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## **Biography of Bapsi Sidhwa**

### **Bapsi Sidhwa: Pakistani American author**

Bapsi Sidhwa is a Pakistani-American novelist and women's rights activist. She was born in 1938 in Karachi, then a part of the British colony of India. She spent her childhood in the Punjabi city of Lahore, which became a part of newly independent Pakistan when Sidhwa was 9, during the Partition of 1947. She writes in English, but her first languages are Gujarati and Urdu. In 1957 she graduated from Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore with her BA. She got married at 19 and moved to Mumbai, India, before divorcing and moving back to Lahore to marry a second time. Currently, she lives in Houston, Texas in the United States. She has three children, one of whom was a 2012 Democratic candidate for District 9 of the Arizona House of Representatives. She has taught at Rice University, Columbia University, Mount Holyoke College, Brandeis University, and the University of Houston.

Sidhwa is most famous for the novel *Cracking India* (1988), but she is the author of several other novels including *The Crow Eaters*, *The Bridge* (1982), and *Water: A Novel* (2006). Her books often focus on life in colonial India, the history of Partition, experiences of the Parsi community (a small community of Indian Zoroastrians), and the experience of immigrating from South Asia to the United States. Sidhwa has many commonalities with Lenny, the protagonist of *Cracking India*. They both lived through Partition as children, were Parsi, and suffered from polio at a young age. Sidhwa drew on her own experiences while creating the character of Lenny. However, the novel is fiction, not an autobiography. Even so, many of the events resemble real occurrences. For example, the character Ranna who is nearly murdered during the mob violence of Partition is based on a man that Sidhwa met in Houston who bears a knife-scar on the back of his head. Of her intentions writing *Cracking India*, Sidhwa has stated: "my intention was to write about Partition because very little had been written about it. There are certain images from my past which have always haunted me[...]Although I was very young then, I saw chance killings, fires, dead bodies. These are images which have stayed with me[...]This hostility needs to be dealt with." The novel was an attempt to bring more attention to this historical tragedy. In particular, the novel shows how Partition affected women, particularly those who were kidnapped or raped.

Sidhwa has also been active in women's rights. She worked as a secretary for a Destitute Women and Children's Home in Lahore. She was also a part of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's committee on women's development. She is the winner of numerous awards, including Pakistan's Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Pakistan's national award for achievements in the arts), the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Writer's Award, and a Bunting Fellowship at Radcliffe/Harvard. Sidhwa has also been inducted in the Zoroastrian Hall of Fame.

Bapsi volunteered for various organizations meant for social work. Writings of this ideal woman reflects distinctive Pakistani but Parsi ethos. Sidhwa's sense of humor and individualism makes the woman a very refined English comic writer. But she was never titled as comic writer. After shifting to United States, she taught, presented and lectured creative writing workshops at multiple universities and colleges including ST. Thomas University, Holyoke College, University of Houston and Columbia University. She was a scholar at

Rockefeller Foundation in Bellagio (Italy) in 1991. Bapsi served on women's development advisory committee for Pakistani's Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto.

She is best known for her collaborative work with Indo-Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta: Sidhwa wrote both the 1991 novel *Ice Candy Man* which served as the basis for Mehta's 1998 film *Earth* as well as the 2006 novel *Water: A Novel* on which is based Mehta's 2005 film *Water*. A documentary about Sidhwa's life called "Bapsi: Silences of My Life" is currently in production and is expected to release 2021.

### **Background**

Sidhwa was born to Gujarati Parsi Zoroastrian parents Peshotan and Tehmina Bhandara in Karachi and later moved with her family to Lahore. She was two when she contracted polio (which has affected her throughout her life) and nine in 1947 at the time of Partition (facts which would shape the character Lenny in her novel *Ice Candy Man* as well as the background for her novel). She received her BA from Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore in 1957.

She married at the age of 19 and moved to Bombay for five years before she divorced and remarried in Lahore with her present husband Noshir who is also Zoroastrian. She had three children in Pakistan before beginning her career as an author. One of her children is Mohur Sidhwa, who is a candidate for state representative in Arizona.

She currently resides in Houston, US. She describes herself as a "Punjabi-Parsi-Pakistani". Her first language is Gujarati, her second language is Urdu, and her third language is English. She can read and write best in English, but she is more comfortable talking in Gujarati or Urdu, and often translates literally from Gujarati or Urdu to English.

In an online interview to her Pakistani friend, Sadia Rehman, in August 2012 she said, "Feroza is closest to me and my views" about the identity issues of Pakistani Parsi immigrants to the US, their life-styles and their culture.

### **Teaching**

She has previously taught at the University of Houston, Rice University, Columbia University, Mount Holyoke College, and Brandeis University.

### **Unforgettable Works of Bapsi**

The first novel "The Crow Eaters" of Bapsi Sidhwa was published in 1980 which was widely appreciated by the readers living in Europe. Then her brilliance was reflected in novels *The Bride*, *An American Brat* and *Ice Candy Man*. Her first three writings focused on the Parsi community and families residing in Lahore. *The Crow Eaters* addressed serious historical and cultural issues written in farcical and humorous style portraying the Parsi culture elements. *The Bride* explains events of partition through story of a Kohistani tribesmen and a young adorable girl he adopts soon after sighting the deadly massacre in which the girl's whole family was killed. *The Bride* interpolate Zaitoon's (young girl) story with that of Carol who was a beautiful American woman not happy with her marriage to the Pakistani engineer.

Her third novel "Ice Candy Man" reveals events surrounding Partition through Lenny's eyes (haughty Parsi girl) who was disabled due to Polio. *The American Brat* was written after Bapsi shifted to America and alarms the increasing Pakistan fundamentalism in 1970's. It follows the story of sixteen year Parsi girl called Feroza Ginwalla. Feroza's mother named Zareen decides to migrate Feroza to USA for staying with her uncle. She was hit by an internal cultural shock and Feroza wills to reside in America where she gets strongly involved

with a Jewish man. She becomes heavily politicized regarding issues for instance global relations, imperialism and gender. Feroza's revolutionary attitude was alarming for Zareen who traveled to America to spare her daughter who has turned out to be an American brat.

### **Highly Inspirational Writings of Sidhwa**

In Sidhwa's novels, she provides a wide glimpse of contemporary political situation in Pakistan. In *American Brat*, she states a background of fundamentalism dispersing in Pakistan at General Zia's rule. Sidhwa gets ironical while featuring the dilemmas of fundamentalism. Sidhwa's incrimination relating fundamentalism was not only restricted to Muslim communities but also targeted other communities. Sidhwa exposes the narrow-mindedness and insular attitude of the American society. Bapsi with her acute characterization, humor and optimistic outlook tackles with some of the contemporary problems. Through her writings, it's apparent that she has been a part of cultural multiplicity. Strikingly, Sidhwa popularized the fashion and extremely open viewpoints on sex by Saadat Hussin Manto. Her emphasis has always laid upon the Parsi societies and their problems. In modern era, Parsi community were although affluent yet faced fear of becoming a minority group. Bapsi with her brains, understood Parsi's antiquity, beliefs and faiths, unveiling mysteries of her community's life.

### **Critical Perception on the Insightful Writer**

Bapsi's work has pulled together positive and bright critical attention for giving an exceptional Parsi view on politics and culture of India's partition. *Crow Eaters* received applauds for an entertaining social travesty with critics honoring Bapsi's exuberant characters and the right use of humor. Readers have praised the depiction of ethnically questionable main character in the *crow eaters*. *Ice candy man* received a mingled critical reception. Some commentators compares Bapsi's narrative of linking important political events from the vision of the child to the narration of Salman Rushdie's in *Midnight's children* while other critics found her ways clumsy and ineffective for elaborating the events relating to partition. Many scholars have strongly criticized her novel *ice candy man* for excessively simplifying politics and history of partition. They also faulted Bapsi's representation of Gandhi asserting her views on political and religious leader is unbalanced as well as unrealistic.

Critics noted that both her novels '*An American Brat*' and '*The Bride*' examined strong characterization and cultural conflict. Kamala Edward keenly observed Sidhwa as a realist and feminist. One could apparently see in her the characteristics of a woman. *American Brat* was extolled by various reviewers as compelling portrayal of both upcoming ages and the experience of immigrant in United States. Furthermore, many critics observed Bapsi's use of cultural and social stereotypes in almost all her novels specifically in *American Brat*.

### **Awards**

Bunting Fellowship at Radcliffe/Harvard (1986)

Visiting Scholar at the Rockefeller Foundation Center, Bellagio, Italy, (1991)

Sitara-i-Imtiaz, (1991, Pakistan's highest national honor in the arts)

Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Writer's Award (1994)

Premio Mondello for Foreign Authors for Water (2007)

Inducted in the Zoroastrian Hall of Fame (2000)

## Works

Their Language of Love : published by Readings Lahore (2013, Pakistan.)

Jungle Wala Sahib (Translation) (Urdu) : Published by Readings Lahore (2012, Pakistan)

City of Sin and Splendour : Writings on Lahore (2006, US)

Water: A Novel (2006, US and Canada)

Bapsi Sidhwa Omnibus (2001, Pakistan)

An American Brat (1993, U.S.; 1995, India)

Cracking India (1991, U.S.; 1992, India; originally published as Ice Candy Man, 1988, England)

The Bride (1982, England; 1983;1984, India; published as The Pakistani Bride, 1990 US and 2008 US)

The Crow Eaters (1978, Pakistan; 1979 &1981, India; 1980, England; 1982, US)

With the publication of her third novel, Ice-Candy-Man (or Cracking India), Bapsi Sidhwa established herself as Pakistan's leading English-language novelist. Pakistan is the location of Sidhwa's first three novels, and in each there is a strong sense of place and community which she uses to examine the post-colonial Pakistani identity. In her novel The American Brat she shifts the predominant locale of her fiction from Lahore and Pakistan to various cities across America as she explores the Parsi/Pakistani diaspora. Multiple alternative voices are heard in Sidhwa's fiction through her choice of narrators and characters from Pakistan's minority communities—members of the Parsi religion, Kohistanis from Pakistan's Tribal Territories, and, perhaps most importantly, women.

Sidhwa's first three novels, although very different from one another, share what Anita Desai has described as "a passion for history and for truth telling." And in each her desire to understand the terrible events of the Partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947 and the subsequent birth of Pakistan as a nation is evident. Her first-published novel, The Crow Eaters, is a delightfully rambunctious comedy in which Faredoon Junglewalla tells the story of his life and times from the turn of the century to the eve of Partition. In common with such a writer as Salman Rushdie, Sidhwa believes that in order to understand any single event it is necessary to consider the many events which led up to it. Like the author herself, Faredoon is a Parsi and his story takes the reader to the heart of that minority community. The focus on the Parsis, their rites, and customs, not only provides a rich subject in itself, but also an ideal vehicle for observing the history of India, and in particular the events played out between Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims, from a detached yet intimate insider/outsider perspective. Through the contact Faredoon and his family have with other groups in India (including the British) a picture of the whole is skillfully created. But always, behind her panoramic canvas, history ticks away and moves the reader gradually but inexorably towards 1947.

Whereas The Crow Eaters ends with the horrors of Partition still to come, The Bride (or The Pakistani Bride, her second published novel, but actually written before The Crow Eaters) uses those horrors as its starting point, and thus focuses on the first chapter of Pakistan's history as an independent nation. In this novel Sidhwa again makes use of a detached and marginalized character from one of Pakistan's minority groups. She uses Qasim, a Kohistani tribesman, as her window onto the period of history she treats. After witnessing a brutal



attack on a train of refugees (a common Partition motif), Qasim adopts a young girl left orphaned by the massacre. When, years later, he takes Zaitoon to his ancestral village to be married, Sidhwa demonstrates the extent of the cultural divisions which exist within the newly drawn political boundaries of Pakistan, and in doing so raises questions about the construction of national identity. Her focus on the relationship between dominant and minority communities in Pakistan is extended specifically to include gender relations, which indeed is a strong theme in all her fiction.

In both *The Crow Eaters* and *The Bride*, Partition is a significant event without being the main subject of either novel. But in *Ice-Candy-Man*—which is revisionist history of Partition from a Pakistani perspective, and major contribution to the growing list of novels which treat Partition—Sidhwa meets that terrible event head-on. Here Sidhwa returns to the Parsi community and chooses Lenny, a young Parsi girl with polio, as her narrator. The political and historical consciousness of her previous novels reaches a pinnacle in this novel, and the young narrator, naive, innocent, and free of the various prejudices an older narrator would be subject to, proves to be an ideal means of exposing the complexities of the period. The frequent intertextual referencing in *Ice-Candy-Man* is testament to Sidhwa's dual literary heritage, but more significantly, her use of Eugene O'Neill's play *The Iceman Cometh*, which provides both the title and the framework for *Ice-Candy-Man*, insists on the importance of fiction as a shaping force of history, and lends one more twist to Sidhwa's exploration of the nature of truth.

In her richly comic novel *An American Brat*, Sidhwa chronicles the departure of Feroza Ginwalla—a member of the Junglewalla clan first encountered in *The Crow Eaters*—from an increasingly fundamentalist Pakistan of the late 1970s and her subsequent exposure to American culture. More than simply the tale of a young girl coming of age, it shows Feroza coming to terms with her identity in the increasingly diasporic climate of the late twentieth century. Sidhwa convincingly handles the personal growth of her central character and the difficulties that arise when two cultures come into contact. This novel, with its focus on diaspora, is a logical extension of the interest in displacement and the clashes between communities which is present in all her previous three novels.

—Ralph J. Crane

### **Major Works**

Sidhwa's first three novels focus on Parsi families and the Parsi community in the city of Lahore and outlying areas that were incorporated into the newly formed nation of Pakistan.

*The Crow Eaters*—written after *The Bride*, but published first—draws its title from a proverb which refers to those who talk too much as people who have eaten crows. The story takes place over the first half of the twentieth century, and concerns the fortunes of a Parsi man, Faredoon “Freddy” Junglewalla.

After moving from a small village in central India to the city of Lahore, Freddy gains financial success through a variety of questionable money-making schemes, such as arson and insurance fraud. Meanwhile, his strong-willed mother-in-law, Jerbanoo, makes his life increasingly difficult.

*The Crow Eaters*, while addressing serious cultural and historical issues, is written in a humorous, farcical style that lampoons elements of Parsi culture. *The Bride* details the events of the Partition through the story of Qasim, a Kohistani tribesman, and Zaitoon, a young girl he adopts after witnessing the massacre in which her family was killed. The plot

chronicles the events leading up to and following the ill-arranged marriage between Zaitoon and a man from Qasim's tribe in the mountains. When her new husband becomes abusive, Zaitoon decides to run away.

The Bride interweaves Zaitoon's narrative with the story of Carol, an American woman unhappily married to a Pakistani engineer. Sidhwa's third novel, *Ice-Candy-Man*, recounts events surrounding the Partition through the eyes of Lenny, a precocious Parsi girl who has been disabled by polio.

Throughout the novel, Lenny relates the effects of the Partition on her family and community. During the course of these events, Lenny's beautiful young Hindu nanny, Ayah, is kidnapped and raped by a group of men who had previously courted her.

The Ice-candy-man, a local popsicle vendor, is among this group of suitors-turnedkidnappers. The novel is both the story of Lenny's coming of age and a complex history of the growing divisions among Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh communities of India at the time, as well as a scathing social commentary about the British colonization of India.

*An American Brat*, written after Sidhwa immigrated to America, follows a sixteen-year-old Parsi girl named Feroza Ginwalla. Alarmed by the rising fundamentalism of Pakistan in the 1970s, Feroza's mother, Zareen, decides to send Feroza to the United States to stay with her uncle. After an initial culture shock, however, Feroza decides to remain in America as a college student, where she falls in love with a young Jewish man. Feroza also becomes increasingly politicized about such issues as gender, imperialism, and global relations. Zareen, alarmed by Feroza's newly Americanized attitudes, travels to the United States to retrieve her daughter, who Zareen believes has become an "American brat."

### **Critical Reception**

Sidhwa's work 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 acclaim as an entertaining social farce, with critics lauding Sidhwa's charming characters and unabashed use of "barnyard" humor.

Reviewers have additionally praised her portrayal of an ethically questionable protagonist in *The Crow Eaters* without subjecting him to moralizing judgments. *Ice-Candy-Man* has received a decidedly mixed critical reception.

While some commentators have favoured Sidhwa's narrative device of relating major political events through the eyes of a child, other critics have found the device to be an ineffective and clumsy means of describing the events of the Partition.

Several scholars have also criticized *Ice-Candy-Man* for oversimplifying the history and politics of the Partition, and faulted Sidhwa's portrayal of Mahatma Gandhi, asserting that her view of the religious and political leader is unrealistic and unbalanced. Tariq Rahman has disputed this assertion, arguing that *Ice-Candy-Man*, "shows the human personality under stress as a result of that cataclysmic event and depicts a society responding to it in the way societies do react: through sheer indifference, gossip, trivial and malicious activities, making love, and also killing, raping, and going insane."

Sidhwa has also been highly regarded as a feminist postcolonial author who effectively addresses issues of cultural difference and the place of women in Indian and Pakistani society. Critics have noted both *The Bride* and *An American Brat* for their examinations of cultural conflict and their strong characterizations. Kamala Edwards has observed, "Sidhwa is

a feminist and realist. One sees in her women characters the strength of passion, the tenderness of love, and the courage of one's convictions.

They struggle to overcome the hurts of time and escape the grip of a fate in whose hands they are often mere puppets." *An American Brat* has been extolled by many reviewers as a compelling delineation of both the coming of age process and the immigrant experience in the United States. However, several critics have noted Sidhwa's use of stock social and cultural stereotypes in all of her novels, particularly in *An American Brat*.

The plotting of *An American Brat* has additionally been judged by several reviewers to be weak and predictable, but a majority of critics have found Sidhwa's representation of American culture to be insightful and unique.

### **Bapsi Sidhwa's Major Novels' Overview**

#### **The Bride**

*The Bride* was written earlier but has only now been published. It narrates the story of Zaitoon, who lost her parents in the Indo-Pakistan riots in the summer of 1947 and was adopted by Lahore-bound Qasim, a Himalayan tribesman also fleeing the mountains after committing a crime and losing his wife and children to the fatalities inflicted by smallpox.

Zaitoon is so named by Qasim, after his own late daughter, and raised from the age of five in the city of Lahore as his adopted daughter. Against better counsel, he decides to marry her off at fifteen to a tribesman in the northern mountains, whence he himself originated. The city-bred young girl now must learn the ways of the tribesman's world outside the civilized, urban though decadent life of the plains, where she spent most of her years. The result is as expected. Sakhi is not husband she wants; nor is she the wife he can endure. So she must escape the rugged hills, which she does, and find her way back, which we cannot know about. Honor, commitment, marriage and loyalty are at stake, and there is really no way either to quash or to salvage them in the painful predicament in which Zaitoon's circumstances have placed her.

Escape from the oppressive, no-go "civilization" is what Carol also decides upon. She appears midway through the book, apparently to highlight Zaitoon's dilemma and to judge it with the outsider's objective eye.

Carol is American and married to a Pakistani engineer living in the northern mountains, extremely dissatisfied with her own life as much as with local mores, which she finds "too ancient" and "too different." She decides to go "home," thus mirroring Zaitoon's flight from the "different" North. The two story lines combine to produce a splendid tale examining sociocultural differences at a level far above that which is familiar in Pakistani Anglophone writing.

#### **An American Brat**

Coming of age is never easy. Coming of age as a woman is even harder. But coming of age as a female immigrant in a foreign country may be the most difficult of all. For many women born into societies with restrictive social and political codes, however, immigration may be the only real way to come of age. In *An American Brat*, Pakistani-born novelist Bapsi Sidhwa reveals with a humorous yet incisive eye the exhilarating freedom and profound sense of loss that make up the immigrant experience in America.

Sidhwa begins her novel in Lahore, Pakistan. Feroza Gunwalla, a 16-year-old Parsee, is mortified by the sight of her mother appearing at her school with her arms uncovered. For

Zareen Gunwalla, Feroza's outspoken 40-something mother, it is a chilling moment. The Parsees, a small sect in Pakistan, take great pride in their liberal values, business acumen, and—most importantly—the education of their children.

It's 1978 in Pakistan and 16-year-old Feroza Ginwalla, the heroine of the novel, *An American Brat*, is beginning to worry her relatively liberal, upper-middle-class Parsee parents.

She won't answer the phone; she tells her mother to dress more conservatively; she sulks, she slams doors, she prefers the company of her old-fashioned grandmother; she seems to sympathize with fundamentalist religious thinking.

What to do? "I think Feroza must get away," says Zareen, the girl's mother, to her husband, Cyrus. Feroza is packed off to visit her Uncle Manek, a student at MIT. But as Zareen waves goodbye to her daughter, she cannot know that in America Feroza will become more independent than Zareen ever dreamt, or hoped, was possible. "Travel will broaden her outlook, get this puritanical rubbish out of her head."

And indeed it does—although to a disastrous degree, from Zareen and Cyrus' point of view, for Feroza's three-month sabbatical with her uncle in Massachusetts turns into a three-year sojourn in many parts of the United States.

By the time Zareen decides, toward the end of the book, to reassert parental control by flying from Lahore to Denver—where Feroza has become a hotel-management student—it's too late. Her daughter is already an "American brat," a woman with a mind and opinions of her own, able to relish the ability to choose.

*An American Brat* is an exceptional novel, one of such interest that the reader's reservations, while significant, are ultimately of little consequence.

Bapsi Sidhwa, author of three previous works of fiction and frequently referred to as Pakistan's most prominent English-language novelist, has produced a remarkable sketch of American society as seen and experienced by modern immigrants.

America, to Feroza and her Uncle Manek, is in many ways a paradise—as indeed it appears to be for Sidhwa, a Parsee who has lived in the United States for many years—but *An American Brat* is nonetheless a measured portrait, often reassuring and discomfiting at the same time.

It's both wonderful and startling, for example, to hear the fully Americanized Manek say to the newly arrived Feroza, as she grapples with some well-wrapped container, "Remember this: If you have to struggle to open something in America, you're doing it wrong. They've made everything easy. That's how a free economy works."

In style, *An American Brat* is nothing like Henry James' *The Ambassadors*, being straightforward, humorous, easygoing and unpoetic. In plot, though, it bears some similarities, with travelers finding themselves unexpectedly transformed by their encounters in a new land.

Feroza soon realizes that Manek's years in the United States have changed him: He is now "humbler and, paradoxically, more assured and quietly conceited, more considerate, yet ... tougher, even ruthless."

One of the first things Zareen notices about Feroza at the Denver airport is her gaudy tan:



"You'd better bleach your face or something," she tells her daughter, "before you come home."

But even Zareen proves vulnerable to America's charms:

Although she has come to break up Feroza's engagement to a "non"—a non-Parsee—she glories in the shopping and amenities of Denver life, "as happy as a captive seal suddenly released into the ocean."

Zareen, her American mission at least partially accomplished, returns to Pakistan but wonders momentarily whether she has done the right thing. And that's the issue lying at the heart of this novel—the competing loyalties immigrants feel toward family, culture, heritage, self.

The problem only flashes through Zareen's mind because she is too old to be fully taken with American ways; Manek can almost ignore the contradiction because, being male, he will be celebrated for living in the United States so long as he takes a Parsee wife.

Feroza, by contrast, feels the brunt of the conflict, newly aware of the severe sexism in Parsee culture—men can marry outside the faith, for instance, while women cannot—and thrilled at the idea of having her own money, her own career, her own identity. Feroza has come to America, she discovers moments after first landing in New York, to be "unself-conscious"—to be free, once and for all, of "the thousand constraints that governed her life."

An American Brat suffers from a meandering, literal plot and a tone that doesn't distinguish major insights from minor ones. Page by page, though, Sidhwa keeps the reader engaged, for one can never predict which mundane American event she will display in an entirely new light.

At the hospital: A Parsee couple is presented with a \$15,000 bill for their daughter's delivery, where-upon the shocked father replies, walking out, "You can keep the baby." At home: Feroza, gushing over Manek's vast supply of canned frankfurters and sardines, saying, "I could eat this all my life!"

At an expensive restaurant where Manek has sent back half his meal, to Feroza's horror, because he can't possibly pay for it: "If you weren't so proud," Manek tells his niece, "you wouldn't feel so humiliated, and you'd have enjoyed a wonderful dinner."

He has a point, however twisted, and it's moments like that which make An American Brat a funny and memorable novel.

### Ice-Candy-Man

Lenny is an eight year old Parsi girl who leads a comfortable life with the four members of her family before the Partition of India in Lahore. Lenny regularly goes for walks with her Hindu Ayah Shanta. The Queen's garden near her house is their favourite place. Lenny limps on one leg and her parents are worried about her. Dr. Bharucha puts plaster on the leg a number of times but each time the results are not upto the mark. Even surgery hasn't helped much. Dr. Bharucha assures the parents of Lenny that with the passage of time, Lenny will walk normally.

The novel Ice-Candy-Man presents people from all communities —the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Parsis living in Lahore before Partition. 'Bapsi Sidhwa here introduces the device of child-narrator. Lenny, the eight year old girl narrates the events around her from a child's

point of view. The novelist also shows the child growing, becoming more conscious about the changing environment around her. Sidhwa introduces the readers to characters like Shanta the Ayah, Imamdin the cook, the Ice-Candy-Man Dilnawaz and Hassan Ali, his cousin brother. At the moment, people in undivided India are seen engaged in the Quit-India Movement, and on the other hand, the Muslim League motivates the Muslim Community to raise a demand for a separate nation for the Muslims. Often the slogans of 'Pakistan Zindabad' are heard in the streets but the communal harmony is intact. One day, one British police officer Rogers and Mr. Singh a neighbour of Lenny visit the house on dinner. They begin to quarrel on trifles. This hot exchange of words is in fact a glimpse and foreshadow of the coming conflicts in the near future. People have started discussions on the possibility of Pakistan and the minorities begin to plan for shifting to safer places. It foreshadows the communal riots between the Hindus and Muslims.

