan. As a child, I would have been raised by Parsis. I was raised away from my family members, including my cousins and aunts and uncles. My family was not a large, close-knit group. My maternal grandmother lived with us for a few years, although she had little impact on my family's culture. My childhood was primarily shaped by the influence of my servants.[9]

Her parents have no other children. She was, of course, depressed and lonely. When she was two years old, she had polio, which made her feel even more alone. In order for her to recover, she had to endure many surgeries. Her parents were told by the physicians not to put her through school and put her under any kind of academic pressure. As a result, an Anglo-Indian governess was hired to tutor her at home.

Her eleventh-grade English instructor assigned her Little Women, which she devoured. Louisa May Alcott's work, Little Women, piqued her interest in literature. She began reading voraciously after finding that she could escape boredom by immersing herself in literature. She devoured anything she could get her hands on, including newspapers, periodicals, and novels by authors from across the world. She told Jassawalla everything:

..... I read non-stop because I did not go to school. I had nothing else to do, no other form of entertainment to fill my life with.... This did turn me, I now realize,

into a writer

After the birth of her first three children, two girls and a boy, Bapsi Sidhwa began writing full-time at the age of twenty-eight. To date, she has released five novels: *The Crow Eaters* (1980), *The Pakistani Bride* (1982), *Ice-Candy Man* (1988), which was published in the United States under the title *Cracking India*, *An American Brat* (1993), and *Water* (2006).

Stages Repertory Theatre in Houston presented and premiered Sidhwa's fourth book, *An American Brat*, in 2007. In her most recent book, *Water* (2006), Deepa Mehta's film of the same name was based on her friendship with Mehta.[10-13]

Also, he has published an anthology titled *City of Sin and Splendour: Writings about Lahore* (2006). *New York Times Books Review*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Harpers and Queen*, *The Economic Times* and *London Telegraph* are among the publications to which she's published reviews or essays.

In some ways, Sidhwa's writings are based on her own experiences. Using some of the most important events in her life and those of others in her immediate vicinity, she has created a bigger reality of fiction. [14-16]

Aside from writing, she is also a dedicated social activist. At the Asian Women's Congress in 1975, she served as Pakistan's delegate, as well as Secretary of the Mother's and Children's House, a refuge for poor women, as well as President of the International Women's Club, Lahore.

In her works, Bapsi Sidhwa exhibits a unique Pakistani but Parsi mentality. Above all, hers is a very personal tone of speech. She is, in reality, a person first and an artist second. As a novelist, her uniqueness and her concern for the human condition make her one of India's most accomplished writers. As a writer who is as at home in Islamic and Parsi cultures as she is in the West, Sidhwa refuses to fit neatly into any one particular national or ethnic category.

Bapsi Sidhwa's works are widely read. Some of her books have been used as textbooks at American colleges and universities. Actually, her books have been translated into four languages: French (German), German (Russian), and Urdu (Urdu). Urdu poetry is a common theme in her work. She believes that Urdu poetry adds cultural context to her work. It's given her a more Indian feel, too.[17]

Biography of Bapsi Sidhwa

Diasporic Pakistani novelist Bapsi Sidhwa is a household name. She has written four English-language books based on her own life experiences, including the partition of the Indian subcontinent, mistreatment of women, immigration to the United States, and participation in the Parsi/Zoroastrian society. Having been born on August 11, 1938, in Karachi, Pakistan, and having moved to Lahore not long after, Bapsi Sidhwa was there throughout the terrible Partition of India. With polio throughout her childhood, she received her education at home, where she read voraciously until the age of 15. From Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore she went on to get a Bachelor of Arts degree (BA). When Sidhwa was only 19 years old, she married and gave birth to one of her three children. Having a family forced her to hide her writing talents. In the middle of bridge games, she explains, "I'd take a break and write." A whole new universe has opened

up for me now that I've been published". For a long time, though, she adds, "I was taught that Pakistan was too far in time and location for Americans or the British to relate with". She was a vocal advocate for women's rights at this period, participating in the 1975 Asian Women's Congress as Pakistan's representative.

