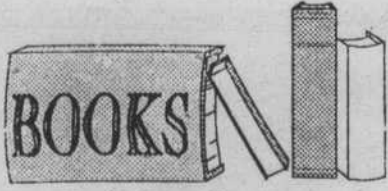


Author offers insight into Pakistani religion



"The Crow Eaters"
Bapsi Sidhwa
Milkweed Editions

By Bryan Peterson
Staff Reporter

First published in 1981, Bapsi Sidhwa's "The Crow Eaters" has been revived as the second book in Milkweed Editions' "Alive Again!" series.

Milkweed is a thriving press in Minneapolis dedicated to preserving works of literature and art that might otherwise be lost between the financial considerations of overly conservative mass market publishers and the limited printings of small presses.

Sidhwa's heritage straddles both Pakistan and India; she now lives in the United States. Drawing on her life experiences, Sidhwa has helped preserve the fragile Parsee community in India in this and other writings.

The book's title refers to a derogatory term given to the Parsees, a reli-

gious sect that is trying to survive in a Pakistan full of other religions and is about to have India partitioned off from it.

Moving from 1901 to 1940, the book centers largely on Fardoon (Freddy) Junglewalla in his rise from a small-time merchant to a widely respected and influential man in his community.

In this loosely connected series of tales, the reader slowly finds a remarkably rich and complex individual living in a similarly rich and complex community.

Part hero and part scoundrel, Freddy follows his country through the unimagined changes wrought by the 20th century. Much like the patriarchal figure in "Fiddler on the Roof," Freddy is torn between the demands of tradition and those of change as he builds a family and a business.

Readers also witness the struggles of the Parsees, and find them to be like most religions. Like any Western sect, the Parsees have their extremists, hypocrites, and occasionally, those with sincere devotion.

And, like many individuals in the West, Freddy has his foibles. He instructs his family in morals by quoting English adages, often misquoting them in the process. At the same time,

he regularly exerts his growing influence in certain manners that are not quite exemplary.

Freddy sees himself as working for the good in his ceaseless wheeling for position, currying of favor and securing of interests.

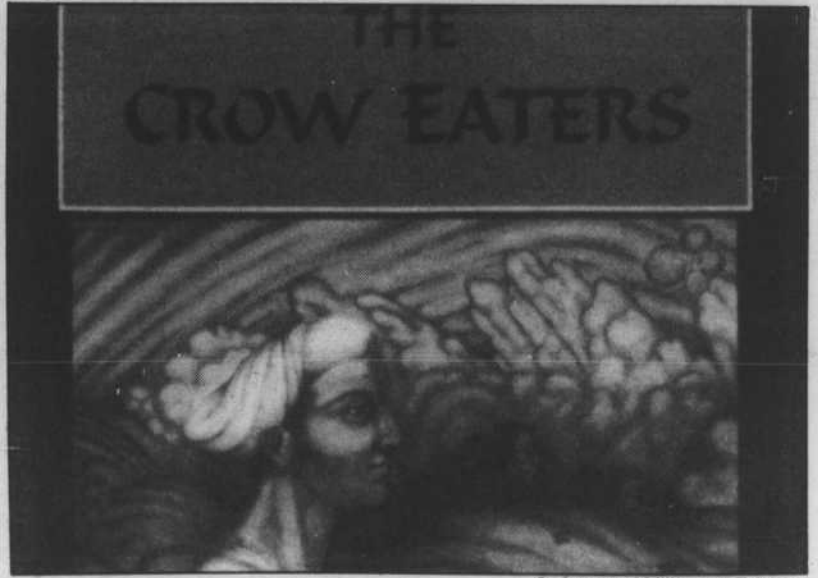
At one point, he collects 50,000 rupees from a fellow Parsee to pay a 10,000-rupee bribe to a police officer to release the fellow's son on drug smuggling charges. Freddy then distributes the balance among Parsee charities.