One day, riots break out in Lahore in a locality far away from Lenny's house. This leads to the killing of innocent people on both the sides. The news of bloodshed spreads like wild fire. The All India Radio also reports about cases of violence from different parts of India. Soon the entire Punjab province is seen burning in the fire of hatred and communal violence. Dilnawaz, the IceCandy-Man waits for his sisters on Lahore railway station. When the train arrives from Gurdaspur, everyone on the platform is shocked to see the ghastly sight. The Train is loaded with mutilated bodies of Muslim passengers. This shocks everyone and the friendly Dilnawaz turns into a person possessed with a frenzy and a desire to kill the Hindus. He also abducts his friend Shanta, the Ayah of Lenny and later takes her to Hira Mandi of Lahore, a locality of prostitutes.

Ice-Candy-Man loved Shanta from the core of his heart but now she is a Hindu for him. Vengeance has transformed him into a killer and a beast. Later with the help of Lenny's relatives, Shanta is rescued and she reaches the relief camp at Amritsar. Lenny's delicate mind is shocked to see all this. The Parsee community remains neutral during this time. Lenny's life becomes a nightmare. She realizes that her Muslim neighbours will not spare the lives of non-Muslims anymore. There have been a number of incidents where the Muslims burn alive the non-Muslims. These traumatic incidents leave a damaging impact on the sensitive person like Ice-Candy-Man, and he loses his sanity and poise. He begins to roam about in the streets of Lahore to avenge the death of his Muslim friends. Communalism and the narrow feelings of caste and creed put on a cloak of greed, meanness and hatred which leads to violence and destruction on the large scale.

### The Crow Eaters

The Crow Eaters is named after derogatory slang referring to the Parsi people, in reference to their supposed propensity for loud and continuous chatter. The Crow Eaters is a comedy, which signals an abrupt change from her earlier work. The Parsis, or Zoroastrians, are the socio-religious group to which Sidhwa belongs, a prosperous yet dwindling community of approximately one hundred thousand based predominantly in Bombay. The Crow Eaters tells the story of a family within the small Parsi community residing within the huge city of Lahore. Complete with historical information and rich with bawdy, off-color humor, the novel is never boring, as Sidhwa's acute sense of humor constantly changes from the subtle to the downright disgusting. Nothing is above this humor, which often times leaves the reader feeling guilty for laughing out loud. The main character, Faredoon, relentlessly torments his mother-in-law Jerbanoo, especially about her self-indulgent complaints of impending death. Some of the most hilarious moments involve Faredoon's detailed and gory description of her funeral. The Parsis practice charity in life as well as death, and their funeral custom of feeding the body to the vultures reflects this belief.

### Bapsi Sidhwa as a Novelist

Bapsi Sidhwa is one of Pakistan's most distinguished authors. Her five novels: *Cracking India*, *The Pakistani Bride*, *The Crow Eaters*, *An American Brat*, and *Water* have been translated and published in several languages. Her four novels reflect her personal experience of the Indian Sub-Continent's partition, and abuse against women. She was born in August 11, 1938 in Karachi, migrated shortly to Lahore. She witnessed the bloody partition of the Indian subcontinent as a young child of 9 in 1947.

In 1978, at a time when publishing in English was practically non-existent in Pakistan, Sidhwa self-published her novel *The Crow Eaters*. Since then, *The Bride*, *Cracking India*, and *An American Brat* have been published in various countries across the world.

*Cracking India* (released as *Ice-Candy-Man* in the UK) has been made into a movie 'Earth 1947' by Canadian director Deepa Mehta.

Bapsi Sidhwa began her writing career at the age of 26 after visiting the Karakoram mountain-area of Pakistan with her husband. She was touched by a tragic story of a young girl who had been brought to one of the area's tribes as a bride. After being there for a short time, the girl ran away from her husband's home. The tribals considered this a highly dishonorable act. Some of the men hunted her down and murdered her. 'When I came back to Lahore, the story haunted me,' says Bapsi Sidhwa. 'The girl's story, the poor tribals, the way they lived, all of that I wanted to write about', she adds. The girl's story obsessed her, and she began to write. She thought she would write a short story, but it grew into her first novel *The Pakistani Bride*.

Sidhwa's first three novels, although very different from one another, share what Anita Desai has described as 'passion for history and for truth telling'. Sidhwa believes that in order to understand any single event it is necessary to consider the events which led up to it.

### **Objective Narration**

The partition is a very sensitive subject because the events of partition have been presented differently by the authors of India and Pakistan. These authors are either advocating Muslim view point or Hindu view point about the events of partition.

Sidhwa is a Zoroastrian and her depiction is rather realistic and objective. She is of the view that violence against the innocent people was committed on both sides of the border. In the sixteenth chapter of *Ice Candy Man*, Sidhwa presents what happened in Lahore, how the people lost their reason and murdered their fellows inhumanly. The mob of Muslim 'goondas' murders a Hindu Banya in such a ruthless manner as Ayah can't witness this terrible scene, she collapses on the floor. Lenny and Ayah also witness the 'tamasha' of burning Hindus in Shalmi.

Sidhwa also gives an account of the horrible incident of Indian Punjab to lend credibility to her narrative. She does so by presenting Ranna's story. Ranna explains how his village was massacred by a swarm of bloody Sikhs. All the men of the village were murdered ruthlessly and women were raped right in the mosque.

### **Realism**

Bapsi Sidhwa is essentially a realist. Lenny is her very significant character. She is the Pip of Dickens' *Great Expectations*. She is found everywhere in the novel. She is highly intelligent and a baby of very acute observation. When she starts her narration she is about four years old and when the partition takes place towards the end of the novel she is about eight years old.

What is most remarkable about Bapsi Sidhwa's perspective on the Partition of the Indian Subcontinent is her religious distance from its most immediate effects as a member of the Parsi/Zoroastrian community.

Another aspect of Sidhwa's realism is her truth to human nature and her realistic art of characterization. Sidhwa said in an interview with dawn.

'There is a beast within human beings and if proper care is not taken it can come out and this beast has been chained by society and its law and order.'

We see that once law and order in the society vanishes, the beast comes out and human beings kill one another mercilessly.

### **Feminism, Abuse against Women**

Bapsi Sidhwa is a confirmed and committed feminist as she constantly engages herself in advocating women rights in Benazir Bhutto's regime.

Sidhwa criticizes child marriages in his superb novel Ice Candy Man. Ranna's sisters are only nine and eleven years of age but Sikh granthi thinks that they must be married.

Sidhwa exposes and unmasks the dual and hypocritical attitude of our society with the help of the incident of fallen women. The society is ready to accept those barbaric men who rape and kill shamelessly but is not ready to accept women who have been kidnapped and raped without their will. Sidhwa presents the mirror in which the ugliness of our society can easily be seen.

### **Characterization**

Sidhwa studied the contemporary society of her time. She studied men and manners. She showed the truthful spectacle of life. There are more or less seventy five characters in her novels. They compose a society of different classes. She looks at her characters objectively. She describes them as if her eyes were wandering over them. Her characters are individuals as well as types. They are real human beings.

Bapsi Sidhwa has received numerous awards and honorary professorships for her first two works The Bride, The Crow Eaters, and her two most recent novels Cracking India and An American Brat. These include the Pakistan National honors of the Patras Bokhri award for The Bride in 1985 and the highest honor in the arts, the Sitari-I-Imtiaz in 1991. Her third novel Cracking India was awarded the German Literaturpreis and a nomination for Notable Book of the Year from the American Library Association, and was mentioned as a New York Times 'Notable Book of the Year', all in 1991.

Her works have now been translated into Russian, French and German.

Sidhwa wrote Cracking India (Ice-Candy Man) in 1991, which provided the basis for Deepa Mehta's film 'Earth 1947'. Her novel Water, A Novel has been filmed again in Mehta's 'Water'.

Edward Hower in New York Newsday:

'Bapsi Sidhwa is a writer of enormous talent, capable of endowing small domestic occurrences with cosmic drama and rendering calamitous historical events with deeply felt personal meaning. Her Ice-Candy-Man is a lively, compelling novel, ambitiously conceived, skillfully plotted and beautifully written.'



### **Thematic Patterns in the Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa**

In this age of globalization, it is usually very difficult to categorize some writers and Bapsi Sidhwa is one of them. She belongs to India, Pakistan and the United States simultaneously but she likes herself to be described as a Punjabi-Pakistani-Parsi woman. All her four novels *The Crow Eaters*, *The Pakistani Bride*, *Ice-Candy-Man* and *An American Brat* are about her perceptions of life as a Parsi, Punjabi, Pakistani and American woman respectively. Sidhwa believes that all of her works have some degree of autobiographical elements. She picks up some significant incidents from her own life or from the lives of other people and flashes them to create a larger reality of fiction. To her, each book is a cathartic release. Together with these four novels, Bapsi has also published *Water: A Novel*, a work of fiction based on the movie of the same name by Deepa Mehta, and *City of Sin and Splendour: Writing on Lahore*. In addition, her stories, reviews and articles have appeared in *New York Times Book Review*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Harper's* and *Queen*, *The Economic Times* and *The London Telegraph*. Bapsi Sidhwa has shown considerable accomplishment as well as promise as a novelist. Like all good novelists, Bapsi Sidhwa's works have aroused a variety of reactions. Her interests are vast and she cannot be easily categorized as just a comic writer or a Parsi novelist. Her novels are remarkably different from one another in both subject and treatment. One can find variety of themes in her fiction such as the partition crisis, expatriate experience, the Parsi milieu, social idiosyncrasies of the small minority community, the theme of marriage, women's problems, patterns of migration. Her treatment of such wide ranging themes is a testimony to her growth as a powerful and dramatic novelist who is both an affectionate and shrewd observer of human society and a keen teller of stories. She is perhaps Pakistan's finest English language novelist. There is a complex sprinkling of themes in her novels which defy any simplistic interpretation.

### **Bapsi Sidhwa: A Pakistani Writer**

In Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*, the narrator, Lenny, muses about the absurdity of the Partition of the subcontinent: "I am Pakistani. In a snap. Just like that." Nevertheless, despite her narrator's musing over the absurdity of Partition, Sidhwa's Pakistani perspective is evident in her writings. Sidhwa is perhaps the first Pakistani writer to receive international recognition—apart from Zulfikar Ghose. As a Pakistani writer, Sidhwa feels it incumbent upon her to explain her Pakistani background to those unfamiliar with her milieu. Because she is a Parsi, she attempts to explain this heritage as well.

Sidhwa is not alone in her need to explain her heritage, but shares with other Third-World writers, particularly those writing in a non-native language, the compulsion to explain her culture to an audience unfamiliar with that culture. Thus *The Crow Eaters* as well as *The Bride* and *Ice-Candy-Man* are firmly rooted in a historical-political consciousness and concern directly or indirectly, the Partition of the subcontinent and the creation of the newly-independent states of India and Pakistan. *The Bride*, her first written novel, though published after the success of *The Crow Eaters*, begins some years before Partition and, for the earlier part of the novel, describes the communal tension during Partition, a train massacre, and the displacement consequent upon Partition. It is only after describing the turmoil of Partition and its aftermath, that the story of Zaitoon and her adopted father, the hill-man Qasim, is developed. *The Crow Eaters* ends just before Partition, with Faredoon Junglewalla, the protagonist of the novel, pronouncing, in his inimitable fashion, upon the bickering politicians who are going to cut up the country. *Ice-Candy-Man*, tighter in focus than the other two novels, concerns wholly the turbulent events of Partition as they affect the lives of a Parsi family and the people who come into their lives. When *Ice-Candy-Man* was published in the United States in 1991 the title was changed to *Cracking India*, focussing on the Partition rather than on the eponymous character.

Unlike the Indian writer of today who has a long literary heritage and does not have to make new beginnings, Sidhwa was writing in what was essentially a vacuum. Hence it was necessary for her to establish her political credentials, proclaim her cultural allegiance.

Sidhwa establishes her political identity in two significant ways: first, by focusing on the worst Indian atrocities committed in the Punjab, and secondly, by reappraising the character of Jinnah and attempting to improve this image by suggesting that the British were less than fair to both Pakistan and Jinnah. Sidhwa's political stance is clearly depicted through her treatment of Partition—which it may be noted, is a focal point in each of her books. Even *The Crow Eaters* which ends before Partition, refers to it. *Ice-Candy-Man* narrates what takes place in Lahore during the traumatic events that accompanied the division of the sub-continent. And Sidhwa's first book, though inspired by the murder of a tribal woman, begins with the gruesome account of a train massacre during Partition. In *The Bride*, Sidhwa combines her feminist concerns with a compulsion to explain the culture of Pakistan to audiences unfamiliar with that culture. It is this combination that gives the novel its structural weakness but also its perceptive insights.

Though *The Bride* fails to come up to the level of either *'The Crow Eaters* or *Ice-Candy Man*, its failure stems from the same motives that make *Ice-Candy-Man* a success: to familiarize her audience with the writer's cultural, political milieu. In *Ice-Candy-Man* to which she came via *The Crow Eaters*, she is both Parsi and Pakistani at the same time. She returns to the Parsi world she had described so well in *The Crow Eaters* and focuses as she had in the second half of *The Bride*, on the fate of a young woman. By narrowing her canvas, she succeeded in writing a book which, even if not as successful as *The Crow Eaters*—this was, remember, the first of its kind—shows an exceptional literary talent. Furthermore, by blending the humour of *The Crow Eaters* with the theme of Partition and a feminist perspective, Sidhwa reveals herself as a writer of the first rank.

In *Ice-Candy-Man* Sidhwa describes Partition through the eyes of the young Lenny. The story of the growth of Lenny and her awakening into sexual awareness merges with her awakening into history. Sidhwa's humour blends with horror and pity as she tells the story of Partition through the perspective of a child. Lenny's comprehension of the events of Partition is told through the story of what happens to her beloved Hindu Ayah. When the story begins, Ayah is surrounded by many admirers, Hindu and Muslim. Among these many admirers is the Ice-CandyMan after whom the novel is named. As Partition nears, Muslims and Hindus become enemies. Some Hindus in an attempt to save themselves become Christians. Some Hindus leave Lahore. Ayah is Hindu, but, protected by her Parsi employers, she assumes that she is in no danger. Unfortunately her charms lead to her abduction by a group led by the Ice-Candy-Man. Ice-CandyMan keeps Ayah, renamed Mumtaz. Ayah begs to be rescued and she finally is by godmother—in a departure from *The Bride* where the rescue of Zaitoon was effected by a man.

Sidhwa makes her Pakistani identity unmistakably clear in *Ice-Candy-Man* where she suggests how Partition favoured India over Pakistan. The Hindus are being favored over the Muslims by the remnants of the Raj. Now that its objective to divide India is achieved, the British favour Nehru over Jinnah. Nehru is Kashmiri, they grant him Kashmir.

They grant Nehru Gurdaspur and Pathankot without which Muslim Kashmir cannot be secured.

True, Lenny is not Sidhwa, but as Laurel Graeber points out, "Bapsi Sidhwa has attempted to give a Pakistani perspective to the Partition of India." As a Pakistani, Sidhwa feels it

incumbent upon herself to defend Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The reference to Jinnah is made aptly in the context of the Parsi family that is the focus of the novel. Lenny comes across the picture of an "astonishingly beautiful woman" and is told that it is the picture of Jinnah's wife.

Sidhwa, however, rises above petty nationalism. *Ice-Candy-Man* does not stress the Two Nation theory behind the creation of Pakistan. In other words, she does not stress the belief of Pakistani Muslims of the necessity of Partition and the creation of Pakistan. In fact, *Ice-Candy-Man* suggests that religious and cultural differences are artificially created and deliberately fostered. Through Lenny's perspective, Sidhwa shows how religious differences were deliberately exploited on the eve of Partition.

Sidhwa describes the destruction of the Muslim village of Pir Pindo Lenny visited earlier during happier times. The villagers had been warned to leave, but they do not, and Ranna describes the mass murder that takes place. Sidhwa does not narrate this incident through Lenny but through Raana:

Ranna saw his uncle beheaded. His older brothers, his cousins. The Sikhs were among them like hairy vengeful demons, wielding bloodied swords, dragging them out as a handful of Hindus, darting about the fringes, their faces vaguely familiar, pointed out and identified the Mussulmans by name. He felt a blow cleave the back of his head and the warm flow of blood. Ranna fell just inside the door on a tangled pole of unrecognizable bodies. Someone fell on him drenching him in blood.

Sidhwa took up the story of Ranna and retold it in a short story "Defend Yourself against Me." In this story Sidhwa also suggests that though the past cannot be forgotten, it can be forgiven. Let not the crimes of the fathers be visited on their sons—but then the sons must be conscious of their fathers' sins and ask for forgiveness.

### **Postcolonialism and Bapsi Sidhwa's Fiction**

Bapsi Sidhwa's fiction deals with both the pre and post-colonial period of the subcontinent. Her fiction not only brings to life the horror of the Partition but also vividly portrays the complexities of life in the subcontinent after Independence. What makes her work interesting from the post-colonial point of view is the way in which she re-writes the history of the subcontinent.

In *Ice-Candy-Man*, Lenny, the young narrator, in the process of narrating the story of her family re-writes the history of the subcontinent, thereby undercutting the British view of history imposed on the subcontinent. In *An American Brat* Sidhwa highlights the predicament of the Pakistani people in general and of the Parsi community in particular. Thus, while in *Ice-Candy-Man* Sidhwa grapples with the realities of the pre-Independence period, in *An American Brat* she highlights the phenomenon of neo-colonialism in Pakistan. What is most remarkable about her work is her dual perspective, which is based on both the Pakistani and the Parsi point of view. She speaks both for the Pakistanis and the marginalized Parsi community.

Sidhwa's re-writing of history in *Ice-Candy-Man* is far more complex than it appears to be since she re-writes history not just from the Pakistani but also from the Parsi point of view. In order to highlight the Parsi dilemma at the time of the Partition she goes back thirteen hundred years to the significant moment in Parsi history, when they "were kicked out of Persia" and "sailed to India." After waiting for four days on the Indian coast they were visited by the Grand Vazir, with a glass of milk filled to the brim, symbolizing that his land is full and

prosperous and in no need of "outsiders with a different religion and alien ways to disturb the harmony." However, the Parsi forefathers, intelligently, "stirred a teaspoon of sugar into the milk and sent it back," symbolizing that the Parsis "would get absorbed into his country like sugar in the milk. And with their decency and industry sweeten the lives of his subjects." The short account, whether true or not, highlights the dilemma the Parsis have faced over the centuries—the dilemma of assimilating themselves into an alien culture and risking the loss of their identity.

The impending partition of the country, as depicted in the novel, might prove that all the efforts the Parsis have made over the centuries to assimilate themselves into Indian culture are futile since the community all of a sudden faces the threat of extinction in the wake of the Partition. Thirteen hundred years ago, the Parsis had tried to accept Indian culture with all its diversities, but now at the moment of Partition they might be forced to take sides with one of the dominant communities/religions in India—Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs. Thus Sidhwa undercuts the received historical view that the Parsis were totally indifferent to the partition of the country. Instead of indifference the Parsis had a complex attitude towards Partition, as brought out in the main-hall meeting in the Fire Temple. Col. Bharucha, the president of the community in Lahore, argues that the Parsis should shun the anti-colonial movement and stick to their long standing stance of loyalty to the British Empire. He warns the Parsis that once we get Swaraj, "Hindus, Muslims and even the Sikhs are going to jockey for power: and if you jokers jump into the middle you'll be mingled into chutney!"

However Dr. Moody points out that it is not so simple. The Parsis cannot remain uninvolved and will have to take a stance otherwise, "our neighbours will think that we are betraying them and siding with the English." This, however leads to a further complication, as voiced by a fellow Parsi, when he asks: "'Which of your neighbours are you going to betray? Hindu? Muslim? Sikhs?'" This remark brings to the foreground the bitter fact that even after thirteen hundred years the Parsis feel alienated in the subcontinent. Their alienation from all the major communities in India ultimately forces them to support "whoever rules Lahore." Col. Bharucha suggests, "Let whoever wishes to rule! Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. We will abide by the rules of the land." Thus Sidhwa by giving voice to the marginalized Parsis demonstrates that their choice of remaining neutral in the context of the Partition was not out of indifference but forced upon them by a complex historical reality.

Sidhwa, further, demonstrates that the neutral stance adopted by the Parsi community vis-à-vis the freedom struggle did not prevent them from participating in the freedom struggle in whichever way they could. M.F. Salat observes that Sidhwa contradicts the received discourses by showing the "silent but positive role played by Lenny's parents in helping both the Hindu and the Muslims," suggesting that "the Parsis too were involved in their own ways in the events of the time and that they were not just indifferent and passive onlookers to the awful human tragedy:"

Salat observes that it is a revelation meant not only for Lenny but also for all those who are ignorant of the Parsi involvement in the Partition when Lenny's mother explains the secret of her suspicious outings. She explains: "I wish I'd told you ... we were only smuggling the rationed petrol to help our Hindu and Sikh friends to run away. And also for the convoys to send kidnapped women, like our Ayah, to their families across the border."

This theme is further developed in her next novel *An American Brat*, where the Parsi community is shown actively participating in Pakistani politics. Instead of keeping a neutral, detached stance, the Ginwalla family is passionately involved in the country's current political crisis. Zareen at one point voices her concern over her daughter's intense involvement in "Bhutto's trial." Her concern for her daughter, however, does not stop her from working in



"many women's committees with Begum Bhutto." Feroza even when she is in America, remains acutely concerned about the crisis in her country. She is totally shocked to hear of Bhutto's hanging. On coming back to Pakistan, she voices her disappointment at being inadequately informed about Pakistan's current political scenario: "I want to know what's going on here. After all, it's my country!" Thus Sidhwa exhibits that the Parsis, both in the pre and post-Independence period, instead of showing indifference to the country's politics, have been actively involved in it.

Sidhwa in *Ice-Candy-Man* as mentioned earlier, rewrites history from the Pakistani point of view also. In an interview with David Montenegro, she clearly states this agenda:

The main motivation grew out of my reading of a good deal of literature on the partition of India and Pakistan ... what has been written by the British and Indians. Naturally they reflect their bias. And they have, I felt after I'd researched the book, been unfair to the Pakistanis. As a writer, as a human being, one just does not tolerate injustice, I felt whatever little I could do to correct an injustice I would like to do. I have just let facts speak for themselves, and through my research I found out what the facts were.

To counter the British and Indian versions of the Partition, Sidhwa in *Ice-Candy-Man* not only tries to resurrect the image of Jinnah but also demystifies the image of Gandhi and Nehru.

The sublime image of Gandhi constructed by British and Indian historians is totally undercut when he is seen through the eyes of the seven-year-old narrator, Lenny: "He [Gandhi] is small, dark, shrivelled, old. He looks just like Hari, our gardener, except he has a disgruntled, disgusted and irritable look; and no one'd dare pull off his dhoti! He wears only the loincloth and his black and thin torso is naked." According to Masseur, Gandhi "is a politician" and "it's his business to suit his tongue to the moment." Similarly Nehru is a shrewd politician who in spite of all the efforts of Jinnah "will walk off with the lion's share." Nehru, according to the *Ice-Candy-Man* is "a sly one... He's got Mountbatten eating out of his one hand and the English's wife out of his other what not ... He's the one to watch!"

Even though Sidhwa tries to depict the atrocities committed by Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs without partiality, being a Pakistani writer she makes it obvious that her sympathies are with the Muslim victims. Not only is the Sikhs's attack on Muslim villages in Punjab described vividly, but also it is seen through the eyes of the Muslim child Ranna, which shifts the reader's sympathy towards the Muslims. In an interview with David Montenegro, Sidhwa observes, "the Sikhs perpetrated the much greater brutality—they wanted Punjab to be divided. A peasant is rooted in his soil. The only way to uproot him was to kill him or scare him out of his wits."

### Sidhwa's Use of English Language

Another interesting feature of Sidhwa's writing from the postcolonial perspective is her use of the English language. In fact, language is a major preoccupation of the postcolonial writer. Should the writer write in the language inherited from the imperial power or should he/she revert to the native language? An opposing stance has been taken by the two African writers Chinua Achebe (Nigeria) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o (Kenya) vis-a-vis language in postcolonial literature. Ngugi after writing his earlier works in English has rejected the language and now writes in his native language Gikuyu.

Ngugi's point is that language has been always used by the colonizer to mentally and spiritually control the colonized: "The domination of a peoples' language by the languages of the colonizing nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonised." By continuing to write in the colonizer's language, one is colonized on the

cultural level, and instead of enriching one's own native language and culture, one only ends up enriching the European traditions. However, writers such as Chinua Achebe and Gabriel Okara disagree. Achebe argues: "I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings." He best demonstrates this new English in his much acclaimed work *Things Fall Apart*.

Sidhwa's stance is in line with that of Chinua Achebe. In her interview with Feroza Jussawalla, she states:

My first language of speech is Gujrati, my second is Urdu, my third is English. But as far as reading and writing goes I can read and write best in English. I'm a tail end product of the Raj. This is the case with a lot of people in India and Pakistan. They're condemned to write in English, but I don't think this is such a bad thing because English is a rich language. Naturally it is not my first language; I'm more at ease talking in Gujrati and Urdu. After moving to America I realized that all my sentences in English were punctuated with Gujrati and Urdu words.

So, even though Sidhwa writes in English, it is a new English— an English punctuated with words from the native language. However, it is not a simple addition of words from the native language to English. While the writer translates a number of words from the, native languages, a large number of words are also left untranslated. For instance, the following words, in *Ice-CandyMan*, have been translated: "pahailwan, a wrestler", "Choorail, witches", "Shabash, Well Said!", "Ghar ki Murgi dal barabar. A neighbour's beans are tastier than household chickens", "Khut putli, puppets", "Mamajee [Uncle]." In *An American Brat*, almost every word and phrase of the native language employed in the novel is translated by the writer in a "Glossary" at the end of the novel. For instance: "Badmash: scoundrel," "Gora; white, in Urdu," "Heejra: eunuch or transvestite." What such a translation of individual words does? Bill Ashcroft et al in *The Empire Writes Back* observe that such translation of individual words is the most obvious and most common authorial intrusion in cross-cultural texts. Juxtaposing the words in this way suggests that the meaning of a word is its referent. But the simple matching of words from the native language with its translated version in English reveals the general inadequacy of such an exercise. The moment a word from a native language is juxtaposed with its referent in English, instead of clarifying the meaning, it shows the gap between the word and its referent.