Having received several rejections for both her first and second works, she opted to self-publish *The Crow Eaters* in Pakistan. Her literary popularity began as a result of this ordeal, which she regrets saying, "I would not want on anybody." As a result of her first two books, *Cracking India* and *An American Brat*, she has garnered various honours and honorary professorships. As a result, *The Bride* received the Patras Bokhri Award for Pakistani literature in 1985, and the Sitari-Imtiazin Award for Pakistani art and culture in 1991. While writing *Cracking India* for her third book, she received several accolades, including a German Literaturpreis, an American Library Association "Notable Book of the Year," and a New York Times mention. *Cracking India* was made possible in 1986 and 1987 by a Harvard Bunting Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Arts award. Lila Wallace-Digest Reader's Award winner in 1993, she received a \$100,000 prize. Russian, French, and German translations of her writings have recently been made available. At Rice University, Mt. Holyoke, St. Thomas University, and The University of Texas, she has also taught college-level English classes. She has also taught at Columbia University, New York. [18]

Cracking India

Cracking India, Bapsi Sidhwa's third book, gently weaves the tale of an 8-year-old girl, Lenny, with the rumblings of the Partition as it proceeds from political planning to actuality. In this novel, the events occur before the eyes of a small child, but there are also hints of an older Lenny looking back. For the same reasons as Sidhwa, Lenny is also a Parsi with polio. He too resides in Lahore. Despite her early age, she is a sharp and keen observer who makes for an excellent storyteller. When she wonders whether the ground would bleed if the grownups "break" India, her naiveté is on display. Sidhwa has been criticized for making Lenny's character too clever for her age, although the historical scenario of the Partition is beautifully interwoven into the narrative via the youthful eyes of Lenny. An increasingly categorized and labeled world is shown to Lenny as she grows more aware of her surroundings. [22]

Slave sister, "Electric Aunt," "Old Husband," "Godmother," "Ayah," and "Ice-Candy Man" are among the personalities that surround Lenny. The work was originally titled after this final character. There were concerns that American readers may mistake the strange moniker for a drug seller. In reality, the Ice-Candy-Man is a Muslim street seller who is captivated to Lenny's nanny Ayah because of her alluring looks. He sees the Ice-Candy-Man go from being an ice cream vendor to a bird salesman to a phone-based connection to Allah as well as a pimp. Last but not least, this position demonstrates the deceptive techniques that individuals (especially politicians) will use in order to remain in power. Politics, Bapsi Sidhwa adds, is dirty because "as a Parsee, I'm able to see things objectively." While the politicians on both sides of the aisle are having a good time, the rest of us are left in the lurch. We are shown the Godmother as a source of power and action by Sidhwa, who portrays her as knowledgeable rather than arrogant.

Along with the failure of politics, Sidhwa identifies Partition's most detrimental effect: the defilement of women on both sides of the struggle as a symbolic act. Sidhwa remembers the horrifying screams and groans of the ladies who had been rescued at the time. "Why do they weep so much?" she wondered. As I

understand it, they're either having unplanned pregnancies or reliving harrowing pasts. Kept in captivity are tens of thousands of women. A woman's victory is celebrated on her body, and a woman's revenge is taken on her body," she says. Especially in my region, that is the way things are (Graeber). In the midst of all this sadness, Cracking India has a fantastic sense of humour. There are so many benefits to laughing, she says. As a "Writer-in-Residence," I am able to "expose wrongs and get rid of rage and exhilaration" The anguish of ancient, caked wounds is brought to the surface in Cracking India so that they might finally be healed.

The Crow Eaters d in early twentieth-century British India, the social mobility of a Parsi family known as the Junglewallas. The adventures of Faredoon Junglewalla, better known as Freddy, are told in a way that is both historically accurate and heavily autobiographical. Freddy's ultimate goal is money and power, which he gains at a price.

Irony abounds in Sidhwa's point of view. In order to keep the book from becoming either too laudatory or overly disparaging, sarcasm, caricature, and buffoonery are often used.