Freddy summarizes himself while lecturing the wayward son of a friend, "The first rule one must observe is to respect the law. You can never run from it... though you may get around it!"

Sidhwa does not let Freddy steal the show, interesting as he is. Many of the book's tales revolve around other members of his family, each of them strong people in themselves and in relation to Freddy.

Also connecting the tales is a vibrant strand of bawdy humor, as when the tomboy daughter of an English civil servant tries to pull the loincloth off Freddy's Hindu gardener.

Such antics help enliven the Parsee culture, but they are balanced by the griefs and sorrows experienced by



Courtesy of Milkweed Editions

Bapsi Sidhwa, an English-language novelist from Pakistan, writes about a Parsee family from India in her book, "The Crow Eaters."

Freddy and his family at other times.

The result is a full, variegated depiction of Parsee culture and some of its more remarkable, if fictional, characters.

In reality, the Parsees are a threatened culture whose numbers are diminishing and whose traditions are

slowly being compromised.

With "The Crow Eaters," Sidhwa has done much to further her wish to portray the robust spirit and exuberance that have served the Parsees so well since their migration to India as refugees 1,300 years ago.



Courtesy of RCA Records

Me Phi Me's debut album, "One," is rap/hip-hop music with a message.

Nonconformist forges acoustic frontier in rap

Reviews



Me Phi Me
"One"
BMG/RCA

"Space. The final frontier. These are the voyages of the Me Phi Me." And so starts the debut album of Me Phi Me.

Me Phi Me is breaking through in a new style that includes acoustic guitars and harmonicas shared with groups such as Arrested Development and The Disposable Heroes of Hiphopracry.

"We stand for individuality" is part of "the Credo" of Me Phi Me. "One" is an album explaining the philosophy of this artist.

Nonconformity is the main idea played out in "One."

In "... and I Believe (the Credo)," it is said, "Get together but never conform to others again/We got our own brain/So I don't need yours/Because alone I am a powerful force."

The lines are backed by samples from Ladysmith Black Mambazo. But let's not forget that this is a hip-hop album. Periods also show up from James Brown and Sly and the Family Stone.

However, live instruments are fa-

vored throughout the disc. The drums are high powered, especially on the tracks "Dream of You" and "... and I Believe (the Credo)."

"Pu' Sho Hands 2Getha" is a party/dance-oriented track. This style doesn't work for Me Phi Me. He needs to stick to songs with a message. When the only things the rhymes have to speak of is the funky music, the lyrics seem incorrect.

The listeners get to see homelessness from the homeless person's point of view in "Black Sunshine." This is one of the album's best tracks with solid drums, acoustic guitar and a voice echo — all used to create deep feelings.

Another solid track is the album's first single, "SadNew Day." This song was well received on the pop and R & B charts.

"It Ain't the Way It Was" is a song about having a relationship with an older woman. Listeners are urged to look at each individual for his or her maturity and not just age.

Throughout the album, Me Phi Me breaks into "Poetic Moments" and has short verse about individuality and positive living.

Me Phi Me is a man trying to break the molds of rap, and he has done a good job. His acoustics musically set him into a new category of rap, just as his lyrics set him out as an individual.

— Greg Schick

Country western Top 10

1. "Jesus and Mama," Confederate Railroad
2. "No One Else on Earth," Wynonna Judd
3. "Cafe on the Corner," Sawyer Brown
4. "The Greatest Man I Never Knew," Reba McEntire
5. "Going Out of My Mind," McBride & The Ride
6. "Lord Have Mercy on the Working Man," Travis Tritt
7. "We Shall Be Free," Garth Brooks
8. "Seminole Wind," John Anderson
9. "Letting Go," Suzy Bogguss
10. "Help, I'm White and I Can't Get Down," Geezinslaw Brothers

Source: Cashbox magazine

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Information Session:

Monday, November 2, 1992
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On-Campus Interviews:

November 3 and 4, 1992

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