Bill Ashcroft et al argue that the implicit gap between the word from the native language and its referent, in fact, disputes the "putative referentiality" of the words and establishes the word from the native language as a cultural sign. For instance, let us take the word "Kotha" from *IceCandy-Man*, which is translated as "Roof in the novel. However, it is made clear in the novel that the word "Kotha" does not simply mean "roof," but is a place of prostitution. This gap between the word "Kotha" and its English translation "roof establishes "Kotha" as a cultural sign.

Apart from these words, in *Ice-Candy-Man*, there are certain other words from the native language which are not translated, such as: "sarka'r", "yaar", "doolha", "chachi", "Angrez", "chaudhary". What purpose is served by not translating words of the native language? The use of untranslated words "is a clear signifier that the language which actually informs the novel is an other language." Even though the *Ice-Candy-Man* is written in English, the untranslated words remind the reader that the language of conversation of the characters is not English but Urdu and Punjabi. The untranslated words are part of the strategy of the postcolonial writer to highlight the cultural difference.

Apart from using the strategies discussed above, Sidhwa, to highlight Muslim culture, quotes various Urdu poets in her narrative. Ice-Candy-Man opens with Iqbal's poem "Complaint to God." At the beginning of chapter 13, the quote from Iqbal's poetry is a good example of the poet's anticolonial stance:

The times have changed; the world has changed its mind.

The European's mystery is erased.

The secret of his conjuring tricks is known:

The Frankish wizard stands and looks amazed.

To conclude, Sidhwa through the Ice-Candy-Man successfully questions the British and Indian versions of the subcontinent's history and provides an alternate version of history based on the Pakistani point of view. In An American Brat, she voices the social and political chaos in Pakistan generated by the forces of neo-colonialism. In both the novels, she has succinctly adapted the English language to suit her purposes. Further, she has not just provided the marginalized Parsi community with a voice but also a large number of Pakistani readers. She is justified in saying:

I think a lot of readers in Pakistan, especially with Ice-Candy-Man, feel that I've given them a voice, which they did not have before. They have always been portrayed in a very unfavourable light. It's been fashionable to lash out Pakistan, and it's been done again and again by various writers living in the West. And I feel, if there's one little thing one could do, it's to make people realize: We are not worthless because we inhabit a poor country that is seen by Western eyes as primitive, fundamentalist country only.

### **Gender and Imagination in Bapsi Sidhwa's Fiction**

It was only after the Second World War that women novelists transcended gender-related limitations in their thematic concerns and started writing about a range of experiences, including the squalid and the terrifying. In Sidhwa's work, the themes diverge from traditional to contemporary.

The feminine imagination in her novels is presented with an incongruous humour to discuss serious sociopolitical issues even though Sidhwa is not gender conscious in writing about any issue. She analyzes how Ice-Candy-Man, despite possessing stylistic charm, vivacity and compelling themes, fails to achieve artistic synthesis. Though her language and narrative are refined, Sidhwa is unable to delve deep into the psyche of her female characters, consequently the sensations it generates are discordant and dishevelled.

In the last thirty years there is a vigorous development in thinking about women and their role in society. For majority of women their gender has had some effect on their experiences, and their perceptions of the world, and this is reflected in the nature of the work they, produce.

Feminism has become a highly important issue in contemporary thought and has resulted in challenging the patriarchal assumption. The application of new ideas about women to their conceptions has produced extensive discussion of both how women have been represented in literature and their trend of writing.

The 'gynocritics' theorize about women's literary production and women writers have

responded in terms of 'colonization of the mind.' In the contemporary literary scenario in the Indian subcontinent, gender consciousness is not palpable in the phraseology of Western criticism.

Women are not lagging behind in their input of literature—we have women writers writing in English from the nineteenth century onwards, not to mention regional writers. These writers with their distinctive talents, particular age of interests and individual style have proved that they are imaginative and are at par with women writers of the West.

It was thought before the First World War that a woman writer is at her best when she deals with the known domain of her womanliness, immediate surroundings and cognition of varied relationships that she creates for herself. But it was after the second World War that women novelists of quality have begun enriching literature, specially fiction, on the Indian subcontinent.

Women writers are not always preoccupied with their personal lives; many of them are interested in large-scale social or intellectual questions. Novelists have started using a combination in varying proportions of what they have experienced, what they have discovered and what they have imagined. Their gender has not debarred women from writing about a range of experiences that include the squalid and the terrifying.

India and Pakistan have enjoyed a common literary and cultural heritage till 1947 and have parted ways in trends and achievements after Partition. In spite of Pakistani fragmentation and Sri Lanka's autonomy, India dominates the subcontinent due to its size and literature. The shared thought and heritage has produced in India many women writers whose work is copious and multifarious in its amplitude. But in Pakistan there is virtually only one established woman writer, Bapsi Sidhwa, and in Sri Lanka probably Yasmine Gooneratne.

Bapsi Sidhwa, born in Karachi and brought up in Lahore, is acclaimed by the Times as 'a powerful and dramatic novelist' and the New Statesman has described her as 'An affectionate and shrewd observer ... a born storyteller.' In addition to writing and teaching in the United States, she is an active social worker and has represented Pakistan at the 1975 Asian Women's Congress. All her novels, *The Crow-Eaters* (1980), *The Pakistani Bride* (1983) and *Ice-Candy-Man* (1988), are experimentations in imagination with an aim to achieve artistic synthesis.

In Sidhwa's work themes diverge from traditional to contemporaneity. Her concern ranges from a pre-Independence social scene to Partition and its aftermath, and her time frame is fifty years. In this narrow canvas Sidhwa who experiences the pleasures of exile is in a more advantageous position than most of the writers. Her exile has given her an opportunity to laugh at the slogan 'Anatomy is destiny.' She could shed many inhibitions under this influence, but it is doubtful whether she has achieved artistic synthesis or not.

Being a writer who is not gender-conscious, she relies more on her imagination than on values. As Pap Gems says:

"Writing is individual. When you write you bring the whole of yourself to the meristem, to the growing point of your thought. You are an explorer. You try to push on, to find out. Writing is science, and like science, not entirely cognitive. In fact often hardly so at all."

Therefore, in most cases writing is a personal fantasy.

Sidhwa's first novel *The Crow-Eaters* is about Faredoon Junglewalla, a man of distinction and



listed in the Zarathustra calendar of great men and women and whose motto in life is 'The sweetest thing In the world is your need. Through this narcissistic personality, in about forty-six chapters, Sidhwa takes us into the heart of the Parsi community, portraying its varied customs and traits. It is a straight narration without any twists in the plot and we travel through the book without much mental strain.

At the age of twenty-three along with his wife Putli, mother-in-law Jerbanoo and an infant daughter Faredoon settles in Lahore, never to look back. In Lahore he continues to live till the end of the novel that is 1940. His family expands and with his pragmatic intelligence and fraud and arson in insurance he becomes a man of great consequence among the Parsis. People travelled thousands of miles to see him in Lahore, especially as they wished to escape the tight spots they had got themselves into. This successful worldly man encounters disappointment and personal loss in the death of his eldest son and a self-exiled second son.

Within this straight conventional theme Sidhwa flings her feminine imagination with an incongruous humour to talk about serious issues like national politics, fraud, death-dealing of mother-in-law, Parsi superstitions, faiths, marriages, rites of death, romance, birth, multifaceted activities and forays to London. Not so much of action but so many incidents take place that one gets a feeling of contradiction. On the one hand the reader finds no link between the words on the page, and on the other the vision or experience is missing in the narrative.

The Pakistani -Bride is about Qasim and his foster daughter Zaitoon. Qasim is a man who in the hands of fate had known no childhood. From infancy, responsibility was forced upon him and at ten he was a man conscious of rigorous code of honour by which his tribe lived. By the time he is ten, he is married to a fifteen-year-old 'girl, at sixteen he becomes a father and a widower at thirty-four. In the year 1947 he migrates to Jullundur which is in India after Partition and from there to Lahore, committing a murder at a slight provocation in Jullundur.

If Freddy of The Crow-Eaters contemplates murder, Qasim executes it. On his way to Lahore he is impelled to adopt a little girl who is a riot victim like him and calls her Zaitoon. He also makes friendship with Nikkaa 'Pahilwan' and his wife Miriam in the refugee camp. Out of the thirty chapters in the novel, seven (from 4th to 11th) deal with Nikkaa's political connections and Zaitoon flowering into a young girl of sixteen, and as the years slip by Qasim gets nostalgic for the mountains and his memories become Zaitoon's fantasies. When a proposal comes from the mountains of Kohistani, Qasim decides to return to his tribe to settle his daughter. On their way to Kohistan they cross the Army Camp and encounter Major Mushtaq, his cousin Farukh and his American wife Carol. From here seven chapters explain the triangle involvement of Mushtaq, Farukh and Carol. The chapters dealing with this relationship are more authentic than the previous ones. Chapter 18 and 19 are about Zaitoon's incompatible marriage with Sakhi. In the next pan shot we come to know of the infatuation of Carol for Mushtaq and also her desire to understand Zaitoon: "Her life is different from mine, and yet I feel a real bond, an understanding on some deep level."

The American and the Pakistani brides become subjects of their husbands' suspicion and both take pragmatic decisions to overcome their crises. Carol decides to make it up to Farukh and contemplates to have a child to bring anchorage to her loveless marriage. Zaitoon decides to take a visionary course of action and runs away, knowing fully well that the punishment for such an act is death. There is a world of difference between these two women and Mushtaq explains to Carol:

It wouldn't be easy for you really to understand her. You'd find her life in the Zenanna with the other women pitifully limited and claustrophobic—she'd probably find yours—if she could ever glimpse it—terrifyingly insecure and needlessly competitive.

Though their paths are divergent, both Zaitoon and Carol take the same path to Lahore.

The title of the novel is to some extent misleading and cryptic. The novel is a combination of Qasim's personal difficulties and a diluted study of ideals and feelings about love and marriage. The area Sidhwa takes for her subject is a significant human experience, and in her treatment of it she does her best to make it a contemporary issue concerning the extent to which women are psychologically free to change their lives. No doubt Sidhwa has passionate interest in the depth and richness of human experience but to a certain extent her enterprise has become too much for her to cope with.

The third novel *Ice-Candy-Man* and its author have been acclaimed by Anita Desai: "There is no other writer I know on the subcontinent who combines laughter and ribaldry, a passion for history and for truth telling as Bapsi Sidhwa does in *Ice-Candy-Man*."

Sidhwa acknowledges that she is indebted to Rana Khan for sharing his childhood experiences at the time of Partition. Maybe the author's knowledge of Partition and the historical experiences in the novel is not all that authentic and could be only a borrowed experience. The book was written with the financial assistance of Bunting Institute and the National Endowment for the Arts. No doubt there is novelty and freshness in the book but how far it is artistic is the question.

*Ice-Candy-Man* comprises thirty-two chapters and gives us a glimpse into events of turmoil on the Indian subcontinent during Partition. Historic truth is only a backdrop of the novel and personal fate of the *Ice-Candy-Man* the focus. *Ice-Candy-Man* is a close associate and admirer of an eighteen-year-old ayah working in a Parsi household to look after Lenny, a polio child of four.

As in other novels so also in this novel Sidhwa is meticulous in mentioning the age of her characters. It is through Lenny that we come to know of the action of the novel and the seriousness of the narration is marred because of this. It is an adult that speaks through the child's memory and keeps the reader on guard and creates a sense of impressions that the child is capable of reminiscing. The parallel theme in the novel is the slow awakening of the child heroine to sexuality and pains and pleasures of the grown-up and to the particular historical disaster that overwhelms her world. There is an element of exaggeration in all instances with regard to characterization and imagination.

Ayah has thirteen admirers and Sidhwa says: "Only the group around Ayah remains unchanged. Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Parsee are, as always, unified around her." Of this group *Ice-Candy-Man* is a man of varied interests. On bitterly cold days when ice sales plummet, *Ice-Candy-Man* transforms himself into a bird man: "News and gossip flow off his glib tongue like a torrent"; sometimes he quotes national leaders and does political analysis and finally he is a metamorphosed character adopting a poetic mould, confessing that he belongs to 'Kotha'—the royal misbegottens located in Hira Mandi. When Ayah becomes a riot victim it is *Ice-Candy-Man* that saves her and rehabilitates her in Hira Mandi and finally we come to know that she has left for Amritsar to be-with her parents, leaving lovelorn *Ice-Candy-Man* to his fate. The vulnerable Ayah becomes virtuous gaining dignity' and *Ice-Candy-Man* complimenting her says: "She has the voice of angel and the grace and rhythm of a goddess. You should see her dance. How she moves!" and goes into a poetic outburst "Princes pledge their lives to celebrate her celebrated face!" Hitherto unknown talent of the Ayah is

divulged.

There are a number of characters in the novel but Godmother alias Rodabai the social worker is the most mundane. She must have emerged from the depths of Sidhwa's personal experiences as a social worker. Some of the incidents in the novel, instead of being blended into the texture of the novel, are superimposed making the creativity of the author prosaic. After all, the novel is a statement about a thousand different objects and these elements are to be held in place by the force of the writer's vision, if the vision falters, the novel collapses.

A writer's imagination involves his creativity, enterprise, insight, inspiration and originality. To achieve artistic unity the writer has to realize that "Artistic creation is a process of synthesis; by effecting harmony in diffused elements, the artist creates a unity in diversity and imparts 'form' to the formless and the deformed." No doubt Sidhwa is quite enterprising and she has dealt with hitherto untouched themes with a straight narration and her creativity is original but she has failed to achieve artistic synthesis. It is not enough for a writer to create sensation he has seen that there is a grain of truth even in malicious pleasure. "Experience is composed of sensations and it is never one solitary sensation but a system or pattern of sensations. When the sensations are coordinated and harmonized our experience is pleasant and when they are discordant and dishevelled the experience is unpleasant.

Some incidents in Sidhwa's fiction are quite incongruous and inconsequential. While reading her works one feels that it is a deliberate attempt of hers to give novelty to her writing. This deliberate attempt of hers in *The Crow-Eaters* to explore the erotic world and sentiments of the Parsi community is quite refreshing. In her narration in the first part of the novel, she explains her point of view and excels in the technique of description which is graphic and realistic.

Sidhwa's men have distinct personality traits but her women are not extravagant—they are ordinary, devoid of feelings. In their limited orbits they are socially active and lead only a superficial existence. Even though they are active, they are flat characters. In a novel like *The Pakistani Bride* where there is ample scope for the writer to explore, Sidhwa could not go deep into the psyche of her female protagonist, allowing methodical narration of events in sequential order. Jerbanoo, Rodabai and Carol are lively characters with natural instincts and imagination. They are more familiar to Sidhwa and are within her range of experience.

Sidhwa's language becomes quite refined, and her analytical faculties become sharp when she has to give insights into her statements.

Talking about Parsi community, which is her own community, Sidhwa makes appropriate statements:

The endearing feature of this microscopic merchant community was its compelling sense of duty and obligation towards other Parsis. . . . There were no Parsi beggars in a country abounding in beggars. . . . Notorious misers, they are paradoxically generous to a cause.

The characters in *The Crow-Eaters* are true to this statement. Her historic observation on the Parsi community's plight during Partition is also authentic. When Billy asks Freddy "Where will we go?" Freddy says softly, "We will stay where we are ... let Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs or whoever rule. What does it matter?" Likewise Lenny's family and Rodabai's family were not affected by the Partition. It is only the neighbours and close associates of these Parsis that got affected. She has given roots to her characters in Lahore and made Lahore the enchantress.

The Pakistani Bride is about Muslim community and one realizes that Parsis are more stabilized and privileged and organized than the Muslims. Sidhwa made an honest attempt to explain Islamic sanctity about marriage: "We take marriage and divorce very seriously. It involves more than just emotions. It's a social responsibility. The vision of the writer definitely creeps in the novel however much the author tries to maintain a distance from the subject. The third novel Ice-Candy-Man is about cosmopolitan context where there is no scope to think about a particular community. The problem in the novel concerns all the citizens of Lahore and its surroundings. There is no graphic description of Lahore in her works but for the mention of "Tower of Silence." In the first two novels she gave us a detailed account of the nocturnal activities that took place in Hira Mandi. It is only in the last novel that she has traced the original and historical significance of this leitmotif.

## **1. Novel "An American Brat" by Bapsi Sidhwa**

### **Introduction to the novel "An American Brat" by Bapsi Sidhwa**

Bapsi Sidhwa's fourth novel, *An American Brat* is about Feroza Ginwalla, a descendant of the Junglewalla clan portrayed in her previous novel *The Crow Eaters*. But whereas the latter is a comic romp chronicling the rags-to-riches life of Faredoon Junglewalla and his family in pre-partition Pakistan, *An American Brat* is a coming-of-age story, a sensitive portrait of how modern America appears to a new arrival -- and an exploration of the impact it has on her. Feroza, a 16-year-old Parsi from Lahore, is shipped off to the United States to counteract the effects of an increasingly intolerant Islam in late 1970's Pakistan. She stays with her uncle Manek, a graduate student at M.I.T. who, although only six years her senior, is a crafty veteran in the ways of America. It is mainly because of him that her planned three-month visit turns into a four-year stay. While attending college in Denver, Feroza falls in love with a Jewish student. After hearing that they intend to marry, her mother sets out for America hellbent on changing her mind. The battles fought by mother, daughter and boyfriend are handled deftly, illuminating the difficulties that arise when culture takes a back seat to the search for self-definition. Ms. Sidhwa's writing is brisk and funny, her characters painted so vividly you can almost hear them bickering.

What happens when an impetuous sixteen year-old Pakistani girl leaves her homeland and wealthy family to encounter America? In *An American Brat*, novelist Bapsi Sidhwa lets lively teenager Feroza Ginwalla tell her own story and along the way explores the vagaries of two vastly different cultures.

In an effort to reverse Feroza's conservative views, which have been nurtured by Pakistan's rising tide of fundamentalism, her parents send her to visit her uncle Manek in America. Manek is a graduate student at MIT, recently arrived from Pakistan himself. Her parents' ploy works only too well, as Feroza embraces American culture. She enrolls in a university and plans to marry until family influence and differences in tradition erode that relationship. In this issue, we feature an excerpt showing Feroza on her arrival, with flashbacks to her life in Pakistan.

Sidhwa examines two ways of life in Feroza's story, particularly contrasting freedom with responsibility. Underlying themes are the workings of family and the role of women in society. Two commentators, Pakistani scholar Fawzia Afzal-Khan and author Edward Hower, explore by analysis and interview Sidhwa's values and influence.

Sidhwa grew up and was educated in Lahore, Pakistan. She has taught at Columbia, Rice, and the University of Texas. Her previous novels include *The Crow Eaters*, *The Bride*, and *Cracking India*. A social activist among Asian women, she represented Pakistan at the Asian



Women's Congress in 1975.

## **The Character-Sketch of Feroza in American Brat by Sidhwa**

### **Introduction**

Feroza is the heroine of the novel. She is the female protagonist of the novel. The title of the novel is also related to her character. She is called, "An American Brat" in the closing chapters. The whole story revolves around this single character. All other characters whether they are the major or minor incidents are related to her character.

She is the daughter of Zareen and Cyrus. She is the student of 10th class. She has an attractive and charming personality.

"Feroza fiddled with the shawl covering her chest and shoulders. Twisting on the balls of her feet, she finally looked up at the handsome youth. Her eyes unnaturally bright, her face abnormally red, she said, "I'm sorry, I don't think I'll be able to act in the play. You know how it is — my father won't like it. Please don't come again. Don't phone, please."

### **Family Background and Physical Appearance**

She belongs to a Parsee family. Her parents are of modern time and they are broad-minded. Feroza is a religious girl when we have a first look at her character. She is very conservative. Her mother comments about her: "

"She won't even answer the phone anymore! 'What if it's someone I don't know?' " Zareen mimicked her daughter in English. "I told her — don't be silly. No one's going to jump out of the phone to bite you!"

She is five feet and four inches with a fair complexion. She is a beautiful girl. She is 16 years old. She has daring and dashing personality.

### **Childhood**

She was a girl of sky-nature in her childhood. She had a very serious and mature nature. She was an anti-social child as:

"By this time Feroza was being invited to an increasing number of birthday parties, and Zareen discovered that she was also antisocial. Invariably the anxious hostess called the next day to inquire if she or someone else had offended the child? Feroza had stayed in her corner with her ayah and couldn't be coaxed to play games. She had not come to the table, even when the candles were blown out and the cake cut. No matter how hard they all tried, Feroza did not smile or say a single word all evening. At the end of this litany, the caller invariably sounded more aggrieved than anxious."

Feroza was a very stubborn nature. Feroza had been a stubborn child — with a streak of pride bordering on arrogance that compelled consideration not always due a child. Awed, Zareen often wondered where she got her pride.

### **Sensitive Girl**

She is a sensible girl. She is not attracted towards the Youngman. She is not slap of emotions. She has self-controlled contours and she knows what is right and what is wrong. The following lines amply show this:

"She said, "I'm sorry, I don't think I'll be able to act in the play. You know how it is — my father won't like it. Please don't come again. Don't phone, please."

### **Backward and Narrow-minded**

She is backward and narrow-minded. Her mother is worried about her attitude and behavior. She tells Cyrus that she is really worried about Feroza and says that:

""What's wrong?" Cyrus inquired cautiously, his voice conveying just the right tinge of mild concern. "She's becoming more and more backward every day." Set in tight-lipped censure, Zareen's face betrayed the hours spent in solitary brooding and the dark anxieties her brooding had spawned. Cyrus, who thought his daughter was if anything too forward, maintained his guard."

And these lines show her narrow-mindedness when Zareen goes to her school to bring her back. In the car, she said:

""In the car she said: 'Mummy, please don't come to school dressed like that.' She objected to my sleeveless sari-blouse! Really, this narrow-minded attitude touted by General Zia is infecting her, too. I told her: 'Look, we're Parsee, everybody knows we dress differently.'"

Under the above lines, we can say that she is also religious-minded. She is a brilliant student and with this she takes apart in the games and sports.

### **Relation with her Mother**

Zareen Ginwala is her mother. She is a modern lady who wears blouses. But Feroza has contrast with her mother's character. She wears scarves and is religious-minded. She has rejected the offer of acting in a play she criticizes her mother's dress. In the car, she said that mummy should not wear that dress. There are also a clear difference between these two characters and their thinking. Zareen is broad-minded enough to wear sleeveless dresses and she is social woman and attends many parties. But on the other hand, Feroza is of a conservative nature. She is not even ready to attend a phone call. Zareen wanted her daughter to be modern, that's why she is sending Feroza to America. Zareen says:

""I think Feroza must get away," Zareen continued. "Just for three or four months. Manek can look after her. Travel will broaden her outlook; get this puritanical rubbish out of her head.""

### **Relation with her Father**

Cyrus is the name of her father. He is a broad-minded and a person of balanced personality. He is normally a correct person. We come to know about his habit of drinking when Zareen says:

""It's okay for you to run around getting drunk every evening, but I must stop wearing sleeveless blouses.""

At another place, Zareen says that it all might do him all good to drinkless. Cyrus is happy when he sees that. As we have already discussed that Feroza is a stubborn child. She was beaten by her father, when she was four but she spoke not a single word till her lips started bleeding.

### **Relation with her Uncle**

Manek is Feroza's uncle who is only six years older than Feroza. Their relation is shown by these lines:

"With only six years between them, Manek and Feroza grew up more as siblings than as

uncle and niece. Their hostilities often assumed epic proportions.”

They are jealous of each other but later on we see that when Feroza goes to America, they become very good friends of each other. They called each other ‘boochina’ and his nickname is guardian in the USA.

### Her relation with Friends

David has a dancing and dashing personality. He is a beautiful Youngman. Feroza is much impressed by his personality. She falls in love with him. So, with the passage of time, she becomes morally corrupt. She has illicit relationship with David. These lines show her illegal relations with David:

“And after this, it was natural for them to be physically close, to tenderly touch each other, to abandon themselves to the ardent intoxication of their youthful hormones. Feroza was as "swept off her feet" as she could wish, as David wished her to be. And the instinct that had guarded her before, now let her go as David released her from the baffling sexual limbo in which Shashi's cooler rhythm and the restraints of their common culture had set her adrift.”

### Conclusion

So, Feroza is a round as well as dynamic character. We can conclude it in such a way that it is not the fault of Feroza but the fault of her family who gave her so much independence. She was innocent and did not agree to go to America, but she was sent by her family. Just a sixteen years old girl and such a corrupt and destructive world of America proved horrible. So, the result had to be necessarily as that of Feroza.

### Summary

Feroza Ginwalla, a pampered, protected 16-year-old Pakistani girl, is sent to America by her parents, who are alarmed by the fundamentalism overtaking Pakistan — and their daughter. Hoping that a few months with her uncle, an MIT grad student, will soften the girl's rigid thinking, they get more than they bargained for: Feroza, enthralled by American culture and her new freedom, insists on staying. A bargain is struck, allowing Feroza to attend college with the understanding that she will return home and marry well.

As a student in a small western town, Feroza's perceptions of America, her homeland, and herself begin to alter. When she falls in love with and wants to marry a Jewish American, her family is aghast. Feroza realizes just how far she has come — and wonders how much further she can go. This delightful coming-of-age novel is both remarkably funny and a remarkably acute portrayal of America as seen through the eyes of a perceptive young immigrant.

We first meet the parents, Zareen and Cyrus, a Pakistani couple who have sent their daughter to the United States because Mom worried that daughter Feroza was being too influenced by fundamentalist Muslims in Pakistan. In an effort to help her child find some western girl power, Zareen has sent Feroza to Houston. But once here, Feroza does more than find her voice; she learns how to roar. While living the American dream, Feroza decides to marry a nice American boy -- a nice American Jewish boy. This information comes to Zareen and Cyrus in the form of an innocent little letter that sends the entire family into a tizzy of fainting spells and prayer. The trouble is, the family is Zoroastrian, an ancient religion that does not allow girls to marry outsiders. If Feroza marries this non-Parsi boy, she will shame the entire family.