To say that Freddy's charitable deeds are noble would be an understatement. An image of selflessness has been created for the purpose of expanding his business relationships and making him seem like a good person. He'd previously amassed his fortune by blaming an insurance company for accidentally setting fire to his business while concealing his valuables in a rented godown. Lahore flourished due of his public relations sycophancy with British authorities disguised as sycophancy. There is more to the tale than merely a guy and his family's social mobility and ideals, though. Comedy also shines a light on the Nationalist Movement and the Parsis' ambiguous stance toward it. He works in the style of Aristophanes, Fielding, and V.S. Naipaul's early books, mixing comedy and sarcasm to elicit laughter while conveying important messages. Jerbanoo, Putli, Behram, Tanya, and Yazdi are all depicted by Sidhwa as vibrant and full of life. The novel's insightful depiction of the disadvantaged Parsi community is both amusing and enlightening thanks to the author's keen observations.

As told to Sidhwa when they were camping out in the Karakoram Mountains, *The Pakistani Bride* is based on an actual real tale. During their stay at an Army camp, they were told the tale of a girl from the plains that was kidnapped by an elderly tribal and transported over the Indus River to marry his nephew. After a month after marriage, they received word that *the bride* had fled. After surviving fourteen days in the Karakoram Mountains, the world's most challenging mountains, the girl intuitively made her way to the Indus. Nevertheless, her husband and the rest of the tribe were searching for her as a runaway wife, which is an offence to the tribespeople. Slashing off her head, he tossed her into a river near a rope bridge that may have saved the woman's life.

A Punjabi orphan, Zaitoon, is born to Sidhwa's romanticised version of the girl. To him, she looks like his daughter, who died of smallpox, and he adopts her since she reminds him of her. In order to deal with his anguish, Qasim had fled to the plains. Compulsions from the community force him into marrying her, despite his knowledge that she is unsuitable for a life of hardship in the mountains.

An dutiful Muslim girl, Zaitoon is enchanted by her protective father's dreams of a long-lost mountain paradise in the book. Her romantic notions are quickly dispelled when she marries a tribal guy in Pakistan's northwestern provinces. At first, she is naive to believe that she is living in a utopia, but she soon finds that

it isn't. Fawzia Afzal-Khan considers Zaitoon's departure from this conservative, traditional tribal society as a spirit of resistance that "endorses a challenge to the norms of patriarchy."

As a counterpart to Zaitoon's amorous ambitions and disappointments, Sidhwa brings in Carol, an American shop girl, from the States. Major Mushtaq's fling with Carol, the American wife of his buddy Farrukh, and his sexual escapades with her run parallel to the main narrative. This is a common theme in both stories, where the wife defies her husband's morals and sense of honour. Both times, the spouses' romance fades away, and they flee in anger. Carol returns to her husband, but Zaitoon's future is uncertain - whether or not to commit herself to Ashiq or not. The author manages to place the American girl in the same boat as the Pakistani one with a fine touch.. On the novel's ideological perspective, Fawzia Afzal-Khan sees it as a technique to liberate "the feminine self that stays marginalised inside the system." "*The bride*" challenges "the patriarchal culture and ideals of Indian-Pakistani society."

CONCLUSION

Bapsi Sidhwa stands out among Indian writers of English-language fiction for a variety of reasons, including her rowdy humour, disdain for established customs, sense of fair play, and nuanced use of character archetypes. This woman is a true representation of her diverse cultural experiences, which she beautifully portrays. Her work's flamboyant ribaldry has given sub-continental English fiction a new depth. What Anatol Lievin refers to as "prim and stiff norm" has been released from this genre. A longtime goal of Khushwant Singh's was realised: increased openness and less restriction in the portrayal of sexuality inside Indian subcontinental English literature. Bapsi Sidhwa has been a trend-setter in this area. Other contemporary, Indian-English authors who have followed this trend include Namita Gokhale and Shoba De, the queen of smut.

Bapsi Sidhwa, like Mulk Raj Anand, a third-world novelist, believes that the author has a duty to play in evangelising. In her many works, she discusses instances of injustice that she has labelled "incidents." For example, the behaviour of superpowers like The Crow Eaters and Ice-Candy-Man is mentioned by Bapsi Sidhwa.

As a writer, I've been used to inhabiting other bodies and occupying rooms, gardens, bungalows, and other historical settings.

She has a particular Pakistani and Parsi ethos in her works, but above all a distinct individual voice. Individuality and a sense of levity distinguish her as one of the best comedy novelists in the subcontinental English literature genre. As a Pakistani writer writing for a Western audience who refuses to accept national categorization, Sidhwa refuses to fit neatly into any preconceived national classifications.

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