As shaky as the news makes Zareen, she's a statue of calm compared to Mumma, Feroza's well-intentioned but very manipulative granny. Mumma insists that Zareen fly to American

immediately to talk some sense into Feroza. So, with Cyrus's blessing, Zareen embarks on a journey that will change both her and her daughter's lives forever.

This is a long setup, filled with some predictable jokes about mothers-in-law and the shocking things that kids do these days, but all of it is handled with such joy by director Brad Dalton and his wonderful cast that even the stuff that feels fairly old hat comes off as entertaining.

Once Zareen gets to Houston, the story deepens quite a bit and the real power of Sidhwa's play opens up. Zareen discovers that her daughter has grown in ways the Pakistani mother could never have imagined. The first difficulty for Zareen is Feroza's living situation. She rooms with her fiancé David (Luke Eddy) and a girl named Jo. Zareen adores Jo (though she doesn't realize this lovely girl is a lesbian), but she barely speaks to David...at first.

Ironically enough, after Zareen spends some time in Houston, she gets used to American freedoms. And despite her mission -- which is to break off her daughter's engagement -- the young man starts to grow on Mom. He even takes her shopping at the Galleria, where she buys pale pink hot pants, of all things. In fact, Zareen enjoys America and its freedoms so much that she starts to understand why her daughter has changed. It almost seems as if she will accept her daughter's choice. But then Cyrus and Mumma call from Pakistan to remind Zareen of what she's doing in America.

And Feroza isn't the only one whose family is worried about her choices. Turns out David's bubbe isn't too happy with the fact that her grandson is planning to marry outside the faith, and she manages to stick her two cents into the equation. At the end of one particularly difficult evening, the young couple's future starts to look very dark indeed.

## Analysis

### Introduction

Bapsi Sidhwa is a prominent writer of Pakistan Diaspora. Her major works reflect her personal experience of the Partition of Indian subcontinent, abuse against women, immigration to the US, membership in the Parsi or Zoroastrian community, and other such related issues and concerns. She has also been trying to bring them into public discussion on a global platform. The term "Diaspora" is used to refer either to singular person or ethnic population forced or induced to leave their traditional ethnic homelands being dispersed throughout other parts of the world, and the ensuing developments in their dispersal and culture. Basically Diaspora is an experience of dislocation and physical displacement from the motherland and it raises socio-cultural and psychosomatic identity questions which have led to a hybrid culture and a new process of cultural assimilation. A mixed cultural milieu opens up new vistas of communication and dialogue in this cosmopolitan world. The uprooting of the individuals or migration from their native lands and subsequently, their efforts to settle in a country with alien socio-cultural ways and their yearning for the roots has become a prominent theme of post-colonial writing. Peculiar experiences caused by migration and native communities, rootlessness become a major issue of the post-colonial society and a prime concern of the post-colonial writers; and hence, it is also regarded as an identity crisis as well as search for identity.

### Being a Native

The novel, *An American Brat* unveils the experiences of Feroza, a Pakistani girl, belonging to the Parsee community, shifted to the United States and the cultural crisis that she confronts during the process of her migration to America. Feroza's parents – Zareen and Cyrus Ginwalla are bewildered to see her conservative attitude, a result of Pakistani fundamentalist



attitude. Sharing her shock, Zareen informs her husband,

"She objected to my sleeveless saree-blouse! Really, this narrow-minded attitude touted by General Zia is infecting her, too. I told her: 'Look, we're Parsee, everybody knows we dress differently.' "When I was of her age, I wore frocks and cycled to Kinnaird College. And that was in '59 and '60 – fifteen years after partition! Can she wear frocks? No. Women mustn't show their legs, women shouldn't act like that. Girls mustn't play hockey or sign or dance! If everything corrupts their pious little minds so easily, then the mullahs should wear burqas and stay within the four walls of their houses!" (American Brat 10)

The narrow-mindedness of Feroza becomes a problem for her parents – Zareen and Cyrus. She becomes more orthodox than her mother Zareen, though there is a big generation gap. They decide to send her to USA for a holiday. They are of the opinion that travelling will broaden her outlook and she will be in a position to get rid of her Puritanism. When Zareen's mother, Khutlibai comes to know that Zareen and Cyrus are sending Feroza to America, she gets angry. Zareen convinces her saying that she is going only for 3 to 4 months. She adds: You've no idea how difficult Feroza's been.... All this talk about Islam, and how women should dress, and how women should behave, is turning her quite strange (American Brat 30). Finally, she is sent to America to her maternal uncle, Manek, who is a student there. Throughout her journey, Feroza behaves as instructed by the elders back in Pakistan but as soon as she reaches America she begins to change.

### **Beats of new world**

The moment she lands on to the Kennedy Airport, she feels the freedom. She is amazed to see the orderly traffic, bright lights and audacity of glass and steel. However, the experience with the passport officer becomes a shocking one for her. She did never expect a series of questions like that. For the first time she realizes that it was a country of strangers. She also passes through some good experiences. When she encounters a moving staircase, an American couple helps her use the down escalator. She finds stark difference between her people and the Americans. She finds them unselfconscious who are always engulfed in their own issues and concerns. For her, the experience is no less than that of a prisoner getting free after an imprisonment for about 16 years. She is happy with the taste of freedom which she never had, "She knew no one, and no one knew her! It was a heady feeling to be suddenly so free – for the moment, at least – of the thousand constraints that governed her life." (American Brat 58) The author clearly depicts the culture clash here. A conservative, a person with backwardness in her thoughts is set free in a country so free and open.

Manek's initial struggles to cope with the US culture help him to guide his niece, Feroza to face with ease the problems which he faced. He considers his experiences as lessons to teach Feroza about the US. Manek takes Feroza on a tour of New York to indoctrinate her with western history and culture, and improve her mind on Western aspect of modernity. She beholds with awe the glitzy and dazzling socio-cultural and historical aspect of the town. They ride to the Statue of Liberty, World Trade Towers, Wall Street, Lexington Avenue, Manhattan Skyline, Fifth Avenue and Madison, YMCA Cafeteria, and several other places of historical importance. Manek also shows her the gloomy side of the western city by drawing her attention to male prostitutes, the pimps and miniskirt prostitutes. However, she finds it hard to accept the poverty and stench of filth in USA. Feroza had been accustomed to the odour of filth, the reek of poverty sweat, urine, open drains and the other debris. These sights and smells in Pakistan had developed a tolerance for them. (American Brat)

Gradually Feroza succumbs to America's charms and decides to stay on as a student. Manek wants her to join a junior college in Twin Falls, Idaho, a small town, which he thought would ease her assimilation into the American way of life. Manek teaches her things – small and

big. She learns and experiences things right from rubbing the deodorant stick to using the elevators. Manek prepares a list of what Feroza should know and experience; he teaches her to be more alert and less trusting; whenever she wrestles with a jar or juice bottle, he says: "Remember this: If you have to struggle to open something in America, you're doing it wrong. They've made everything easy" (American Brat 140). Equipped with worldly wisdom, Feroza goes to college. she'll teach you more than I can. Just remember everything I've told you. Don't become 'ethnic' Before leaving her, Manek says:

"... You're lucky you've not been palmed off with some Japanese or Egyptian roommate. Jo's a real American; and eat with your fingers in the dorm. And don't butt in when someone's talking" (American Brat 148).

### **Being an American immigrant**

Now Feroza's American roommate, Jo takes charge of her life as a guide. She teaches her American English, and makes her give up Pakistani clothes and earrings. Feroza now wears jeans, T shirts, sweaters, and blouses. They rent a two-bedroom apartment. Initially Feroza is thrilled at the thought of living with just Jo, but soon discovers a fresh aspect of her roommate's social life. Jo is fond of boys. She picks them up from various places like restaurant, theatre, construction site, stores and also brings them home. She also makes Feroza learn to flirt with boys. But not having much experience of socializing with boys, Feroza feels awkward. Jo initiates her into smoking and drinking wine. Eventually Feroza also starts enjoying the company of boys. Sometimes she has a guilty feeling of what her family will think about her conduct, but she accepts it as her assimilation into the American lifestyle:

As the pressure of constraints, so deeply embedded in her psyche, slightly loosened their grip under Jo's influence, Feroza felt she was growing the wings Father Fibs had talked about, which, even at this incipient stage, would have been ruthlessly clipped in Pakistan. Feroza was curious to discover how they might grow, the shape and the reach of their span. This was her secret, this sense of growth and discovery, and she did not want to divulge any part of it, even to Manek. (American Brat 164)

Under the influence of Jo, Feroza completely adapts an American life-style. She acts, talks and dresses like an American girl. The shy and conservative Feroza turns into a confident and self-assertive girl. To put Feroza on the track of modernization, Sidhwa has shown her sharing room with different types of mates—the American girl Jo. Rhonda and Gwen, and the lesbians Laura and Shirley; thus, through the interaction with people of various cultures, she experiences different shades of life.

### **Love and break up**

Feroza thinks of buying a secondhand car. In her search for a decent second hand car, she makes an appointment with David Press, a tall blue-eyed handsome guy of around twenty two. She buys the car but loses herself. Feroza later moves to a vacant bedroom in David's house. Living in the same house leads to their more intimate relations. It becomes a kind of living together. But, gradually, Feroza becomes conscious of her guilt. She thinks whether she is the same Feroza living in Lahore and studied in Convent of the Sacred Heart. She decides to have permission from her family to marry David. She writes a letter and also sends a photograph of David. It proves to be a bomb-blast in her family. Finally, it is decided that Zareen should go to USA and prevent Feroza from marrying David, a Jew. She is armed with all necessary instructions to face different sorts of situations. Zareen tries to explain Feroza that by marrying David, a non-Parsee she would cut herself off from her family and religion; she would never be allowed to enter the Parsi places of worship and never be allowed to attend the funeral rites of her grandmother or even the parents. But Feroza, who

had once placed emphasis on religion and culture, can now think only about David and wishes to marry him. Feroza feels David is everything for her and their love cannot be changed forever.

Zareen decides to protect her daughter from him. To avoid further conflicts and to act wise, she gives her consent for their marriage but wants it to be an arranged marriage. She, patronizingly, explains Parsi wedding rituals and customs to David. By doing so, she wants to make David aware of how different their cultures are. When Zareen performs a ritual to cast out the spell of the evil eye that she feels afflicted on Feroza, David recoils in horror. Now he clearly understands that their cultures are quite different and he cannot adjust. His love for Feroza fades away and his feelings change. Her exoticism that once attracted him to her now frightens him. He wants to go out of her life. Fortunately, he gets another job in California and leaves Denver.

### **Self realization**

Initially Feroza feels depressed over her break-up with David, but she determines to stay in America, instead of returning to Pakistan. She has experienced freedom in America and cannot live without it now. Feroza refuses to go back to her old conservative life of her Parsi community and Pakistan, for there the increasing fundamentalism and other constraints would crush her freedom that had become the centre of her happiness. She wants to lead her life without any interference or chains, and it is possible only remaining away from her family: "And privacy, she had come to realize, was one of the prime luxuries the opulence of the First World could provide, as well as the sheer physical space the vast country allowed each individual, each child, almost as a birthright" (American Brat 312). Feroza has learnt that, in future, she will not allow anyone to interfere in her personal matters, and she would marry a man whom she comes to love without noticing if he is a Parsi or not. Randhir Pratap Singh writes,

"Feroza has tasted freedom and she now cannot give it up. She decides to manage her life to suit her heart and pursue happiness in her own sweet way. She will marry a man whom she comes to like and love without bothering herself whether he is Parsi or of different faith. She has learnt her lesson and in future she will not allow anyone to meddle in her personal affairs. As for her religion, she is Parsi and she will continue to be Parsi. If the priests in Lahore and Karachi do not let her enter the fire temple, she will go to one in Bombay where there are so many Parsis that no one will know whether she is married to a Parsi or to a non – Parsi." (Bapsi Sidhwa, 83 – 84)

### **Conclusion**

Feroza has become a confident and self-assertive girl. Her journey was from a historically traditional girl to a modern brat. An innocent conservative girl of the Parsi heritage, after expatriation, gets a modern look leaving past the cultural inhibition. She has dug out her self-identity through her immigrant experience. Though migration possesses a sense of loss, Bapsi Sidhwa, here portrays a positive picture for it. The immigrant experience of Feroza provides self actualization through cultural assimilation. Feroza undergoes the transitional dilemma and are constantly engaged in a search for identity or roots in a new land till she forgot her past roots and get assimilated to the culture of the adopted land. Feroza, thus assimilates the independence of mind and spirit and self-confidence offered by the new world.

This novel, even though appears to be the story of a simple Parsi girl trying to learn and live in a different culture from the one she was brought up in, is more significantly about the ways in which ethnicity creates, regulates and eventually decides our identity. The collective identity of the community to which the individual belongs shapes the interaction with the



environment and the interaction in turn structures the identity of the community and the individual. Ethnic identity is more enduring than other identities; it is an individual's primary identity and is most often ascribed at birth. This identity strengthens as the individual grows up by feeding on the energy provided by 'we' and the 'other'. But the individual when subjected to experiences and freedom of a new world leads to self realization and attain a new identity.

An American Brat is an "affecting, amusing, and enjoyable" novel about a young woman's coming of age and the immigrant experience in America: Discuss.

Coming of age is never easy. Coming of age as a woman is even harder. But coming of age as a female immigrant in a foreign country may be the most difficult of all. For many women born into societies with restrictive social and political codes, however, immigration may be the only real way to come of age.

In *An American Brat*, Pakistani-born novelist Bapsi Sidhwa reveals with a humorous yet incisive eye the exhilarating freedom and profound sense of loss that make up the immigrant experience in America. Sidhwa begins her novel in Lahore, Pakistan. Feroza Gunwalla, a 16-year-old Parsee, is mortified by the sight of her mother appearing at her school with her arms uncovered. For Zareen Gunwalla, Feroza's outspoken 40-something mother, it is a chilling moment. The Parsees, a small sect in Pakistan, take great pride in their liberal values, business acumen, and—most importantly—the education of their children. Zareen's family, the Junglewallas—a fictional clan chronicled in Sidhwa's previous two novels, *The Crow Eaters* and *Cracking India*—have for generations bred strong-willed, independent women. Zareen knows she must do something to keep her daughter from being further influenced by the morals of the majority Muslim government. But what can a free-thinking Parsee mom do when she sees her daughter becoming "more and more backward"? Send her to America, of course.

Feroza is packed off to visit her Uncle Manek, a student at MIT. But as Zareen waves goodbye to her daughter, she cannot know that in America Feroza will become more independent than Zareen ever dreamt, or hoped, was possible. With Uncle Manek, Feroza quickly sees both the squalor and the beauty that America offers. In New York, she's repelled by the smells of the city. Yet Feroza sees that, along with the stench, America possesses luxuries and a utilitarian efficiency that are almost magical. In the end, though, it's not material comfort that seduces Feroza into a love affair with America. Nor is it the stares from handsome young American men. What seduces her is the candor, the unabashed freedom, behind those stares. Wanting to get beyond her own selfconsciousness, Feroza decides to prolong her stay. But Manek, fearing "the catastrophe that could take the shape of a good-looking non-Parsee man," places Feroza in a small, strictly supervised Mormon college in Twin Falls, Idaho. Manek's overly protective plans go haywire, however, in the person of Feroza's American roommate. Jo Miller, as simple in her desires as her name, smokes a lot, drinks liberally, eats compulsively and never stops falling in love. Although Jo, as written by Sidhwa, is a blowzy American cliché, Feroza is impressed with her unrestrained energy. The girls become fast friends, and soon transfer together to the University of Colorado, where Feroza's transition to an American lifestyle is complete. She quickly begins to act, talk and dress like an American girl. She even falls in love like an American girl, and, copying Jo's impulsiveness, Feroza writes home to Lahore, blithely announcing her intention to marry. She also blithely announces that Peter, her new love, is Jewish. In no time at all, Zareen heads off on her first visit to America, determined to save her daughter from a marriage that, to a Parsee, means nothing less than cultural suicide.

Feroza is moved by the ultimate argument Zareen uses against her marriage to Peter. If a



Parsee woman marries outside of her community, she can no longer practice her religion and is no longer considered a Parsee. The same law does not apply to Parsee men. The iniquity rankles Feroza. Married or not, she exclaims indignantly, she has experienced freedom in America and she refuses to live without it now.

Hearing this, Zareen, at last, truly perceives her daughter, not as a wayward child, but as a modern version of herself and the other Junglewalla women who preceded her. Like her female ancestors chronicled in Sidhwa's two previous novels, Feroza is defining herself, breaking away from the strictures of the past without denying her heritage. One only hopes that Feroza's maturation as a woman will make for a journey as affecting, amusing, and enjoyable as her coming-of-age does in *An American Brat*.

### **Diaspora and An American Brat by Bapsi Sidhwa**

Post-colonialism refers to the period after the colonialism and furthermore signifies the relationship between the colonizers, the European countries and the colonized, the Third World countries. Colonialism was the era when the European nations took control over the Third World countries and exploited people's lives in numerous ways. Colonialism stepped over people's social freedom, shook their psychological states and crushed their cultural identity and beliefs. People were like slaves on their own motherland. The colonizers used to decide the guidelines for the colonized to live by and there were strict punishments for those who disobeyed. People were utterly at the mercy of the colonizers.

After the disintegration of the European control over the Third World countries, Post-colonial literature evolved as one of the most popular facets of English literature especially since 1970. A strong product of all the previous tensions is highly evident in Post-colonial literature in which the colonized presented their dissatisfaction out of the effects of the colonialism and their resistance to and struggle to survive under such impacts. The usual themes depicted by most of the Post-colonial writers are the fight for freedom, national values, cultural identity, nostalgia and detachment. The writers from the countries which were once or still are the colonies of European nations often tend to satirize the colonizers for their efforts of justifying colonialism. Their writings cherish their cultural greatness against the notion of inferiority that's gradually and minutely inculcated in the global society against the colonized. Further, in the same line, one of the major influences of colonialism directs us towards diaspora.

The word "diaspora" means the dispersion or displacement of people from their homeland. This term is derived from a Greek word "diaspeiro" that refers to scattering or spreading about. In expansion to the understanding of diaspora, the people generally have a memory of their native place as they believe their roots are their ancestral places and that's where they actually belong. The place proffers them an identity of their own. Thus, there's almost always a tendency in them to return to their place of origin.

Diaspora underlines the feeling of rootlessness. People nurture an attachment with their motherland irrespective of the reasons for which they have been away from it. Discussing about the reasons, there are two possible bases for one to move away from their native place; voluntary or involuntary/forced. These bases may further have contributing reasons such as war, recession, economic depression, political tension, cultural beliefs, social stress, personal reasons or lifestyle differences among the people in the society.

### **Types of Diaspora:**

There can be a number of methods to classify and enlist Diaspora for its lengthy, complex and omnipresent nature. However, it is classified into four major types below:

**Victim Diaspora:** When people are banished away from their native land.

**Trading Diaspora:** When people move from their own country to another countries to conduct trade.

**Imperial Diaspora:** When people go to other regions which are conquered by their nation.

**Labor Diaspora:** When people are transported to other countries for labor.

Other than these, diaspora can be found and kept in many more categories according to the elements and features of diaspora. According to Mr. Khachig Toloyan, one of the founders of field of diaspora studies and founding editor of the award winning DIASPORA: A Journal of Transnational Studies, in writing, diaspora is of two distinct types: Emic and Etic. Emic diaspora represents mostly the autobiographical journey of the writer whereas the Etic diaspora is the representation of some scholarly work. Diaspora has been a subject of writing for a number of authors and novelists who somewhere in their life were dislocated from their native country or were influenced by such events from others' life. Bapsi Sidhwa is one of such prominent writers of diaspora. "We are not worthless because we inhabit a country which is seen by Western eyes as a primitive, fundamental country only....I mean, our lives are very much worth living" (1).

In An American Brat, the concept of identity, both personal and cultural is present. Cultural identity is what gives a shape to an individual, no matter where he comes from. Cultural identity is a feeling of belongingness to a certain group or a community. It is a segment of an individual's self-conception and set of his choices and principles in life. This comes into existence by virtue of chronic habits, rituals, traditions and practices being performed by the people of the similar class and region. It consists of various aspects of life of a person such as religion, dressing, physical features, food choices etc. Cultural identity is not only visible through actions but thoughts also. The thoughts direct actions and thus, cultural identity leads the way of life of people on this entire earth.

Zareen's perspective in the start of the novel depicts her grave concern for one's identity. The story opens from the event of Zareen being terribly restless for her daughter's upbringing in a society where no modernity lies. Zareen discusses with Cyrus, her husband about Feroza's mindset being narrowed. "She's becoming more and more backward every day" (9). Zareen continues to tell her husband the way socio-political environment has influenced Feroza's behavior. "She won't even answer the phone anymore! What if it's someone I don't know?" Zareen mimicked her daughter in English. "I told her – don't be silly. No one's going to jump out of the phone to bite you!" (10).

Zareen feels considerably bothered by the prevailing system and practices in Pakistan and their disastrous impacts on her young daughter's mental development and so shares with her husband. "Could you imagine Feroza cycling to school now? She'd be a freak! Those goondas would make vulgar noises and bump into her, and the mullahs would tell her to cover her head. Instead of moving forward, we are moving backward. What I could do in '59 and '60, my daughter can't do in 1978! Our Parsee children in Lahore won't know how to mix with Parsee kids in Karachi or Bombay" (11). Thereafter, she talks about the image of a woman in her culture and nation where fundamentalism had made the existence of respectable and liberal identity almost impossible. Propelled by such circumstances only, Zareen decides to send off her daughter Feroza to America where again she is a stranger and has no native identity but has to adapt to American culture.

Stuart Hall in his book *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* observes: "...identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past" (236). The conflict and concern regarding cultural identity leading to one's individual identity continues to be visible in America also when Feroza can't help but recall the whole different version of her in Pakistan back then. "Feroza was riven by bouts of guilt. Once when she was sneaking back into her room at three o'clock in the morning with her shoes in her hand, she wondered if she was the same girl who had lived in Lahore and gone to the Convent of the Sacred Heart" (264).

According to Homi K. Bhaba's theory of "Otherness", there's a fine line between "cultural differences" and "cultural diversity". Cultural differences are there among people of two different regions who are unknown to the history and practices of each others' community while cultural diversity is simply the distinct nature of the cultures followed in different regions and countries and are to be regarded by others. Similar grounds are laid off in the culmination of *An American Brat* when the protagonist of the novel Feroza Ginwalla realizes that to exist in American society; she does not have to sacrifice her own values and culture. The understanding of cultural diversity and co-existence can be abstracted from the part of the plot as the novel ends with Feroza's realization, that in order to survive on an alien land, she does not have to cut off her own culture from herself. Edward Said states thus "Far more than they fight, cultures coexist and interact fruitfully with each other" (52). She re-adorns her *Sudra* and *Kusti* (cultural marks), cites Ahura Mazda's blessings and takes a decision that "There would be no going back for her, but she could go back at will" (317).

Exploring more of diaspora in the story, another element of diaspora, orientalism shows up. The word "orientalism" refers to the characteristics and cultures of Asian people. It distinguishes the way they appear quite unlikely to the western world and their practices. Said writes: "The more one is able to leave one's cultural home, the more easily is one able to judge it, and the whole world as well, with the spiritual detachment and generosity necessary for true vision. The more easily, too, does one assess oneself and alien cultures with the same combination of intimacy and distance" (259).

Bapsi Sidhwa has also clearly illustrated the way fundamentalism made life suffocating and uneasy in Pakistan. She has shown the conventional Asian traits in the personality of the characters in the novel through various means namely the fixed type of clothes considered to be appropriate for women, deserving a much regulated extent of freedom and marrying someone from one's own community etc. Also, she has provided a base for the gradual transition in their mindsets and personalities namely how Feroza turns from a shy girl into an independent bold woman. Earlier she says "I'm sorry, I don't think I'll be able to act in the play. You know how it is – my father won't like it. Please don't come again. Don't phone, please" (16). Followed by the transformation in America, she quite bravely makes up her mind to marry David, a non-Parsee guy and when it doesn't go along her expectations, she handles her emotional self very sensibly.

Another dive into the diasporic waters of the novel gets the elements namely mimicry and hybridity nurturing in the characters. Mimicry refers to the act of imitation of the culture of the colonizers by the colonized. Usually, to fit in, the dislocated people tend to adopt the mannerism of the Western and European world as with their native lifestyle, they feel inferior in that advanced societal setup. Manek, Feroza and Zareen belong to Pakistani roots and values but they feel fascinated to the American culture and lifestyle. As per the level of exposure and their psyche, all three of them develop modern habits. Manek has been living in U.S for a considerable number of years and all his habits and life-style have thoroughly changed. He, no more, feels alien to the American culture and rituals. When he talks to Feroza over a phone call, he sounds foreigner through his statement. "Don't yell, Manek



said. "You're puncturing my eardrum. Why do you Third World Pakis shout so much? Everybody's not deaf" (26). Manek continues to talk in that manner to which Feroza exclaims "What do you mean, 'Paki.' What're you, some snow-white Englishman?" (26).

Later in the story, Manek again highlights the element of mimicry when he changes his name for the sake of Americans to get it easily and relate to him but Feroza seems to disapprove of this. She couldn't help it. "Mike?" she asked, her appalled voice conjuring up Jo's unpleasant boyfriend. "You've become a Mike?" Manek remained calm. "The people I have to deal with at work find it hard to remember Manek. It's too foreign, it makes them uneasy. But I'm one of the guys if I'm Mike" (260).

As the plot of the novel proceeds, the characters become hybrids. The word 'hybrid' means 'mixture' of the two or more things. Thus, hybridity is basically the concept that highlights the process of mixing up of two different races and cultures. Homi K. Bhaba, in his works, supports the idea that hybridity has been present in all the cultures and no culture is pure as it has always been influenced by the intervening cultures and traditions. The same element of hybridity is apparent in Bapsi Sidhwa's *An American Brat*. Manek, Feroza and Zareen visit America and willingly mix up with the host culture. As the plot progresses, Feroza very well adapts into American social setup and the incident of Feroza falling in love with David and wanting to marry him gives initiation to the base of occurrence of hybridity. She writes a letter to inform her family about her will to marry David.

Feroza wrote that she had met a wonderful boy at the University. Like her, he was also very shy. She had agreed to marry him. She knew they would be very upset, particularly her grandmothers, at the thought of her marrying a non-Parsee. His parents were Jews. The religious differences did not matter so much in America. They had decided to resolve the issue by becoming Unitarians. "Please, don't be angry, and please try to make both my grannies understand. I love you all so much. I won't be able to bear it if you don't accept David" (266). However, followed by a number of events, especially the ones manipulated by Feroza's mother, their love doesn't culminate into a wed-lock.

Feroza spends three years in America and turns out to be a bold woman with a firm voice and decision making ability which were the rare features to be found in a girl from a fundamentalism dominated country. She behaves like a global citizen now and understands that she has to stay strong and survive in this world. Furthermore, Feroza's mother, Zareen also is affected by the liberty and modernity in American air. She quickly and easily adjusts in American society during her visit to Feroza.

The stark contrast in the lifestyles of the two nations leads to the induction of alienation in characters. Alienation is the term that reckons to the withdrawal or disintegrating of a person or a person's affections from something or position of earlier attachment. It also defines how someone may have different outlook and connection with some specific entity after passing through a span of time and series of circumstances.

In the novel, *An American Brat*, the theme of Alienation is quite present. It appears as a highlight in form of the events of portrayal of the beliefs and persona of the protagonist of the novel, Feroza who initially likes to follow Pakistani leaders and feels embarrassed because of her mother wearing a sleeveless blouse. Zareen complains to Cyrus how Feroza objects upon the manner Zareen dresses up. "In the car she said: 'Mummy, please don't come to school dressed like that.' She objected to my sleeveless sari-blouse! Really, this narrow-minded attitude touted by General Zia is infecting her, too. I told her: 'Look, we're Parsee, everyone knows we dress differently'(10). Also, Feroza holds great respect and belief in Pakistani leaders and systems in the first half of the novel and she even tends to follow



the mannerism reflecting through those people. She is shown advocating their work and holding a stand for them when needed. "Don't you dare say anything about Bhutto. Are you ashamed, speaking ill of someone who is facing death just because he's the voice of the masses?" (124). But, later, after having the taste of liberty in U.S.A, Feroza becomes so fond of modernity and feels it nearly impossible to return to her native conservative community. Sidhwa describes through the comprehensibility of Feroza what's opined by Karl Marx "Social progress can be measured by the social position of the female sex." She can easily witness the distinction between the cultures and all the other aspects of life in the two nations. Her bond with the American lifestyle broadens her mentality and lets her think in a new spirit.

Under the category of Post-colonial literature, *An American Brat* is one of the most elegant creations by Bapsi Sidhwa. While merely the superficial reading of the storyline gives its readers immense pleasure through its outstanding expression, metamorphosis of its characters in two different worlds and the in-depth study of the novel provides valuable knowledge of diaspora and its various elements that are engraved beautifully by the author and can be traced out through close and meticulous observation. Not only the readers appreciate the story-telling of Bapsi Sidhwa, but also the novel deals with a number of critical concepts from the era of colonialism till contemporary relevance and also derives a logical relationship between those concepts in the most realistic manner revealing both the positive and negative aspects without any bias.

### **Contrast between Pakistani and American Civilization and Culture as depicted in An American Brat**

#### **Introduction**

In 'An American Brat', Bapsi Sidhwa seems to be more interested in exploring the horizons of contrast and comparison of Pakistani and American civilizations. For the sake of comparison, Sidhwa has used basically two characters e.g. Protagonist – Feroza and her uncle Manek. This theme is also highlighted in the short stay of Zareen in 'New World'. In order to understand the comparison drawn by Sidhwa, we must analyse the characteristics of both civilizations.

#### **Government**

Sidhwa has highlighted the characteristic of Pakistani society a lot. She condemned the fundamentalism through the words of Zareen when she says:

"Could you imagine Feroza cycling to school now?... what I could do in 59 and 30, my daughter can't do in 1978."

Sidhwa also made his reader aware of the fact that these political problems create psychological problems in youth and Zareen took important decision of sending Feroza to America because of this problem.

"I think we should send Feroza to America for a short holiday... she is been so desperate lately; You are right, it's these politics"

#### **Family Structure and Parental Order**

In Pakistani civilization family structures are very strong and parental orders cannot be denied. Even Zareen has to answer her mother when she decided to send her daughter to America Kuttibai asked her in satirical tone that

"..... ping, ping and u don't bother to consult with your elders or elder brother."

### **Strong Religious and Moral Institution**

Religion and morality are these institutions which cannot be questioned in Pakistani civilization. One cannot compromise on religion and moral values in Pakistan. Feroza was unable to marry according to her happiness because of her religious restrictions. David's parents can permit him to marry outside their religion but Zareen is horrified with the thought that Feroza will marry any one other than Parsee. She even considers Feroza's children illegitimate and thinks:

"She would be branded an adulteress and her children pronounced illegitimate. She would be accused of committing the most heinous sacrileges. Cut off from her culture and her surroundings like a fish in shallow waters, her child would eventually shrivel up. And her dread for Feroza altered her opinion of David."

### **Economic Dependence of Women**

In Pakistani set up women are completely dependent on men not only economically but also emotionally and psychologically. In the introductory chapter, Sidhwa used 'high heels' as a symbol of quest of men to become equal. She writes about Zareen:

"Her high-heeled slippers clicking determinedly beneath the hem of the printed silk caftan she usually wore in the house, Zareen followed her husband into the bedroom. She always wore high heels, "to measure up to my husband," and removed them only when she got into bed or stepped into her bath."

### **Sexual Freedom**

This motif is also highlighted to great extent by Sidhwa throughout this novel. Kattibai's first fear regarding Feroza's visit to America is the sexual freedom prevailing there. She says:

"Is the poor child's behavior so unpardonable that you have to banish her from the country? If you can't bear to keep her, I will," Khutlibai said, rejecting the bait. The matter was of too much moment for her to be so easily diverted. "She's too innocent and young to be sent there." There was pregnant with unspeakable knowledge of the sexual license allowed American girls and the perils of drink and drugs. Compounding the danger were vivid images of rapists looming in dark alleys to entice, molest, and murder young girls."

Further:

"Feroza had no experience with socializing with boys; dating is no such thing as dating in Pakistan. It was excruciatingly painful for her to be among so many young people and not know how to respond or behave."

Towards the end of the novel, it was a great shock to Zareen to know about the lesbian relationship of Lura and Shirley. She was:

"What goes on! Feroza was living with a boy and a couple of lesbians. She wouldn't dare mention it to Cyrus, or anyone. How could she face the disgrace of nurturing a brat who looked her in the eye and brazenly talked about bodily juices? She tried not to show how hurt she was."

### **Unquestionable Obedience**

In Pakistani setup, parents and relatives demand unquestionable obedience of children and after viewing the freedom in America, Feroza declares:

"Feroza's parents, her aunts, and uncles, for all their assertions of being broad-minded and

modern, would expect unquestioning obedience on certain matters, like the relationships between various family members, and between boys and girls, and would view with consternation any straying from the established path."

## **American Civilization**

### **Secularism**

Americans are more tolerant in the case of religion. They think religion as a personal matter of every one. David's parents feel nothing bad about their son marrying a girl outside their religion. But Zareen and Cyrus cannot tolerate this decision and Zareen has to fly to America in order to intervene the decision. Feroza's fan in Pakistan behave in the way that Bunny, Feroza's cousin was forced to say:

"Jeroo and Behram's daughter Bunny, who was by now a pert fifteen-year-old with light brown eyes and a dark ponytail she tossed frequently, said, "For God's sake! You're carrying on as if Feroza's dead! She's only getting married, for God's sake!"

### **Independence**

In the character of Jo, Sidhwa has shown the independence of American girls. While Feroza was dependent on her parents and for sometime on her uncle Manek. But Manek taught her to be independent. All American characters are free and independent to take their own decisions as opposed to those of Pakistani culture where women are still dependent and unable to take their decisions.

### **Family Structure**

American family setup is absolutely shattered and broken. Children are supposed to live alone and independently. While old parents live separately and have their own activities. This characteristic of American family system of Jo where parents run their own restaurants while their sons and daughters used to live separately. Feroza was highly impressed by the Miller's family (Jo's family) and thought about them in the following way:

"And, surprisingly, even though Feroza found the Millers' way of life admirably tolerant and eminently desirable, she could not imagine it transposed to any community, whether it was Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, or Parsee, in her part of the world. What would life be like in her family and in Lahore without the extravagant guidance and dire warnings, the endless quoting of homilies, and the benign and sometimes not so benign advice, inquisitive-ness and interference?"

### **Political Insight**

In Pakistan, politics concerned every one from street sweeper to business tycoon – because it personally affected every one. The political process would run smoothly and it would make a little difference to Jo's life as it would to American policy.

### **Different Set of Manners**

American people have entirely different set of manners. Feroza really works hard to learn all those manners of how to eat, how to demand things from sales man and how not to stare on a kissing couple. She (Feroza) has created a scene at a store when she is unable to phrase her demand properly. She nervously asked sales woman:

"May I have this, please?" and she answered: ""You may not. You'll have to pay for it. This isn't the Salvation Army, y'know; it's a drugstore."

### **Zero Interference**

Every one is free to take decision. There is no interference of any one into the decisions taken by American people. They not even let the religion or moral values to interfere in their personal matters. David needs no permission from his parents or religious scholars while Feroza needs to take permission on every level. But in the end, she was independent enough to take her own decisions. As she thinks:

"Feroza knew her drougths would be considered despicable and selfish were she to voice them at home. But it was a selfishness sanctioned by die values of die prosperous new world in which she wished to dwell. Surely she could arrive at a compromise if her conscience troubled her — and even as she thought this, she knew it would. Her deeply ingrained and early awareness of political and state evils and her passion for justice would always make her fight injustice wherever she was."

### **Potential of Progress for Every one**

American culture allows every one to go for equal progress. There is no repression or regression for any one at any level. Even a person likes sushi by using his intellect properly can earn enough. His family back at home is not that much rich to send him enough money so he exploits all the means which that culture allowed him to do.

### **The cross-cultural effects on Feroza**

The cross-cultural effects on Feroza were that she became independent, obsessed, powerful, experienced, confident and secular. There are a lot many effects on Feroza' mind set after experiencing the two contrasting sets of civilizations. Her relation with David and her liberties with him are ample proof of her mental advancement. In concluding chapters, she thinks about herself:

"Once when she was sneaking back into her room at three o'clock in the morning with her shoes in her hand, she wondered if she was the same girl who had lived inLahore and gone to the Convent of the Sacred Heart."

### **Confident**

Because of American civilization Feroza becomes more independent. Once she was unable to take the decision whether she wanted to act in annual drama of G.C. or not. But in America she changed her university, selected her career, chooses her friends and even took the decision to marry a non-Parsee boy.

### **Linguistic Changes**

When she first got change to have conversation with ordinary people, they thought her very artificial because of her accent and word choice. Jo helped her a lot in improving her pronunciation and made her speak in an accent nearer to the native Americans.

"Jo spent the next Sunday afternoon improving Feroza's pronunciations and taught her to say mayonnaise as "may-nayze" with the accompanying curl of noseand emphasis. She made Feroza practice saying, "Gimme a lemonade. Gimme a soda," and cured her of saying, "May I have this — may I have that? Pretty soon Feroza was saying, "Hey, you goin' to the laundry?Gitme a Coke!"".

We can conclude this discussion of contrast of both civilizations by quoting two opinions of Zareen. These statements show that both the civilizations show that both the civilizations are incomplete contrasting with each other and this thing completely metamorphosed the personality of Feroza:

""She's becoming more and more backward every day."



"I should have listened. I should never have let you go so far away. Look what it's done to you — you've become an American brat!"

**Do you agree to the statement that An American Brat is the work "a funny and memorable novel. Discuss.**

It's 1978 in Pakistan and 16-year-old Feroza Ginwalla, the heroine of this novel *An American Brat*, is beginning to worry her relatively liberal, upper-middle-class Parsee parents.

She won't answer the phone; she tells her mother to dress more conservatively; she sulks, she slams doors, she prefers the company of her old-fashioned grandmother; she seems to sympathize with fundamentalist religious thinking.

What to do? "I think Feroza must get away," says Zareen, the girl's mother, to her husband, Cyrus. "Travel will broaden her outlook, get this puritanical rubbish out of her head." And indeed it does—although to a disastrous degree, from Zareen and Cyrus' point of view, for Feroza's three-month sabbatical with her uncle in Massachusetts turns into a three-year sojourn in many parts of the United States.

By the time Zareen decides, toward the end of the book, to reassert parental control by flying from Lahore to Denver—where Feroza has become a hotel-management student—it's too late. Her daughter is already an "American brat," a woman with a mind and opinions of her own, able to relish the ability to choose.

*An American Brat* is an exceptional novel, one of such interest that the reader's reservations, while significant, are ultimately of little consequence. Bapsi Sidhwa, author of three previous works of fiction and frequently referred to as Pakistan's most prominent English-language novelist, has produced a remarkable sketch of American society as seen and experienced by modern immigrants. America, to Feroza and her Uncle Manek, is in many ways a paradise—as indeed it appears to be for Sidhwa, a Parsee who has lived in the United States for many years—but *An American Brat* is nonetheless a measured portrait, often reassuring and discomfiting at the same time.

It's both wonderful and startling, for example, to hear the fully Americanized Manek say to the newly arrived Feroza, as she grapples with some well-wrapped container, "Remember this: If you have to struggle to open something in America, you're doing it wrong. They've made everything easy. That's how a free economy works." In style, *An American Brat* is nothing like Henry James' *The Ambassadors*, being straightforward, humorous, easygoing and unpoetic. In plot, though, it bears some similarities, with travelers finding themselves unexpectedly transformed by their encounters in a new land. Feroza soon realizes that Manek's years in the United States have changed him: He is now "humbler and, paradoxically, more assured and quietly conceited, more considerate, yet ... tougher, even ruthless."

One of the first things Zareen notices about Feroza at the Denver airport is her gaudy tan: "You'd better bleach your face or something," she tells her daughter, "before you come home." But even Zareen proves vulnerable to America's charms: Although she has come to break up Feroza's engagement to a "non"—a non-Parsee—she glories in the shopping and amenities of Denver life, "as happy as a captive seal suddenly released into the ocean."

Zareen, her American mission at least partially accomplished, returns to Pakistan but wonders momentarily whether she has done the right thing. And that's the issue lying at the

heart of this novel—the competing loyalties immigrants feel toward family, culture, heritage, self.

The problem only flashes through Zareen's mind because she is too old to be fully taken with American ways; Manek can almost ignore the contradiction because, being male, he will be celebrated for living in the United States so long as he takes a Parsee wife.

Feroza, by contrast, feels the brunt of the conflict, newly aware of the severe sexism in Parsee culture—men can marry outside the faith, for instance, while women cannot— and thrilled at the idea of having her own money, her own career, her own identity. Feroza has come to America, she discovers moments after first landing in New York, to be “unself-conscious”—to be free, once and for all, of “the thousand constraints that governed her life.”

An American Brat suffers from a meandering, literal plot and a tone that doesn't distinguish major insights from minor ones. Page by page, though, Sidhwa keeps the reader engaged, for one can never predict which mundane American event she will display in an entirely new light. At the hospital: A Parsee couple is presented with a \$15,000 bill for their daughter's delivery, where-upon the shocked father replies, walking out, “You can keep the baby.” At home: Feroza, gushing over Manek's vast supply of canned frankfurters and sardines, saying, “I could eat this all my life!”

At an expensive restaurant where Manek has sent back half his meal, to Feroza's horror, because he can't possibly pay for it: “If you weren't so proud,” Manek tells his niece, “you wouldn't feel so humiliated, and you'd have enjoyed a wonderful dinner.” He has a point, however twisted, and it's moments like that which make An American Brat a funny and memorable novel.

### **Discuss Sidhwa's art and style of story telling with special reference to American Brat.**

Feroza Ginwalla, a pampered, protected 16-year-old Pakistani girl, is sent to America by her parents, who are alarmed by the fundamentalism overtaking Pakistan — and their daughter. Hoping that a few months with her uncle, an MIT grad student, will soften the girl's rigid thinking, they get more than they bargained for: Feroza, enthralled by American culture and her new freedom, insists on staying.

A bargain is struck, allowing Feroza to attend college with the understanding that she will return home and marry well. As a student in a small western town, Feroza's perceptions of America, her homeland, and herself begin to alter. When she falls in love with and wants to marry a Jewish American, her family is aghast. Feroza realizes just how far she has come — and wonders how much further she can go. This delightful coming-of-age novel is both remarkably funny and a remarkably acute portrayal of America as seen through the eyes of a perceptive young immigrant.

Sidhwa's story opens in the author's birthplace, Pakistan, where Muslim fundamentalism has swayed 16-year-old Feroza Ginwalla, a lively, headstrong child who berates her mother for showing her arms and refuses to answer the telephone - even though the Ginwalla family is Zoroastrian, or Parsee, not Muslim.

Her mother, Zareen, decides to remove Feroza from these influences and sends her to visit her young uncle, Manek, a student in America.

Feroza's arrival in New York, from her humiliating ordeal at Customs, to the whirlwind tour of museums, towering buildings and glittering Fifth Avenue shop windows, to the bag ladies,

derelicts and predatory young men, is a starkly humorous study of extremes.

Before leaving New York Feroza ventures out alone. The reader's sense of danger to this ebullient neophyte diminishes as she successfully negotiates the streets and shops and returns to the YMCA building where she and her uncle are staying. Only to be trapped in the fire stairs 22 stories up. As she loses her bearings, finds every door locked and begins to hear stealthy noises, Feroza succumbs to abject panic.

Chastened by this experience, Feroza wastes most of her visa watching television and eating delicacies like Vienna sausages out of cans. It's Manek who decides she, too, should study in America. To escape his bossiness, Feroza decides on Twin Falls, Idaho.

Feroza's initiation into things American accelerates under the tutelage of Jo, her roommate, who Feroza categorizes as "a 'juvenile delinquent,' a Western, and more specifically, American phenomenon." Jo drinks, curses, shoplifts and picks up men.

Slowly Feroza sorts through American customs, adopting those that suit her, and recognizing Jo's self-destructive behavior and becoming protective of her.

Then she falls in love with an American. At home in Pakistan all hell breaks loose. A Parsee girl who marries out of her religion is ex-communicated (not so, a Parsee man). Although determined not to, it seems Feroza must choose.

Sidhwa's ("Cracking India") style is humorous and turbulent. While sometimes the story seems to digress from its focus - delving more deeply than necessary into Jo's and Manek's lives - vivid details illuminate an appealing heroine's unusual coming of age.

### **Discuss the major features, themes and issues in American Brat.**

In *An American Brat* Sidhwa highlights the predicament of the Pakistani people in general and of the Parsi community in particular. Thus, while in *Ice-Candy-Man* Sidhwa grapples with the realities of the pre-Independence period, in *An American Brat* she highlights the phenomenon of neo-colonialism in Pakistan.

What is most remarkable about her work is her dual perspective, which is based on both the Pakistani and the Parsi point of view. She speaks both for the Pakistanis and the marginalized Parsi community. This theme is further developed in her next novel *An American Brat*, where the Parsi community is shown actively participating in Pakistani politics. Instead of keeping a neutral, detached stance, the Ginwalla family is passionately involved in the country's current political crisis. Zareen at one point voices her concern over her daughter's intense involvement in "Bhutto's trial." Her concern for her daughter, however, does not stop her from working in "many women's committees with Begum Bhutto." Feroza even when she is in America, remains acutely concerned about the crisis in her country. She is totally shocked to hear of Bhutto's hanging. On coming back to Pakistan, she voices her disappointment at being inadequately informed about Pakistan's current political scenario: "I want to know what's going on here. After all, it's my country!" Thus Sidhwa exhibits that the Parsis, both in the pre and post-Independence period, instead of showing indifference to the country's politics, have been actively involved in it.

In *An American Brat*, almost every word and phrase of the native language employed in the novel is translated by the writer in a "Glossary" at the end of the novel. For instance: "Badmash: scoundrel," "Gora; white, in Urdu," "Heejra: eunuch or transvestite." What such a translation of individual words does? Bill Ashcroft et al in *The Empire Writes Back* observe

that such translation of individual words is the most obvious and most common authorial intrusion in cross-cultural texts. Juxtaposing the words in this way suggests that the meaning of a word is its referent. But the simple matching of words from the native language with its translated version in English reveals the general inadequacy of such an exercise. The moment a word from a native language is juxtaposed with its referent in English, instead of clarifying the meaning, it shows the gap between the word and its referent. In *An American Brat*, she voices the social and political chaos in Pakistan generated by the forces of neo-colonialism. In both the novels, she has succinctly adapted the English language to suit her purposes. Further, she has not just provided the marginalized Parsi community with a voice but also a large number of Pakistani readers. *An American Brat* has been extolled by many reviewers as a compelling delineation of both the coming of age process and the immigrant experience in the United States. However, several critics have noted Sidhwa's use of stock social and cultural stereotypes in all of her novels, particularly in *An American Brat*.

The plotting of *An American Brat* has additionally been judged by several reviewers to be weak and predictable, but a majority of critics have found Sidhwa's representation of American culture to be insightful and unique. *An American Brat* (1993). Her lightest and least characteristic novel, it is also, in a strange and subversive way, her most daring, dealing as it does with issues of diaspora and questions of cultural identity and racial difference. In its seemingly innocuous portrayal of the (mis)adventures of its young protagonist Feroza, in the USA, it actually describes the painful process of losing and replacing homes, presenting, in the process, an indirect metaphor for the ambivalent position of so many diasporic writers today. And though its heroine is a Parsi, she could be a young woman of any of the subcontinent's religious communities, choosing between a period of rampant sectarianism at home and the experience of more covert prejudice abroad. With this novel, Bapsi stakes another claim, on Asian American territory; and it isn't surprising that writers like Gish Jen have been quick to write of their own communities in similar ways. The ambiguous, transitional nature of this work convinces me—and many other readers, I'm sure—that another major work is in presently in Bapsi's imaginative laboratory. Meanwhile, this omnibus volume of Bapsi Sidhwa's novels is a welcome addition to the work of the writer who has done so much to put Pakistan on the map of the English-speaking literary world.

In her novel *An American Brat*, Sidhwa deals with the inter-faith marriage in the Parsi community. Feroza Ginwalla the rebellious daughter of Cyrus and Zareen moves to Colorado from Lahore to improve her lot. Sidhwa here shows the protagonist Feroza adapting to an alien culture. Her room mate Joe instructs her into American way of life. Feroza becomes bold enough to shed her hesitation. Now she discovers that she has attained an independent personality and thinking. She no longer needs guardians and protectors. She intends to marry David Press, an American Jew. Her family at Lahore is disturbed as no one had in their family marriage outside the Parsi community. Here Sidhwa's treatment of theme, subject and characters provides a valuable insight into the Parsi psyche. She also provides an ironic exposure of the Parsi attitude to inter-faith marriage. Feroza's mother Zareen later realizes that her attitude towards interfaith marriage is no better than the Mullahs of Pakistan. Sidhwa also touches the problem of fundamentalism in Pakistani society. She does not intend to criticize a community but its orthodoxy and out-dated values. She employs irony to expose fundamentalism. "She criticizes the 'mullah mentality' that 'girls must not play hockey or sing or dance!'" The Parsi community's own brand of fundamentalism."

Bapsi Sidhwa has emerged as a trendsetter in English novel in the Indian subcontinent. She provides insights into the antiquity of the Parsi faith with their tolerance of other beliefs and their cultural values. She lets her readers to know about the Parsi community with their rites,



customs, traditions, beliefs and mannerism. One psychological factor behind the restrictions in Parsi community is the small population and its closed society. As a Parsi, Sidhwa's writings show her quest for the continuation of her community. "She aptly reflects the cultural multiplicity in which she has lived. It is Sidhwa's sexual and excretory candour and depiction of enforced sexual innocence in a touching manner," observes Novy Kapadia. Sidhwa's attempt to show the heart and soul of the Parsi community has been successful. She presents realistically the reaction of the Parsi community towards the question of loyalties and Swaraj. The Parsis have also been presented as culturally hybrids in their faiths and mannerism.

In *An American Brat* there are many experiences that me and my family actually went through personally or heard about after migrating to the United States. Otherwise I would not have dared to write about America. Most other writers who have come here from the subcontinent have not taken that step yet. In retrospect, I am not sure it was such a good idea to attempt to create so many American characters in *An American Brat*. But I wanted to do it. I didn't want to sit in America and write only about the expatriate community here, or about the community I left behind. I could have done that even in Pakistan. I am having new experiences here everyday, and they need to be incorporated in fiction. There is a great dearth of candid writing about our expatriate community here and its experiences with the mainstream American community. So far only Bharati Mukherjee has attempted to write on this theme and has done a good job. But even she has created few American characters. This is not easy to do. I have been here only a few years and don't know American culture very well. Trying to interpret it can be quite dangerous. But American readers have, on the whole, appreciated my attempts, and found my observations about America revealing. Some Indian reviewers, however, have been somewhat offended by the book, and I am not very sure why. Maybe the current antagonisms between the two countries and my Pakistani origins have contributed to this hostility. I was a bit disappointed by this, because I feel myself part of the subcontinent. I don't feel myself "other" from India. In fact, I have been an Indian citizen also.

In her next novel *An American Brat* (1994) Bapsi Sidhwa moves the locale from Pakistan to the United States of America. In it, she takes up the issues like globalization, brain-drain from the third world. "In *An American Brat*, Bapsi Sidhwa handles the change in theme and locale, expertly, with a lot of humour and from a contemporary perspective. This novel marks her entry into the orbit of diasporic fiction in which other South Asian novelists have already made a mark," writes Novy Kapadia. The genius of Bapsi Sidhwa as a writer is better revealed in her novel *An American Brat* which brings out her gift of keen observation, heightened sense of story and character along with her moral vision of her Parsi community. In the narrative of *An American Brat*, the protagonist Feroza Ginwalla the rebellious daughter of Cyrus and Zareen Ginwalla moves from Gulberg, Lahore to Denver, Colorado, U.S.A. with her ambitious hopes and dreams. The novelist delineates the character of Feroza "adapting to an alien culture and the stress that accrues when colliding cultures clash." On many occasions, Feroza finds herself in an awkward situation whom she fails to understand the nuances of a foreign language. Her room mate -Joe teaches her various Americanism. This helps Feroza to grow and make herself fit in a new system. In the last pages of the novel, Feroza has shed her old persona of Lahore and she finds herself a new with an independent attitude. "The perennial Parsi problem of inter-faith marriage arises when Feroza wants to marry David Press, an American Jew. The family assembles at Lahore and treat the situation like a dire emergency. Sidhwa through the guise of humour, shows how elders exert the pressures of conformity and tradition on the youngsters by applying forms of emotional blackmail. Reprimanding a young cousin who defends Feroza's choice of marriage, Grandmother Khutlibai contrived to make her vigorous person look crumpled and close to death while she spoke, so that the spirit of rebellion in Bunny and other youngsters was

nipped in the bud." This novel caused alarm in the Parsi orthodox people.

In her novels, Bapsi Sidhwa also provides a glimpse of her contemporary political condition in Pakistan. In her novel, *An American Brat*, she provides a backdrop to the fundamentalism prevailing in Pakistan during the reign of General Zia. Sidhwa is ironical while discussing the problem of fundamentalism in Pakistan. Sidhwa's indictment of fundamentalism is not restricted only to the Muslim community but also to other communities. She also exposes the parochial attitude and narrow-mindedness of American society. Sidhwa with her astute characterization, positive outlook and humour tackles some of her contemporary problems. Her writings show the cultural multiplicity of which she has been a part. "It is Sidhwa's sexual and excretory candour and depiction of enforced sexual innocence in a touching and humorous manner which also makes her novels unique. The strain of extrovert ribaldry in her work has given a new dimension to sub-continental English fiction...", observe Dhawan and Novy Kapadia. Sidhwa has been a trend-setter in less inhibition and open views on sex Saadat Hussein Manto, Asmat Chughtai.

### **American Brat - Objective-Type Questions with Answers**

#### **1. Write a short note on Bapsi's biography.**

Answer: Bapsi Sidhwa has been called Pakistan's leading English-language novelist. Born in Karachi in 1938, she moved to the United States in 1983. Her first three novels -- *The Crow Eaters*, *The Bride and Ice-Candy-Man* -- take place in her homeland, exploring the post-colonial Pakistani identity. Anita Desai has said that Sidhwa has "a passion for history and for truth telling" -- and this passion is exhibited in each of her first three novels, as she tries to understand the dramatic events leading to the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 and the subsequent birth of Pakistan as a nation.

Her "richly comic" fourth novel, *An American Brat*, looks at the immigrant experience in the United States as she chronicles a young Parsi girl's exposure to American culture in the late 1970s. Sidhwa's short stories and articles have been published in numerous anthologies.

#### **2. What are the major themes of Post-modernism?**

Answer: Post-modernism is a very complex phenomenon. The major themes of this dimension include disintegration, deconstruction, cultural studies, multiculturalism and feminism and many others like these.

#### **3. What is post-colonial literature?**

Answer: Postcolonial literature, sometimes called "New English Literature" is literature concerned with the political and cultural independence of people formerly subjugated in colonial empires, and the literary expression of Postcolonialism.

#### **4. Write a short note on the fictional technique of Bapsi Sidhwa.**

Answer: Bapsi Sidhwa's fiction deals with both the pre and post-colonial period of the subcontinent. Her fiction not only brings to life the horror of the Partition but also vividly portrays the complexities of life in the subcontinent after Independence. What makes her work interesting from the post-colonial point of view is the way in which she re-writes the history of the subcontinent. In *Ice-Candy-Man*, Lenny, the young narrator, in the process of narrating the story of her family re-writes the history of the subcontinent, thereby undercutting the British view of history imposed on the subcontinent. In *American Brat*, Feroza is shown in the process of transformation as a result of cross-cultural ties.

#### **5. What does Bapsi Sidhwa present about gender and community?**

Answer: Sidhwa skillfully links gender to community, nationality, religion, and class,

demonstrating the ways in which these various aspects of cultural identity and social structure do not merely affect or reflect one another, but instead are inextricably intertwined. Since moving to the United States and becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen, Sidhwa has written *An American Brat* (1993), which describes the Americanization of a young Parsi woman.

**6. What are the major themes in *An American Brat*?**

Answer: *An American Brat*, written after Sidhwa immigrated to America, follows a sixteen-year-old Parsi girl named Feroza Ginwalla. Alarmed by the rising fundamentalism of Pakistan in the 1970s, Feroza's mother, Zareen, decides to send Feroza to the United States to stay with her uncle. After an initial culture shock, however, Feroza decides to remain in America as a college student, where she falls in love with a young Jewish man. Feroza also becomes increasingly politicized about such issues as gender, imperialism, and global relations. Zareen, alarmed by Feroza's newly Americanized attitudes, travels to the United States to retrieve her daughter, who Zareen believes has become an "American brat."

**7. What is her understanding of Pakistan as depicted in the novel, '*An American Brat*'?**

Answer: To understand Pakistan, Bapsi Sidhwa appears to suggest, it is necessary to understand the events which led to its emergence as a new nation in 1947. With this always in mind, her wonderfully irreverent first novel begins a lifetime earlier—towards the end of the nineteenth century. It is an unusual passage to India which transports the reader to the heart of the Parsi community, and, as the story progresses, prepares him or her for the end of a significant chapter of history—the birth of Pakistan.

**8. Discuss the major features of Bapsi Sidhwa as a writer of novel.**

Answer: Bapsi Sidhwa has emerged as a leading woman novelist writing in English from Pakistan. In her novels, she shows her concern about her Pakistani roots, culture and the treatment of recent history i.e., Partition. Being a Parsi, she also introduces her Parsi community in her novels. She has a distinctive Parsi ethos in her novels along with her individual voice. She possesses a sense of individualism and humour which makes her writings lively. She also possesses the art of storytelling. Bapsi Sidhwa has emerged as a trendsetter in English novel in the Indian sub-continent. She provides insights into the antiquity of the Parsi faith with their tolerance of other beliefs and their cultural values. She lets her readers to know about the Parsi community with their rites, customs, traditions, beliefs and mannerism. One psychological factor behind the restrictions in Parsi community is the small population and its closed society.

**9. Discuss Bapsi Sidhwa as a realist.**

Answer: Bapsi Sidhwa is a realist to the core. She does not romanticize situations and characters in her narratives. Her novels also provide an interesting and realistic socio-cultural background of her community. She introduces her Parsi character without any distortion or exaggeration. They are true to their colours. Her portrayal of Parsi Characters in her novels is in fact a part of her quest for the continuation of her Parsi identity.

**10. Write a short note on the character of Feroza.**

Answer: Feroza is the heroine of the novel. She is the female protagonist of the novel. The title of the novel is also related to her character. She is called, "An American Brat" in the closing chapters. The whole story revolves around this single character. All other characters whether they are the major or minor incidents are related to her character.

**11. Write a short note on the character of Feroza.**

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closing chapters. The whole story revolves around this single character. All other characters whether they are the major or minor incidents are related to her character.

**12. Discuss Feroza as a round character.**

Answer: Feroza is a round as well as dynamic character. We can conclude it in such a way that it is not the fault of Feroza but the fault of her family who gave her so much independence. She was innocent and did not agree to go to America, but she was sent by her family. Just a sixteen years old girl and such a corrupt and destructive world of America proved horrible. So, the result had to be necessarily as that of Feroza.

**13. Write a very short note on Manek.**

Answer: Manek Ginwalla is an important character of the novel. He is brother of Zareen Ginwalla and uncle of Feroza. He has been in America for the last three years. He is doing chemical engineering there. Manek is a Youngman of about 23 and possesses attractive looks. He can be called a transformed American Sadu because in the last three years, he acquires all the qualities of an American young man. Now he is self-contented, confident, rational, calculated, professional and educated. He has the ability to take decisions instantly and deal with different people differently.

**14. What is your understanding of Manek's character?**

Answer: Then his handling or treatment of Feroza and David's problem was also very nice. Although it was a matter of life and death for Zareen yet Manek remained composed and helped Zareen. So, all these things clearly show that Manek is a transformed pseudoAmerican.

**15. What major cultural differences has Bapsi Sidhwa dealt with in An American Brat?**

Answer: In 'An American Brat', Bapsi Sidhwa seems to be more interested in exploring the horizons of contrast and comparison of Pakistani and American civilizations. For the sake of comparison, Sidhwa has used basically two characters e.g. Protagonist – Feroza and her uncle Manek. This theme is also highlighted in the short stay of Zareen in 'New World'. Both these cultures are different from each other in terms of their religion, geography, nature, rituals, language, temperament, freedom, government, development and the like.

**16. What is Bapsi's attitude towards Pakistanism?**

Answer: The way Sidhwa defends Pakistan, Muslims and Islam, by urging the world to study the causes that lead people to terrorism out of sheer desperation and not by choice or because it is ordained by religion, is the most human and objective argument advanced to address the issue. "And the Americans — the public, students and academics — that I have spoken to on the subject have been extremely forthcoming and understanding," she says glowing with hope. "There has got to be an end to the madness of hate and revenge seeking — sentiments that politicians everywhere stoke to gain political mileage, and America is no exception."

**17. What is Bapsi's attitude towards Americanism?**

Answer: America, to Feroza and her Uncle Manek, is in many ways a paradise—as indeed it appears to be for Sidhwa, a Parsee who has lived in the United States for many years—but An American Brat is nonetheless a measured portrait, often reassuring and discomfiting at the same time. It's both wonderful and startling, for example, to hear the fully Americanized Manek say to the newly arrived Feroza, as she grapples with some well-wrapped container, "Remember this: If you have to struggle to open something in America, you're doing it wrong. They've made everything easy. That's how a free economy works."

**18. Write a note on the stylistic features of American Brat?**



Answer: In style, *An American Brat* is nothing like Henry James' *The Ambassadors*, being straightforward, humorous, easygoing and unpoetic. In plot, though, it bears some similarities, with travelers finding themselves unexpectedly transformed by their encounters in a new land. Feroza soon realizes that Manek's years in the United States have changed him: He is now "humbler and, paradoxically, more assured and quietly conceited, more considerate, yet ... tougher, even ruthless." One of the first things Zareen notices about Feroza at the Denver airport is her gaudy tan: "You'd better bleach your face or something," she tells her daughter, "before you come home." But even Zareen proves vulnerable to America's charms:

**19. Write a note on Sidhwa's main contribution to novel in Pakistan?**

Answer: Bapsi Sidhwa invented English-language fiction in Pakistan. Unlike India, from which Pakistan was carved, the country had no established literary tradition in English. Urdu was the official language, and many would have preferred that the former colonizers' language disappear altogether.

**20. What is the major issue that Bapsi Sidhwa highlights in *An American Brat*?**

Answer: In *An American Brat* Sidhwa highlights the predicament of the Pakistani people in general and of the Parsi community in particular. Thus, while in *Ice-Candy-Man* Sidhwa grapples with the realities of the pre-Independence period, in *An American Brat* she highlights the phenomenon of neo-colonialism in Pakistan. What is most remarkable about her work is her dual perspective, which is based on both the Pakistani and the Parsi point of view. She speaks both for the Pakistanis and the marginalized Parsi community.

**21. What does Bapsi Sidhwa tell us about her biography?**

Answer: I graduated from Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore-and at nineteen I got married in Bombay. That brought a wonderful change to my life. I was brought up in a very strict home. We Parsis adopt the flavor of whichever country we are in, we have to, and the atmosphere in my house was segregated. When my brother's friends came, I was told, "You better disappear," --that sort of thing. So, I had no idea who I was or what I was. Then, when I got married and went to Bombay, it was traumatic-I was plucked out of childhood and thrust into big-city life and straight into adulthood. At the same time, the move opened up the world to me, and I was, for the first time, surrounded by my own community of Parsis, which was an enchanting thing.

**2. Novel "*Ice-Candy-Man*" by Bapsi Sidhwa**

**Ice-Candy-Man: An Introduction**

The novel *Cracking India* (first published as *Ice-Candy-Man* in 1980), by Bapsi Sidhwa, explores the civil war that occurred during the Partition of India in 1947. The political and social upheaval engendered by independence and Partition included religious intolerance that led to mass violence, killings, mutilations, rapes, dismemberments, and the wholesale slaughter of infants, children, men, and women, along with the displacement of millions of refugees—Hindus fleeing to India and Muslims fleeing to Pakistan.

Told from the first-person perspective of Lenny Sethi, a Parsee child who is about 4 years old when the novel begins and approximately 10 years old at the end, the novel portrays the complicated and shifting political and social ramifications of the Partition of India into two countries: a Hindu-majority India and a Muslim-majority Pakistan. Lenny and her family attempt to quietly endure the partition that transforms Lahore, India into Lahore, Pakistan in August 1947.

Simultaneously, the novel operates as a coming-of-age novel delineating the parallel growth and formation of identity within the protagonist, Lenny, and the country, Pakistan. Both suffer severe growing pains, as Lenny's child-like vision becomes a quickly-maturing voice reporting upon the violence she witnesses, the many friends who are lost, the friends who are betrayed by their former friends and neighbors due to religious differences, and the terrible human cost of dividing one country into two along brutally enforced religious lines. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and Parsees all vie for survival.

As a minority group, the Parsee people first seek alliance with other ethnic groups to help protect them, but then quickly resolve to stay on the sidelines of the growing battle, hoping to hide in plain sight. In fact, Lenny's idyllic childhood, during the first third of the novel, serves as an idealistic backdrop, displaying the ethnic and religious harmony that existed in Lahore prior to the independence and Partition of India. Lenny's pampered, secure childhood mirrors the peace that precedes the slaughter of Partition. This peaceful coexistence highlights the later terrors of religious intolerance. In this way, Sidhwa unfolds the macrocosm of the civil war through the microcosm of Lenny's life.

Other parallels also link private life with the larger world. Lenny's nursemaid, Ayah, attracts a multi-ethnic crowd of admirers that mirrors the complex ethnic compositions of both India and Pakistan. The breakdown of Pakistani and Indian society into violent ethnic and religious groups mirrors the breakdown of the previously harmonious relationships between ethnicities and religions in Lenny's world.

The novel's themes explore human understanding of being both a social insider and a social outsider depending upon a person's caste, religion, ethnicity, and economic status. It also examines the experience of being handicapped; the effects of religious and racial conflicts; the subjugation of women through arranged child marriages and prostitution; obsessions with sexuality; and the dangers of politically-motivated violence. By using a child for the novel's narrative voice and perceptions, Sidhwa confronts the histories of India and Pakistan and their social, historical, and political complexities with humor and compassion.

However, Lenny's childhood contains many horrors once Partition occurs. These horrors culminate with the ultimate dreadfulness of her own betrayal of her beloved Ayah to the Ice-candy-man and his Muslim thugs. Even her family is confounded by her action; she can barely forgive herself.

The last third of the novel demonstrates the united efforts of Lahori women, across ethnic and religious lines, to repair some of the damage perpetrated during Partition and its aftermath. Since parents hide painful truths from their children, and Lenny has proven that she cannot be trusted, Lenny's mother hides her own secret work, which involves dangerous, illegal trade on the black market to earn money used to rescue women from enforced prostitution and sex slavery. Lenny only learns about this work near the end of the novel, when her Godmother demonstrates her power and authority by locating and stealing Ayah back from the Ice-candy-man. Lenny's mother's work enables them to send Ayah back home to her family in Amritsar, India. Perhaps the novel's most hopeful sign for the future of Pakistan is that these women come together to help one another, regardless of ethnicity or religion.

Lenni is an eight year old Parsi girl who leads a comfortable life with the four members of her family before the Partition of India in Lahore. Lenni regularly goes for walks with her

Hindu Ayah Shanta. The Queen's garden near her house is their favourite place. Lenny limps on one leg and her parents are worried about her. Dr. Bharucha puts plaster on the leg a number of times but each time the results are not upto the mark. Even surgery hasn't helped much. Dr. Bharucha assures the parents of Lenny that with the passage of time, Lenny will walk normally.

The novel Ice-Candy-Man presents people from all communities —the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Parsis living in Lahore before Partition. 'Bapsi Sidhwa here introduces the device of child-narrator. Lenny, the eight year old girl narrates the events around her from a child's point of view. The novelist also shows the child growing, becoming more conscious about the changing environment around her. Sidhwa introduces the readers to characters like Shanta the Ayah, Imamdin the cook, the IceCandy-Man Dilnawaz and Hassan Ali, his cousin brother. At the moment, people in undivided India are seen engaged in the Quit-India Movement, and on the other hand, the Muslim League motivates the Muslim Community to raise a demand for a separate nation for the Muslims. Often the slogans of 'Pakistan Zindabad' are heard in the streets but the communal harmony is intact. One day, one British police officer Rogers and Mr. Singh a neighbour of Lenny visit the house on dinner. They begin to quarrel on trifles. This hot exchange of words is in fact a glimpse and foreshadow of the coming conflicts in the near future. People have started discussions on the possibility of Pakistan and the minorities begin to plan for shifting to safer places. It foreshadows the communal riots between the Hindus and Muslims.

One day, riots break out in Lahore in a locality far away from Lenny's house. This leads to the killing of innocent people on both the sides. The news of bloodshed spreads like wild fire. The All India Radio also reports about cases of violence from different parts of India. Soon the entire Punjab province is seen burning in the fire of hatred and communal violence. Dilnawaz, the Ice-Candy-Man waits for his sisters on Lahore railway station. When the train arrives from Gurdaspur, everyone on the platform is shocked to see the ghastly sight. The Train is loaded with mutilated bodies of Muslim passengers. This shocks everyone and the friendly Dilnawaz turns into a person possessed with a frenzy and a desire to kill the Hindus. He also abducts his friend Shanta, the Ayah of Lenny and later takes her to Hira Mandi of Lahore, a locality of prostitutes.

Ice-Candy-Man loved Shanta from the core of his heart but now she is a Hindu for him. Vengeance has transformed him into a killer and a beast. Later with the help of Lenny's relatives, Shanta is rescued and she reaches the relief camp at Amritsar. Lenny's delicate mind is shocked to see all this. The Parsee community remains neutral during this time. Lenny's life becomes a nightmare. She realizes that her Muslim neighbours will not spare the lives of non-Muslims anymore. There have been a number of incidents where the Muslims burn alive the non-Muslims. These traumatic incidents leave a damaging impact on the sensitive person like Ice-Candy-Man, and he loses his sanity and poise. He begins to roam about in the streets of Lahore to avenge the death of his Muslim friends. Communalism and the narrow feelings of caste and creed put on a cloak of greed, meanness and hatred which leads to violence and destruction on the large scale.

### Character-Sketches in Ice-Candy-Man

The narrative revolves around the character of Ice-Candy-Man who is a loving person. He is in love with the ayah of Lenny. He is a man of varied interests. During winters when the sales of ice-candies decrease, he becomes a birdman. He plays a number of roles to amuse people. He speaks on politics of his days and imitates them. He is then transformed into "a metamorphosed character adopting a poetic mould, confessing that he belongs to 'Kotha'—the royal misbegottens located in Hira Mandi. After the riots, ice-candy-man saves the ayah and later she is sent to Amritsar with her parents. The ice-candy man remains a

lovelorn lover. Jagdev Singh shows that through the Ice-Candy-Man, Sidhwa shows the changing patterns of communal discord:

The change from the pattern of communal discord to that of reconciliation is, however, traced in the person of the Ice-candy man. Though his role in the cataclysmic event of Partition is painted in lurid colours, his growing passion and love for Ayah is shown to redeem him from the morass of senseless communal hatred. From a rough and rustic man, always ready to nudge Ayah the IceCandy Man becomes a person of refined sensibility; he steepers him self in poetry.

When Ayah is wrenched away from him and sent to Amritsar, he follows her across the border. That the Ice-Candy-Man is willing to leave the land, that he so much cherishes, for the sake of his Hindu beloved, is not only an example of self-sacrifice but also symbolic of a future rapprochement between the two warring communities—the Muslims and Hindus. Though Bapsi Sidhwa shows the possibility of the emergency of a harmonious pattern of communal relations between the Hindus and Muslims sometimes in the future, yet she leaves much unsaid about how the change in the Ice-Candy-Man's personality comes about.

Thus, the novel Ice-Candy-Man shows how the 'raw emotions in simple people can transform them into extremists. Their perception of outer reality is different from those who manipulate things to suit to their selfish interests. The novelist shows the impact of the trauma and shocking sights which the Ice-Candy-Man witnesses. He sets out to avenge the genocide of his Muslim brothers. The novel like other novels of Partition emerges as a compelling study of character and event, irrespective of caste bias and religious affinity.

The story of the novel revolves around this central character. He belongs to Hira Mandi of Lahore, the streets of the dancing girls. His mother had been one of them and his early years shaped his personality according to his tastes. He is a jolly and friendly person. He is a gifted poet, rather poetic in his interaction with others. He would recite a couplet from Urdu poetry whenever required. He is an ardent lover of the Hindu Ayah of Lenny. He is a regular visitor of Lenny's house for Ayah's sake. He is fascinated by the charm and beauty of Ayah. In summers, he sells icecandy and in winters, he becomes a birds-man who sells sparrows and birds.

The first half of the novel presents the Ice-Candy-Man as a jovial and life-loving person. He is known for his warmth and good-nature. This is one side of his personality. One incident transforms the peace-loving ice-candy man into a selfish man and a savage. He happens to be on the Lahore railway station when the train arrives from Gurdaspur. It doesnot carry passengers but dead bodies of Muslims. There are no women but bags full of chopped female breasts.

This barbaric scene shocks him and he loses his sanity. He runs in the streets of Lahore to avenge the death of Muslims. During the riots, he takes active part in killing Hindus and Sikhs the worst part comes later. He joins a mob of Muslim goondas looking for Hindus. They stop in front of Lenny's house and enquire about the Hindu Ayah. The faithful servant Imam Din lies by saying that she has left for Amritsar. But Just then, Ice-Candy Man comes forward and asks Lenny about Ayah. Lenny out of her innocence points towards the right direction. Ice-Candy man's trick works. They drag Ayah from inside and is forcefully abducted. It is only after a couple of weeks that IceCandy-Man marries her. But the damage has been done. Ayah is raped by many persons for days and now she has to stay in the locality of prostitutes of Hira Mandi.

Lenny realizes the consequences of telling a bare truth. She is filled with a deep sense of



remorse and repentance. She even injures her tongue for telling the bitter truth. Now Ice-CandyMan also realizes his mistake. He wants to make her happy but she is heart-broken. She tells Godmother of Lenny that she wants to go to Amritsar. Later, she is sent to Amritsar and IceCandy-Man too crosses the Wagah border behind her. He has become a wandering woe-begone lover looking for his beloved. The story of the novel shows how racial identity and religious orientation can play havoc with the life of a person like Ice-Candy-Man.

## **2. Lenny**

Lenny is the child-narrator in the novel. She is just like Chaucer's persona in telling the stories. This device of narrator has been extensively used in modern fiction. Lenny is the daughter of a Parsee gentleman and she suffers from a limp in one leg. Even after surgery, conditions don't improve. She lives in a close and compressed world. She is a keen observer. Her physical movement is restricted due to her infirmity. It is only her Hindu Ayah Shanta who is her true companion. When Shanta is abducted, she feels herself Ayah less and alone in the world.

The novel also shows the child Lenny growing from a child into a young woman. Bapsi Sidhwa records even the small details in Lenny's life. In fact, Lenny is like a projector through which one is able to see the internal world of Lenny and her response to external reality in a magnified form. On many occasions, her immersion in thoughts look similar to that of Stephen in *A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man*. The narration of the story is in the first person and Lenny takes the readers into her private and intimate world. The novel is also a tale of Lenny's disillusionment and failure to reconcile with external reality which is bitter and unbearable.

## **3. Shanta, the Ayah**

Shanta is the Hindu Ayah of Lenny who works in the house of a Parsee family in Lahore. She is sharp, beautiful and responsible. She is Lenny's mentor and guide in this harsh world. Ayah has a number of admirers. Irrespective of religion, they all adore her. The communal riots in Lahore also transform Ayah. She becomes an easy victim and is raped by angry Muslims. Later she is married by Ice-Candy-Man and he keeps her in Hira Mandi, the place of dancing girls. IceCandy-Man has killed her soul and her warmth is gone. Now he tries his best but his betrayal of his beloved has burnt their world of dreams and romance.

When Lenny and her Godmother visit Shanta (now Mumtaz) in Hira Mandi, Lenny is shocked to see her. She observes: "Where have the radiance and the animation gone? Can the soul be extracted from its living body? Her vacant eyes are bigger than ever: wide-opened with what they have seen and felt."

Ice-Candy-Man pleads before Godmother: "Please persuade her ... Explain to her... I will keep her like a queen... like a flower... I will make her happy." With this, he starts weeping, but Mumtaz has decided not to stay in Hira Mandi anymore. She asks Godmother to send her to Amritsar with her relatives. Godmother is a very influential lady and after a few days, Ayah is sent to Amritsar. This separation leaves Ice-Candy-Man heart-broken and forlorn like Pareekutti in T.S. Pillai's novel *Chemmeen*. The novel ends on a sad note.

## **MINOR CHARACTER**

There are a number of characters in the narrative of Ice-Candy-Man like Lenny's cousin, Lenny's Godmother, Imam Din the cook, Hari the gardener, the Masseur, Dr. Bharucha, Mr. Rodgers, Adi Lenny's Godbrother, Ranna the village boy from Pir Pindo, Mrs. Pen, Sher Singh, Dost Mohammad, Yousaf and Butcher. They are parts of Lenny's world. Bapsi Sidhwa, is at her best while delineating character sketches with their aspirations, moods and frustrations. Everything that happens to them is perceived and felt through the eyes of the child-narrator

Lenny. Characterization in Ice-Candy-Man is superb with psychological insight into human behaviour and human nature. Sidhwa also shows how a feeling of communal hatred transforms good people like ice-candy-man into savages.

### **Ice-Candy-Man: A Brief Summary**

Bapsi Sidhwa's novel Ice-Candy Man deals with the partition of India and its aftermaths. This is the first novel by a woman novelist from Pakistan in which she describes about the fate of people in Lahore. The novel opens with the verse of Iqbal from his poem 'Complaint to God', with this, the child-narrator Lenny is introduced. She is lame and helpless. She finds that her movement between Warris Road and Jail Road is limited. She sees the Salvation Army wall with ventilation slits which makes her feel sad and lonely. The narration is in the first person. Lenny lives on Warris Road. The novelist describes about the localities in Lahore through the Childnarrator. Lenny observes: "I feel such sadness for the dumb creature I imagine lurking behind the wall." Lenny is introvert and she is engrossed in her private world.

One day, Lenny is in her pram, immersed in dreams as usual. Her Ayah attends to her. Suddenly an Englishman interrupts them and he asks Ayah to put Lenny down from her pram. But Ayah explains to him about Lenny's infirmity. Lenny is a keen observer. She has seen how people are fascinated with the Hindu Ayah's gorgeous body. She notices how even beggars, holymen, old people and the young men adore her for her feminine grace.

Colonel Bharucha is Lenny's doctor. He is a surgeon. Lenny is brought to the hospital for her limp in one leg. In the first, attempt, plaster on Lenny's leg is removed but still she limps. Soon a new plaster is cast over her leg. Lenny cries out of pain but her mother takes care of her.

Dr. Bharucha's surgery pains Lenny as she has become bed-ridden. The news of Lenny's operation spreads in small Parsi community of Lahore and she has visitors but she cries for Godmother. Lenny lying on the bed observes keenly the reaction of visitors and her parents. After one month, Lenny is allowed to be taken in a stroller outside her house. Her eighteen year old Ayah Shanta takes her to a zoo.

Lenny's Ayah Shanta has a number of admirers. Ice-Candy-Man is among her admirers. Another companion of Lenny is her electric-aunt, a widow. She also picks up a brother. His name is Adi and Lenny calls him Sissy. He goes to school and Lenny studies at home. When winter comes, Ice-Candy-Man turns into a birdman and in the streets of Lahore, he is seen with birds. Rich ladies give him money for these poor birds to be freed. Ice-Candy-Man is a chatter-box and he can talk on any topic.

One day, the Parsi community assembles in the community hall in the Parsi temple. Two priests prepare for the worship of fire. Lenny observes everything with curiosity. Then the meeting of the Parsi community begins on their stand on Swaraj. Col. Bharucha holds the mike and apprises all -about the latest political developments. After discussions and questions, all agree to observe the middle path—to observe and see. They will not be with the Indian nationalists to oppose the Raj. They fail to come out of their dilemma.

The Ayah takes care of the helpless child Lenny like a sister. Lenny's mother too loves her.

A portion of Lenny's house is lent to the Shankars who are newly married. Shankar's wife Gita is seen welcoming him in the evening. The children observe this couple with curiosity. Gita is a good cook and a good story-teller. She is popular with children. The reader is now introduced to Hari, the gardner, Imam Din, the cook of Lenny's house. Here one finds focus on the character of Imam din. He is sixty five years old. He is "tall, big-bellied, barrel-chested

and robust." Imam Din likes to play with children in his spare time. One day Imam Din takes Lenny to his village on his bicycle. Lenny observes every thing keen on her way to the village. There she meets children Ranna and his sisters Khatija and Parveen. This is the village Pir Pindo where Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims live peacefully. Villagers have assembled beneath a huge sheesham tree to discuss about the situation in other cities like Bihar and Bengal. They feel disturbed over the news of Hindu Muslim riots. The villagers blame the British government for 'inaction in the wake of communal riots. The Chaudhry of Pir Pindo assures them about the safety of everyone in the village if riots break out. Later Lenny and Imam Din return to Lahore.

Ayah has now two more admirers—achinaman and the Pathan. They are fascinated by her feminine grace. They visit Lenny's house daily to talk to her. Lenny doesnot go to school. She goes to Mrs. Pen for her studies. Her house is next to Lenny's Godmother's house on Jail Road— opposite to Electric-aunt's house. Ayah accompanies Lenny to Mrs. Pen's house. After tuition, Lenny goes to her Godmother's house for sometime. One day Mahatma Gandhi visitsLahore. Lenny goes to see Gandhijee with her mother. She is surprised to see him because she has always taken him to be a mythic figure only. Gandhi jee blesses them all and advises them to follow the enema-therapy. Lenny fails to understand as to why people call him a saint. To her, he appears to be 'half clown and half-demon'.

Now it is April and Lahore is getting warmer day by day. Ice-Candy-Man finds his business prospering. By now it has become clear that India is going to be broken. Muslim league wants Pakistan to Muslims. Imam Din, the cook at Lenny's house is worried over the news of communal riots and plans a visit to his village Pir Pindo. Lenny insists to join him on his trip to the village. She still cherishes the memory of her earlier visit to Pir Pindo. On Baisakhi, they visit the Dera Tek Singh near the village. Dost Mohammad joins them. They enjoy the mela and the feast. Now people apprehend trouble. One day the relatives of Imam Din arrive in Lahore to stay with him. They are accommodated in Servant's quarters. Military trucks arrive in Pir Pindo to evacuate Muslims to safer places but the Muslim peasants are confused. They can't leave their home, property and harvest all of a sudden. Mr. Roger's mutilated body is found in the gutters. He was the Inspector General of Police. This news sends shivers among the people of Lahore. Children including Lenny find it a strange incident. Ayah loves Masseur's songs and Ice-CandyMan loves Ayah for her blooming youth. Ice-Candy-Man is disturbed over the developments in the nearby areas. People start moving to safer places. Riots begin and this leads to confusion among people.

Communal riots spread from towns to small villages like Pir Pindo. Muslims and Sikhs become enemies thirsting for each other's blood. In Lahore, people begin to move to safer places. Hindus and Sikhs leave their houses behind and reach Amritsar. People hear announcements on All India Radio about the division of districts into India and Pakistan. The Parsee community in Pakistan is safe but still worried about its future. Muslim mobs attack Hindu houses. A mob stops outside Lenny's house and enquire about its Hindu servants. They ask about the Hindu Ayah Shanta but the cook Imam Din tells them about her fake departure. Ice-Candy-Man comes forward and asks Lenny about Ayah. Out of innocence, Lenny discloses about her hiding. The angry Muslims drag her out of Lenny's house. This shocks Lenny and she repents for her truthfulness. A truth can also ruin one's life, Lenny discovers. Ice-Candy-Man takes her to Hira Mandi, the bazars of prostitutes. Ice-Candy-Man's mother was also a prostitute and Ice-CandyMan becomes a pimp. He is fond of reciting Urdu poetry.

In Pir Pindo village, Sikh crowds attack the Muslim community. Imam Din's family is in trouble but nothing can be done. There is confusion. Muslims in Pir Pindo village get killed and their women gang-raped. Children are butchered mercilessly. Ranna, the playmate of



Lenny in Pir Pindo is also wounded and buried under the heap of dead bodies. After some time, he safely moves to other place. His journey of hide and seek has been dealt with in detail by Bapsi Sidhwa. Sidhwa narrates Ranna's ordeal of escape in full fifteen pages. A little boy wounded and shocked, running for life finds suddenly himself alone in the world. Earlier, it had been decided that the women and girls of Pir Pindo would gather at Chaudhry's house and pour the kerosene oil around the house to burn themselves. It was also decided to hide some boys and men in a safer place but nothing worked. Muslims are killed, women molested and children butchered. Only Ranna escapes and finds shelter in a camp in Lahore. When he reached Lahore, he observed, "It is funny. As long as I had to look out for myself, I was all right. As soon as I felt safe, I fainted." Before reaching the camp, Ranna had a tough time: "There were too many ugly and abandoned children like him scavenging in the looted houses and the rubble of burnt-out buildings. His rags clinging to his wounds, straw sticking in his scalped skull, Ranna wandered through the lanes stealing chapatties and grain from houses strewn with dead bodies, rifling the corpses for anything he could use ... No one minded the semi-naked spectre as he looked in doors with his knowing, wideset peasant eyes." Later, Ranna was herded into a refugee camp at Badami Baugh. Then "chance united him with his Noni chachi and Iqbal chacha."

After the abduction of Ayah by the Muslim mob, Lenny remains sad and dejected. She is shocked over the betrayal by Ice-Candy-Man. She finds him to be a changed man. The day he saw the mutilated bodies of his Muslim brethren, he became a different person. His beloved Ayah becomes a Hindu for him. "They drag Ayah out. They drag her by her arms stretched taut, and her bare feet that want to move backwards—are forced forward instead." This sight proves to be traumatic for poor Lenny and she repents for telling the truth to Ice-Candy-Man. She is guilt-driven: "For three days I stand in front of the bathroom mirror staring at my tongue. I hold the vile, truth—infected thing between my fingers and try to wrench it out: but slippery and slick as a fish it slips from my fingers and mocks me with its sharp rapier tip darting as poisonous as a snake. I punish it with rigorous scouring from my prickling toothbrush until it is sore and bleeding." This act of Lenny shows her sense of guilt. There has been Papoo's marriage but Lenny feels lonely without Ayah. By now Lenny has become mature both in body and mind.

Lenny's Godmother is an influential lady. She loves Lenny, she has established a network of espionage in Lahore. She has information from each corner of Lahore. One day, Lenny's cousin comes with a news that he has seen the Ayah in a taxi dressed like a film actress. After a few days, Lenny too sees Ayah in a car. Now she tells everyone about it and the search for Ayah begins. One Monday, Lenny visits her Godmother's house to tell her about the Ayah. She is told about the Ayah's husband's visit to Godmother's house in the evening. Lenny finds it difficult to wait for the evening. At six o'clock, the bridegroom of Ayah arrives. He is none but Ice-Candy-Man, now dressed in flowing white muslin. He recites a verse from Urdu poetry and greets everyone. He informs that she is married to him and has been accepted in the family of dancers. Godmother scolds him for ill-treating Ayah and let her be raped. But he confesses: I am a man! Only dogs are faithful! If you want faith, let her marry a dog." But Godmother reacts wildly by saying: "You have permitted your wife to be disgraced! Destroyed her modesty! Lived off her womanhood! And you talk of princes and poets! You're the son of pigs and pimps!" Ice-Candy-Man weeps and cries but asserts that now he will make her happy by all means. Lenny has been listening to all this. She is angry with Ice-Candy-Man to such an extent that: 'There is a suffocating explosion within my eyes and head. A blinding blast of pity and disillusion and a savage rage. My sight is disoriented. I see Ice-Candy-Man float away in a bubble and dwindle to a grey speck in the aftermath of the blast.'

Ice-Candy-Man stands there with Jinnah—cap in his hand and "his ravaged face, caked with



mud, has turned into a tragedian's mask. Repentance, grief and shock are compressed into the mould of his features." Then, Godmother plans a visit to see Ayah, now Mumtaz after her marriage. Lenny insists of going with her to Hira Mandi. They reach Hira Mandi in a tonga. They are led in a well-decorated room with the fragrance of sprinkled flowers. Ice-Candy-Man brings his Mumtaz, the Ayah dressed as a bride before them. Lenny is shocked to see sadness in Ayah's eyes. Lenny observes: "Where have the radiance and the animation gone? Can the soul be extracted from its living body? Her vacant eyes are bigger than ever: wide-opened with what they have seen and felt... She, buries her head in me and buries me in all her finery; and in the dark and musky attar of her perfume."

Leaving Ayah with Godmother and Lenny, Ice-Candy-Man goes to fetch tea. Now Ayah pleads that she will not live, here anymore and she must go. Godmother asks her to think over it again but Ayah (Mumtaz) insists of going back to her relatives in Amritsar. The visitors return after assuring Ayah that she will be rescued.

Lenny's cousin asks her about a Kotha and her impression of it. Lenny understands by Kotha to be a place of dancing girls. By now Lenny also understands that "the potent creative force generated within the Kotha that has metamorphosed Ice-CandyMan not only into a Mogul Courtier, but into a Mandi poet. No wonder he founds poetry as if he popped out of his mother's womb spouting rhyming sentences."

After her visit to Hira Mandi, Godmother contacts the government machinery. One day a police party comes to Hira Mandi and takes Ayah away from. Ice-Candy-Man. She is put at the Recovered Women's Camp on Warris Road which is well-guarded. Ice-Candy-Man visits the camp to see his beloved but is beaten up badly by the Sikh sentry. Now Ice-Candy-Man has become a dejected, wandering lover searching for his lost love. He has acquired a new aspect: "that of a moonstruck fakir who has renounced the world for his beloved." Ice-Candy-Man places flowers for Ayah over the wall of the camp every morning and his "voice rises in sweet and clear song to shower Ayah with poems." This routine of offering of flowers and singing of love songs continues for many days.

One day, Lenny learns that Ayah has been shifted to Amritsar with her family there. Ice-Candy-Man has also followed her across the Wagah border into India to pursue his love. The novel ends on this sad and tragic note. The novel contains a number of poignant scenes along with scenes of murder and violence. "The novel is a masterful work of history as it relates political events through the eyes of a child. "Ice-Candy-Man has also been called as a multifaceted jewel of a novel. The novel deals with "the bloody partition of India through the eyes of a girl Lenny growing up in a Parsee family, surviving through female bonding and rebellion."

### **An analysis of Bapsi Sidhwa's novel 'Ice Candy-Man'**

#### **About Bapsi Sidhwa:**

Bapsi Sidhwa, a well-known Pakistani Parsi author, has carved out an excellent position for herself in the literary world today. She has demonstrated that her experience as a member of a small Parsi community in Pakistan, far from being an obvious stumbling block in her creative process, provides her with enough to appreciate her gift. It has given her a distinct sense of 'detached attachment' to her country and its people, she believes. Her creative journey, which began with *The Crow-Eaters* (1978), has progressed with pieces such as *Pakistani Bride* (1983), *Ice-Candy-Man* (1988), and *An American Brat* (1989). (1994).

#### **Ice Candy-Man:**

*Ice-Candy-Man/Cracking India* (1988), Bapsi Sidhwa's third and most acclaimed and

extensively quoted novel, is one of the most powerful narratives of recent times. Through the eyes of an eight-year-old crippled girl named Lenny, the novel recounts one of the most pivotal times in India and Pakistan's history—Partition— in a very captivating way. "The novel is an imaginative response to the traumatic events of India's Partition in 1947, and Sidhwa has used surrealistic techniques to make it an adequate symbol for the effect of external events on human beings," writes Tariq Rahman in a review. "Ice-Candy-Man is a novel in which heartbreak coexists with slapstick... and jokes give way to lines of glowing beauty ("the moonlight descends like a layer of ashes over Lahore")," writes Sliashi Tharoor, a prominent columnist and author. The author's ability to realistically bring a variety of personalities to life is impressive.

Bapsi Sidhwa has given us a memorable work, one that affirms her position as Pakistan's finest English language novelist, by reducing the Partition to the views of a polio-ridden child, a girl who wants to pull out her tongue since it is unable to lie." 'Lenny's growth from childhood to adolescent parallels India's struggle for independence from Britain and the country's partition into India and Pakistan. The intricately linked narratives provide tremendous meaning to each other. 'Partially as a result of' Lenny is from a Parsi family, a religious and ethnic minority that has remained largely neutral in post-Partition religious strife. She knows individuals of various nationalities and religions in Lahore and beyond. More importantly, she has access to a wide range of perspectives, both pre- and post-Partition, thanks to her Ayah, a beautiful woman with a wide range of suitors from many ethnic and religious backgrounds. Little Lenny watches the clamorous horrors of Partition from the lap of her lovely Ayah, or holding her skirts as Ayah is followed by her suitors through the fountains, cypresses, and marble terraces of the Shalimar Gardens. The year is 1947. Lenny resides in Lahore with her large Parsi family, which includes her Mother, Father, Brother Adi, Cousin, Electric-Aunt, Godmother, and Slavesister. Butcher, the puny Sikh zoo attendant, the Government House gardener, the favoured Masseur, the restaurant-owning wrestler, and the shady Ice-Candy-Man— Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, friends and neighbors— are working for them or panting after Ayah until their ribald, everyday world disintegrates before the violence of religious hatred.

### **The Plot:**

The plot is around Lenny's passionate love for Ayah and the loss of innocence that comes with their developing relationship as the Partition progresses. The work is also about Lenny's interactions with her mother, her domineering Godmother, and her sexually invasive cousin. Polio is a crucial early plot line for Lenny. The shifting relationship of Lenny's parents, the death of a British official, Raima's tragic story, and the child marriage of Papoo, the much-abused daughter of one of Lenny's family's workers, are all small but interesting subplots.

### **Symbols:**

In this symbolic novel, Sidhwa's concentration is not so much on the tale as it is on the narrative strategies, which all add to the overall effect of the work. The first- person present-tense narration is the most common. When the events described occur, Lenny is—or was—a child, and the events are perceived through her consciousness, with the present tense conveying immediacy and a sense of simultaneity between past and present. The narrator learns a lot about human deceit by the end of both stories, mostly via the influence of external circumstances. Lenny learns about the perverse nature of romantic human desires through her cousin, who pursues her with a zeal only equaled by Ice-Candy- pursuit Maiv's of Ayah. The slaughter of Hindus in Lahore and Muslims in Punjab by Sikhs exemplifies how religious fanaticism can engender hatred and bloodshed. The story of Lenny's buddy Ranna, a horrifying picture of the human crimes that can be performed when all civilized restraints are removed through external circumstances or political propaganda, reflects the dehumanizing impact of community riots.

### **Main Character:**

Bapsi Sidhwa chose Lenny, a polio-infected, precocious child, as the novel's narrator because she allows her to recount the events leading up to the horrific Partition riots with maximum objectivity and without an air of propaganda. She also comes from a Parsi family, thus she is free of any religious or ethnic prejudice. She, like most children her age, has a tongue infected with the truth. In many ways, she mirrors her creator, who suffered from severe polio, which limited her usual movement and forced her to spend the most of her infancy under the care of an Ayah, busy tenderly nursing her world of exquisite romances. Bapsi was the same age when the country was divided into two and witnessed the Partition riots firsthand. "I was a child then," she recalls. Even at the age of seven, the foreboding roar of faraway crowds was a constant in my awareness, exposing me to a visceral feeling of the evil that was taking place in various sections of Lahore. My heart was ripped by the brilliance of fires beneath the push of smoke, which stained the horizon in a perpetual sunset. The brutality of partition eclipsed the British departure and the long-awaited independence of the subcontinent for many of us." The events of Partition had left an indelible impression on Bapsi's psyche, prompting her to unburden herself from the traumatic events of those days. In actuality, Lenny is the personae, expressing the author's inner desire. "I'm establishing a sort of truthful witness, whom the reader can believe," Bapsi Sidhwa explains why she chose Lenny as the novel's narrator. Lenny is maturing at the same time, learning, experiencing, and arriving to her own opinions." Though it may seem risky to associate the narrator with the author, the parallels between the two at various points in the narrative appear to be deliberate rather than coincidental, because the novel is as much about personal history as it is about memory and imagination. As she reveals in an interview, "the scene where people ride into the house to kidnap Ayah did happen in real life, although I have fictionalized it," the author has no concealment about her relationship with the narrator.

Lenny is the protagonist in *Ice-Candy Man*. Her story begins in her fifth year and finishes after she turns eight. "She passes pushing my pram with the unconcern of the Hindu goddess she worships," she recounts her first conscious memory of her Ayah. She also recalls her home on Lahore's Warris Road, and how she used to seek refuge in her Godmother's "one-and-a-half room abode" to escape the "gloom" and "perplexing unrealities" of home. Her own polio, which she uses as a shield against a "pretentious world," her mother's extravagance, her father's disapproval of it, and her attempt to fill the "infernal silence" during her father's "mute meals" by "offering laughter and longer chatter" ("Is that when I learned to tell tales?") are among her perplexities. The household staff is equally perplexed by these issues. It includes her very dear Ayah, an eighteen-year-old dusky beauty, Shantha, Imam Din, the Sethi household's genial-faced cook, Hari, the high-caste Hindu, Moti, the outcaste gardener, Mucho, his shrew of a wife, Papoo, his much abused child—and the Ice-Candy-Man, a raconteur and a "born gossip" who never stops touching Ayah with his Lenny keeps us going by focusing on interesting data interspersed with poetic phrasing. Ayah is at the center of the important events, which include the conclusion of WWII, India's independence, and the partition of the subcontinent into Pakistan and India. She is a symbol of larger-than-life realism, truly "perplexing," much like India itself. Beggars, holy men, hawkers, cart-drivers, chefs, coolies, and cyclists all yearn after her, according to Lenny. Isn't India a much-looted country that is finally being forced to start over? The novel maintains our interest on both a personal and political level as a result of these growing connotations.

### **A psychoanalysis of characters:**

For Lenny, an entire universe, which is also her world, undergoes a major change marked by "blood dimmed anarchy" in just a few years. Her attention shifts from her own "sense of



inadequacy and unworth" and the "trivia and trappings" of her studies to the dark and scary world beyond. She notices the rapid, unstoppable, and violent changes that leave her and others around her, particularly Ayah, "wounded in the soul" with increased perception.

"Action, passion, contemplation, feeling, even the unconscious mind find place" in a novel, according to Iyengar. Different colors of human cognition, sentiments, and behavior are accurately voiced in Sidhwa's story. Every character in the narrative gives us a glance into his inner sanctum, and we are constantly shocked by what we see. Bloodshed and murder are depicted in passages that highlight humanity's brutal side. The mob becomes "maniac" after Master Tara Singh's stirring speech against Punjab's separation. The cops were also targeted. Then there's the raging fire in Lahore. Lenny observes, "The entire world is on fire." My face is sweltering from the heat of the air. My flesh and clothing appear to be on fire. I start yelling and wailing hysterically—how long will Lahore burn? Weeks? Months?

The workings of the local mind are brilliantly illustrated by Sidhwa's ingenious use of diverse devices in this tale. Through her dreams, witticisms, descriptions of individuals, their habits, and moods in idioms and metaphors, both native and alien, she tells us how little Lenny's mind sees, grasps, and ponders over the world around her. The whole fate of an enslaved country is depicted in the line Queen Victoria's statue imposes the English Raj in the park.

Prior to the clash, Muslims and Sikhs coexisted peacefully. They enjoyed each other's festivals, such as Baisakhi and Id, and took part in them. "One man's religion is another man's poison," he said once the great turmoil started. The "Rad-cliff commission deals out Indian cities like a pack of cards," causing and exacerbating the conflict between the two countries. And at the conclusion of a dreadful day, "the moonlight settles over Lahore like a layer of ashes."

In addition to idioms that evoke a terrible national tragedy, Bapsi Sidhwa employs devices such as nightmares, bathroom humour, poetry by the popular Urdu poet Iqbal, Parsi entry into India, their customs, prayers, fire temples, and funerals in *Towers of Silence*, elaborate discussions and debates on national politics by the haves and have-nots, detailed accounts of villages such as Pir Pindo inhabited by people of various religions. Everything is mediated via Lenny's consciousness as the story progresses. Her fascination with the world around her is abnormal, as we find her filming everything like a video camera. Her motions are unrestricted, and she appears to be enjoying everything that is going on around her. She can go to a Parsi conference to discuss the next course of action in the aftermath of Partition hostilities, as well as linger around parks, cheap hotels, and other public locations with her ayah to get a sense of popular opinion. She is loved and cared for by all because of her physical impairment and precocious temperament, and even her parents do not place restrictions on her. Imam Din even allows her to accompany him on his visits to Pir Pindo, a Punjabi village. This visit allows her to meet Raima, the youngster who later becomes a weapon in the novelist's hands, detailing the events of barbaric cruelty perpetrated on Muslims across the border by the Sikhs, thus corroborating Lenny's version of Partition.

### **Narrative and style:**

Bapsi Sidhwa's narrative design in the novel appears to be very basic and easy at first glance, but a closer examination reveals that its simplicity is only misleading. Despite the fact that Lenny is the main narrator, the voice that emerges from the story is far from monologue. It's difficult for the readers to believe that a tiny child like Lenny can say the things that have been forced into her mouth at times. As an example, consider the following:

The noxious odor has me enslaved. It's dissipated into a hazy haze. I float about in circles, up and down, and plummet great distances without ever landing, fighting for my life's breath.



I'm choking in that stifling haze. My ghastly voice transforms me into something disgusting and scary, deserving of the heinous punishment. But where am I, exactly? I'm not sure how long the horror will last. Days and years pass with no sign of an end in sight.

And once more:

My nose inhales the scents of dirt and grass, as well as another scent that elicits thoughts. Things have meaning and purpose for me. The enigmatic rhythms of creation and death. The epitome of beauty and truth. I remember the choking hell of milky vapours and am surprised to learn that heaven has a black scent.

Passages like this draw the reader's attention to the author's presence in the kid, with Lenny expressing her adult reactions to her juvenile situation. Sidhwa, of course, narrates the novel in the first person, placing everything in the mouth of the kid protagonist, but one thing is certain: she does so with serious intent. She doesn't want to come across as political or provocative, but she can't stop herself from presenting the other side of the truth about the Partition riots—the Pakistani or, in her own right, the neutral point of view. It's another thing when she abandons even the dignity and decorum of a literary artist in order to exploit the emotions of millions of people. As evidenced by her observations and remarks regarding Nehru and Gandhi. Lenny's thoughts on Gandhi are as follows:

He's frail, black, and shriveled, and he's elderly. He has the same appearance as Hari, our gardener, except he is angry, disgusted, and impatient, and no one would try to take off his dhoti! His black and slender torso is exposed, and he just wears a loincloth.

Gandhijee is unquestionably a forerunner of his time. He is already aware of the benefits of dieting. He's created headlines all over the world by starving himself into the press.

### **Conclusion:**

Despite several flaws, such as the one mentioned above, it goes without saying that "no other novel captures India's centuries-old ways of living with religious difference before Partition as well as this one." Lenny is observant and takes note of everything: clothes, fragrances, color, skin patina, sex everywhere, and eyes—olive-oil-colored, cunning eyes, scared eyes. Sidhwa gives us the seedbed of the Partition massacres—an mistreated Untouchable, the ritual disemboweling of a goat, a priest trembling over the hand of a menstruating woman—in prose that is frequently poetic, always delicate and brilliant, with a subtlety here, a touch there. This amusing, sweet story, told through the eyes of a child, is a tribute to searing grief and a superb evocation of religious intolerance's lurking origins. Though some ardent Indian nationalists have accused Bapsi of presenting a Pakistani perspective on history, we must remember that this is a novel, not a work of social documentation; it is limited to one child's perspective through which the dissenting, disagreeing voices she hears are refracted; and, as Aamer Hussein puts it, "insofar as a novel can be objective, Bapsi is in the grand tradition of the Progressive writers on both sides. Indeed, Bapsi's point of view is one of the novel's most successful ploys. We believe we are witnessing the events of Partition through the eyes of a child, but strategically placed flashbacks reveal that the adult Lenny is actually reliving the past in order to make sense of the events that perplexed her when she was too young to comprehend; simultaneously, she confines herself to the experiences and sensory perceptions of the child she was. As a result, we are offered a dual—even dialogic—perspective that layers innocence over experience, introspection over retrospect.

### **Leading Themes in Ice-Candy-Man**

Bapsi Sidhwa is among the important signatures in Pakistani literary world. Being a Parsi, she is aware of her roots, past and the Parsi community. Ice-Candy-Man is her major novel

which introduces a child-narrator Lenny who narrates the events in the wake of Partition of India. Sidhwa's concern for her Parsi community, place of women in Pakistani society, human struggle for survival and dignity of man are major themes in her novels. In *Ice-Candy-Man*, Sidhwa presents her Parsi community in a dilemma over the issue of support. Partition is immanent and the question of loyalty haunts the Parsi psyche.

They are loyal to the Raj but now Parsis have to side either with India or the newly formed Pakistan. Sidhwa depicts Hindu-Muslim riots without any social discrimination. As the narrative progresses, history moves to the background and struggle for survival becomes the focus of the narrative. There are a number of novels written about Partition of India like *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh, *Tamas* by Bhisham Sahni, *Azadi* by Chaman Nahal, *A Bend in the Ganges* by Manohar Malgaonkar, *The Rape* by Raj Gill, *Ashes and Petals* by H.S. Gill, *Twice Born Twice Dead* by K.S. Duggal, *The Dark Dancer* by B.Rajan, *Sunlight on a Broken Column* by Attia Hosain and *Ice-Candy-Man* by Bapsi Sidhwa. These novels realistically portray and depict the upheaval that the Indian sub-continent experienced. It was the most shocking and traumatic experience of division of hearts and communities. These literary works leave the reader with the feeling of disquiet and disturbance. These novels deal with the tumultuous and traumatic moments in the life of one generation. (A Critic) observes that these works not only deal with the tumultuous times but also strips away the veneer of civilization that man hides behind. They also hold a mirror to the element of savagery latent in man. "It seems, a stressful situation reveals the animal streak just waiting to be unleashed. This is made all the more strong by the support of a mob feeding on hatred."

*Ice-Candy-Man* deals with human emotions at play at different levels, heightened by turbulent times. In the process of shaping history, human emotions and relationships are relegated to the background. The tidal waves of violence, hatred and communal violence change the feelings of fraternity. Aradhika observes: "Like some ancient Satanic rites of witchcraft, the power to destroy, springs forth from an unsuspected fount within and the sheer pleasure of humiliating and massacring the victim is so great that one forgets one's own mortality." Bapsi Sidhwa in her novel *Ice-Candy-Man* delineates his characters and their antecedents with fidelity and with a feeling of contemporaneity. In the narrative of *Ice-Candy-Man*, the reader is introduced to the kind-hearted Khansama who is a veritable rebel, the loyal khalsa refusing to leave Lahore, Tota Ram the frightened Hindu and a Parsi family oscillating between two viewpoints with neutrality hoping for their survival.

In *Ice-Candy-Man*, the main characters are *Ice-Candy-Man* and the 'Ayah', the maid-servant with the Parsi family. *Ice-Candy-Man* is a handsome and immensely popular youngman. He is a generous fellow who is miles away from religious fanaticism. But one incident shakes his entire existence and his belief in the goodness of man is shattered. He becomes a witness to the mutilated bodies of Muslims in the hands of Hindus and he takes a vow to avenge the death of his Muslim fellows. This bitter experience wrenches out the darker side of his personality. This shattering blow transforms a kind and loving individual into a violent and frenzied person. On a crucial moment in the narrative, he asks the Ayah: "there is an animal inside me straining to break free. Marry me and perhaps it will be contained." Here Aradhika observes: "The ultimate betrayal is not by the innocent trusting little girl but by the devil of hatred that cannot be contained." Now the *ice-candy-man* plays the pivotal role of a raffish type man.

Like other novelists on Partition, Sidhwa also describes the ugly and terrifying face of Partition by recollecting the traumatic and agonising memories of those moments. Sidhwa also has tried to recreate history in emotion-laden and poignant scenes. The rumblings of Partition are felt in the beginning of the narrative and the atmosphere proper to the kind of a tale is gradually created. As the tension mounts, atmosphere becomes grim and awesome.

Here one finds the worst kind of genocide in the history of mankind. Narratives like Ice-Candy-Man transport readers back into the corridors of time. This experience of being catapulted back into the dark and forgotten recesses of time leaves the readers shocked and unbelieving on the reaction of man. One witnesses the shocking and heart-rending scenes of the arrival of trains full of massacred Muslims chugging into the platform with crowds waiting for another gift from Amritsar. Man is transformed into a brute, a savage lustful for blood. He is ripped apart, dissected to reveal animal form. The colourful streets of Lahore look ominously dreadful and deserted. The Hindus are still reluctant to leave their ancestral property where their generations have lived and prospered. Now they visualise a future devoid of any hope. These painful experiences are like the agonising throes of a new birth. It is still painful to recollect those traumatic and dreadful moments that turned the noble ones into beasts. Indeed the Partition of India remains the most agonising experience in history. A number of writers who wrote on Partition touch the gut of the problem in order that such blunders should never be committed by 'wise leaders'. Jagdev Singh observes, "The Partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947 is one of the great tragedies, the magnitude, ambit and savagery of which compels one to search for the larger meaning of events, and to come to terms with the lethal energies that set off such vast conflagrations." These comments aptly throw light on the central theme of the novel Ice-Candy-Man.

The theme of inter-community marriage is at the core of Sidhwa's novels like Ice-CandyMan, An American Brat and the Crow Eaters. Her handling of the theme of inter-community marriages is relevant and contemporary. This sensitive issue arouses acrimonious debates in Parsi Community. In Parsi faith, it is believed that a Parsi could be one only by birth. In mixed marriages, the children lose their right to be members of Parsi community. The Parsis have a patriarchal society. While dealing with the theme of marriage, Sidhwa maintains a balance without revolting against rigid social codes. In her novel An American Brat, Sidhwa examines the theme of inter-faith marriage in detail. Its protagonist Feroza migrates to America where she intends to marry a Jew boy David Press. Her Parsi community opposes this marriage and Feroza has to withdraw her move but she expresses her conviction to marry to boy of her choice only, irrespective of religion.

In Ice-Candy-Man, Sidhwa presents the theme of interfaith marriage through the love relationship between the Ice-Candy-Man and the Hindu Ayah. On seeing his fellow Muslims massacred, the Ice-Candy man goes mad with rage and keeps his beloved Ayah in the brothels of Hira Mandi in Lahore. Then he realizes his mistake and marries the Hindu Ayah but now love has become powerless. The Ayah is rescued and is taken to a Recovered Women's Camp in Amritsar. Thus, a number of themes have been well-integrated in the narrative of Ice-Candy-man.

Ice Candy Man showcases violations of human rights and the pathetic living conditions during the partition of Subcontinent in 1947. Through the eyes of Lenny, Bapsi Sidhwa the writer, provides details of how the political changes and the political scenarios in those days effected the citizens of India. The theme of the novel is mainly focused on the exploitation and suppression of women, partition of sub-continent, religious intolerance, inter community marriage and human nature.

### i) Religious Intolerance

Throughout the novel, characters' desires for power or influence over others mirrors the desire for political power that fuels religious intolerance. Religious intolerance erupts into violence, pitting different religious and ethnic groups against each other. Lenny witnesses many acts of killing, maiming, and death, including finding Masseur, Ayah's beloved, dead in a sack on the sidewalk.



As Lahore becomes a refugee center and an entrance to the new country of Pakistan, now a majority-Muslim country, the Hindus and Sikhs are driven out of the city.

Religious intolerance also becomes a way for men to subjugate women. For example, Ayah is taken prisoner by the Ice-candy-man, whom she has rejected for Masseur, and he pimps her out to other men as a "dancing girl." Women become victims of extreme sexual violence, including rape and sex slavery, under the guise of religious intolerance.

### **ii) Partition of Subcontinent**

Like other novelists on Partition, Sidhwa also describes the ugly and terrifying face of Partition by recollecting the traumatic and agonizing memories of those moments. Sidhwa also has tried to recreate history in emotion laden scenes. The rumblings of Partition are felt in the beginning of the narrative and the atmosphere proper to the kind of a tale is gradually created. As the tension mounts, atmosphere becomes grim and awesome. Here one finds the worst kind of genocide in the history of mankind. Narratives like Ice Candy Man transport readers back into the corridors of time. This experience of being catapulted back into the dark and forgotten recesses of time leaves the readers shocked and unbelieving on the reaction of man. One witnesses the shocking and heartrending scenes of the arrival of trains full of massacred Muslims chugging into the platform with crowds waiting for another gift from Amritsar. Man is transformed into a brute, a savage lusting for blood. He is ripped apart, dissected to reveal animal form. The colourful streets of Lahore look ominously dreadful and deserted. The Hindus are still reluctant to leave their ancestral property where their generations have lived and prospered. Now they visualize a future devoid of any hope. These painful experiences are like the agonising throes of a new birth. It is still painful to recollect those traumatic and dreadful moments that turned the noble ones into beasts. Indeed the Partition of India remains the most agonising experience in history. A number of writers who wrote on Partition touch the gut of the problem in order that such blunders should never be committed by 'wise leaders'. Jagdev Singh observes, "The Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 is one of the great tragedies, the magnitude, ambit and savagery of which compels one to search for the larger meaning of events, and to come to terms with the lethal energies that set off such vast conflagrations."

These comments aptly throw light on the central theme of the novel Ice Candy Man.

Towards the end of Ice Candy Man, she makes the hero, Ice Candy Man, who is an extremist for the Partition, traverse into India looking for his Hindu cherished, Shanta and plays Judas on his nation, bringing up numerous issues about the basis and belief system of Partition. Sidhwa, in The Bride, likewise challenges the essential belief system of Partition and makes Qasim a disengaged eyewitness of a train slaughter, on the grounds that the individuals being killed by the Sikhs are Punjabi Muslims, and not his kin from the mountains. In this way, Qasim watches the slaughter as in a film yet despite the fact that frightened by the butcher, he feels no impulse to hazard his own particular life. This is Sidhwa's own particular autonomous viewpoint on Partition, and not the authority Pakistani form. The standard Pakistanis don't take the Partition as it is displayed by Sidhwa, first and foremost in The Bride and after that in Ice Candy Man.

### **iii) Human Nature**

One of the prominent theme of Ice Candy Man is conflict between good and evil in human's nature. In Ice-Candy-man, the main characters are. Ice-Candy-Man and the 'Ayah', the maid-servant with the Parsi family. Ice-Candy-Man is a handsome and immensely popular youngman He is a generous fellow who is miles away from religious fanaticism. But one incident shakes his entire existence and his belief in the goodness of man is shattered. He becomes a witness to the mutilated bodies of Muslims in the hands of Hindus and he takes a



vow to avenge the death of his Muslim fellows. This bitter experience wrenches out the darker side of his personality. This shattering blow transforms a kind and loving individual into a violent and frenzied person. On a crucial moment in the narrative, he asks the Ayah:

"there is an animal inside me straining to break free. Marry me and perhaps it will be contained."

Here Aradhika observes

"The ultimate betrayal is not by the innocent trusting little girl but by the devil of hatred that cannot be contained."

Now the ice-candy-man plays the pivotal role of a raffish type man. Through his character Sidhwa had shown how man is slave of his psychology or nature.

#### **iv) Inter-community Marriage**

The theme of inter-community marriage is at the core of Sidhwa's novels like Ice-Candy-Man, An American Brat and the Crow Eaters. Her handling of the theme of inter-community marriages is relevant and contemporary. This sensitive issue arouses acrimonious debates in Parsi Community. In Parsi faith, it is believed that a Parsi could be one only by birth. In mixed marriages, the children lose their right to be members of Parsi community. The Parsis have a patriarchal society. While dealing with the theme of marriage, Sidhwa maintains a balance without revolting against rigid social codes. In her novel An American Brat, Sidhwa examines the theme of inter-faith marriage in detail. Its protagonist Feroza migrates to America where she intends to marry a Jew boy David Press. Her Parsi community opposes this marriage and Feroza has to withdraw her move but she expresses her conviction to marry to boy of her choice only, irrespective of religion.

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#### **Justification of Title "Ice Candy Man" by Bapsi Sidhwa**

##### **Introduction**

Title of the novel Ice Candy Man seems to be contradictory as Lenny is the protagonist of the novel and the story revolves around the bloody partition of Indian Sub-continent during the late 1940s.

Moreover, it focuses on feminism. However, the title Ice candy Man holds great significance. This can be interpreted and justified in two ways.

##### **1st Justification**

First, Ice Candy Man, in a broader sense refers to every man of the Indian sub-continent. The men are as sweet as candy before the partition. There exists communal harmony among the people belonging to different communities.

The masseur, the gardener, the Ice Candy Man etc. all belong to different faiths yet they sit in one group cracking jokes and talking about the trending issues. In spite of having

sensitive discussions, they remain friends and all are the admirers of Shanta Devi who is a Hindu.

Moreover, in the first visit of Lenny to Pir Pindo, we witness that Muslims vow to protect Sikhs from the upcoming danger and vice versa. They talk about their relations, dependencies etc.

But this candy-like situation vanishes with the breaking of violence of partition and the ice portion becomes visible. Ice Candy Man is seen celebrating the vista of Lahore burning in flames and feels excited about the death of masseur. He also betrays Lenny by ensuring to help Ayah but instead helps mob to locate her hiding.

In addition, the scene at Pir Pindo is contrasting to the first one, when Lenny visited this place. The Muslim men and children are butchered and Muslim women raped in the Mosques and then reduced to corpses by Sikh marauders.

Muslims also reply Sikhs and Hindus by killing their people and raping their women in Lahore. All this show how fake is the sweetness of man. It vanishes and the iced-face comes into light when such a situation arises.

### **2nd Justification**

The other perspective of vindicating the significance of the title is to narrate the story of Ice Candy Man. Ice Candy Man is a good person having a humorous nature when we meet him in the beginning.

He has friends from different communities. He is one of the admirers of Shanta Devi who is a Hindu. He possesses the qualities of wit and humour and entertains the readers with his funny actions.

But when the partition takes place, he happens to witness the train which carries the dead bodies of Muslims killed mercilessly by Hindus and Sikhs. He also sees the sack filled with the breasts of Muslim women.

This incident changes him into a villain. He cherishes the murder of Sikhs and Hindus in Lahore. In the final portion of the novel, he shows his extreme of villainy by deceiving Lenny and helping Muslim mob locating the hiding of Ayah who drags her out of the house and take her to Kotha where she is gang-raped and forced to become a prostitute.

But again we find a transformation in his character. He repents his actions and marries Ayah. He also becomes a poet. He tries to convince Ayah about his true love for her but she leaves for Amritsar and he follows her to the border.

This shows the complex nature of a human being that cannot be judged. Hence the title Ice Candy Man of the novel carries great and profound significance both in terms of humanity as well as the individual.

## **Art of Narration of Bapsi Sidhwa in Ice Candy Man**

### **Introduction**

Bapsi Sidhwa, the Pakistani Parsi essayist, has made a powerful position in this day and age. Through her ability of innovative and pertinent written work she has tossed light on different consuming issues of her time and spoke to the minority Parsi people group at

global level.

She feels that it has given her a remarkable feeling of 'isolates connection' for her nation and its kin. Her inventive odyssey, which began with *The Crow-Eaters* (1978), has developed from quality to quality in her progressive works like *Pakistani Bride* (1983), *Ice-Candy-Man* (1988) and *An American Brat* (1994).

Bapsi Sidhwa's third and till date the most famous novel *Ice-Candy-Man* (1988) is a standout amongst the most talked about books of late circumstances. The novel tosses light on the biting substances of segment through the eyes of an eight-year old debilitated young lady, Lenny.

### **Narrative Technique in Ice Candy Man**

Lenny's improvement from youth to puberty, India's battle for autonomy from Britain and the apportioning of the nation into India and Pakistan all grow all the while.

The skilfully joined plots give each other considerable importance as Lenny originates from a minority group that remained moderately impartial in post-Partition religious clashes; she has entry to individuals of all religions, both inside Lahore and in different regions.

She additionally has entry to a wide assortment of perspectives, both pre-and post-Partition, through her Ayah, a lovely lady whose suitors are ethnically and religiously various. It is 1947. Lenny lives in Lahore, in the chest of her amplified Parsi family: Mother, Father, Brother Adi, Cousin, Electric-Aunt, Godmother and Slave sister.

Working for them, or gasping after Ayah, are Butcher, the tiny Sikh zoo attendant, the Government House nursery worker, the favoured Masseuse, the eatery owning wrestler and the shady Ice-Candy-Man—Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, companions and neighbours—until their foul, regular world crumbles before the savagery of religious scorn.

Lenny's enthusiastic love for Ayah, and the loss of honesty that goes with their changing relationship through the Partition, is a lively focus to the plot. Lenny's associations with her mom, her effective Godmother, and her sexually obtrusive cousin are likewise vital to the novel.

Lenny's polio assumes a noteworthy part. Other minor yet convincing subplots incorporate Lenny's folks' evolving relationship, the murder of a British official, Raima's terrible story, and the youngster marriage of Pappu, the greatly mishandled little girl of one of Lenny's family's hirelings.

Sidhwa's concentration in this typical novel is more on account strategies and less on the story, for they add to the work's aggregate impact. Right off the bat it is the principal individual current state portrayal. Lenny is a kid when the occasions described happen, and the occasions are seen through her awareness.

Lenny learns of the per-verse way of affectionate human interests from her encounters with her cousin, who courts her with an assurance similar just to the Ice-Candy-Man's quest for Ayah.

How religious fanaticism can breed contempt and brutality is obvious in the executing of the Hindus in Lahore and the Muslims in the Punjab of the Sikhs.

The dehumanising effect of shared mobs is reflected in the tale of Lenny's companion

Ranna, a frightening record of the human abominations that can be executed when all humanised restraints are evacuated through outside occasions or political propaganda.

Sidhwa picks Lenny, a polio-ridden, kid as the storyteller of the novel since she furnishes her with a degree for recording the occasions prompting wicked Partition riots, without purposeful publicity. In addition, she originates from a Parsi family as is free from any religious or ethnic inclination.

In *Ice-Candy Man*, Lenny is the story persona. Her narration begins in her fifth year and finishes after her eighth birthday. She reviews her first cognizant memory of her Ayah accordingly: "She passes pushing my pram with the unconcern of the Hindu god-dess she venerates."

She additionally recalls her home on Warris Road in Lahore and how she used to discover shelter in her God-mother's "one-and-a-half room residence" prevailing with regards to making tracks in an opposite direction from the "unhappiness" and the "bewildering unrealities" of home.

These perplexities incorporate her own polio tribulation, which she utilises as defensive layer against a "self important world," her mom's indulgence, her dad's aversion of it, her strain to top off the "diabolical hush" amid her dad's "quiet suppers" by "offering chuckling and lengthier prattle".

These perplexities likewise include the family unit staff. It incorporates her dear Ayah, Shanta, Imam Din, Hari, Moti, Mucho, Pappu and the *Ice-Candy-Man*, and masseur, a touchy man who cherishes Ayah and is adored by her, much to the shame of *Ice-Candy-Man* and Ranna.

In Sidhwa's novel, one finds diverse shades of human thought, sentiments and conduct honestly voiced. Each character in the novel gives us a chance to witness into his inward selves and we are constantly astonished at the truth of it.

Entries portraying slaughter and murder highlight the animal in individuals. After Master Tara Singh's awakening address against the division of Punjab, the swarm turns "neurotic." Even the police were focused on. And after that there is towering inferno in Lahore. Lenny watches:

The entire world is consuming. The air all over is so hot. I think my fragile living creature and garments will burst into flames. I begin shouting: madly crying—to what extent does Lahore consume? Weeks? Months?

Prior to the contention, Muslims and Sikhs lived in serene harmony. They celebrated and took part in each other's celebrations, for example, Baisakhi and Id. Be that as it may, once the enormous inconvenience began "Small time's religion is another man's toxin."

Other than expressions which summon a frightful national catastrophe, Bapsi Sidhwa likewise makes utilization of gadgets, for example, bad dreams, jokes including lavatory funniness, verse by the well known Urdu artist Iqbal, Parsi entrance into India, their traditions, supplications, fire sanctuaries, and funerals in *Towers of Silence*, expound exchanges and civil arguments on national governmental issues by the wealthy and the poor, itemized records of towns, for example, Pir Pindo occupied by individuals of various religions, and the astringent change of later circumstances, constrained conversions, constrained kid relational unions and numerous other minute yet grave subtle elements,



which prevail with regards to conveying to the peruser an entire range of tragi-comic and grievous occurrences.

As the story advances, everything is sifted through the cognisance of Lenny. Her enthusiasm for things around her is to some degree unnatural as we discover her recording each and every-thing like a camcorder.

There are no limitations on her developments and she is by all accounts getting a charge out of the considerable number of happenings around.

She can go to the Parsi meeting to examine the future game-plan in the wake of Partition clashes and can likewise saunter around parks, shabby lodgings, and such different places alongside her ayah and can have admittance to the well known assessment.

Be-cause of her physical incapacity and intelligent nature, she is adored and minded by all, and even her folks don't keep restric-tions on her. She is even permitted to go with Imam Din in his visits to Pir Pindo, a town in Punjab.

This visit furnishes her with a chance to meet Raina, the kid who later turns into an apparatus in the hands of the writer to detail the occasions of cruel severity stacked on the Muslims over the outskirt by the Sikhs, therefore supplementing the record of Partition described by Lenny.

The account outline that Bapsi Sidhwa follows in the novel evidently looks exceptionally basic and direct, yet on a more intensive look one understands that its effortlessness is simply misleading. Al-though the principle storyteller is Lenny, the voice that rises up out of the novel is a long way from being a monolog. There are minutes when it is hard for the perusers to trust that a young lady like Lenny can express the words that have been put into her mouth. Like the one that is cited here:

"I am held hostage by the ruthless odour. It has vaporised into a smooth cloud. I skim all around and here and there and fall horrendous separations without landing anyplace, battling for my life's relax.

I am relinquished in that stifling cloud. I groan and my ghoulish voice transforms me into something disgusting and scary and meriting the shocking discipline. Be that as it may, where am I? To what extent will the loathsomeness last? Days and years with not a single end to be seen."

"My nose breathes in the aroma of earth and grass—and the other scent that distils bits of knowledge. I intuit the importance and reason for things. The mystery rhythms of creation and mortality. The quintessence of truth and magnificence. I review the stifling damnation of smooth vapours and find that paradise has a dim aroma."

Entries like this make the peruser mindful of the nearness of the creator in the kid, Lenny voicing her grown-up responses to her adolescence circumstance.

Obviously Sidhwa portrays the novel in the main individual placing everything in the mouth of the youngster protago-nist, yet one thing is for certain that she does it with a genuine pur-pose.

She wouldn't like to sound political and dubious, yet can't turn herself again from the current reason, i.e., to introduce the opposite side of reality with respect to the Partition revolts—the

Paki-stani or in her own privilege the impartial perspective.

It is something else that now and again she yields even the goodness and etiquette of an abstract craftsman, simply displaying the feelings of a great many people like we find in her perceptions and remarks about Gandhi and Nehru. Lenny thinks about Gandhi:

He is little, dull, wilted, and old. He looks simply like Hari, our gardener, with the exception of he has a displeased, nauseated and crabby look, and nobody set out draw off his dhoti! He wears just the loin-fabric and his dark and thin middle is bare.

Gandhi is positively in front of his circumstances. He definitely knows the upsides of abstaining from food. He has starved his way into the news and stood out as truly newsworthy everywhere throughout the world.

Notwithstanding the incidental constraints like the one we have seen over, this abandons saying that “no other novel gets as this one does India’s hundreds of years old methods for living with religious distinction before Partition.”

Lenny is curious and sees everything: garments, scents, shading, and the patina of skin, sex everywhere, and eyes—olive-oil-hued, shrewd eyes, dreadful eyes.

In composing which is regularly melodious, constantly delicate and cunning, with a subtlety here, a touch there, Sidhwa demonstrates to us the seedbed of the Partition slaughters—a manhandled Untouchable, the custom eviscerating of a goat, a minister shivering over the hand of a menstruating lady.

This chuckling, tender story, told through the eyes of blamelessness, is a demonstration of savage misfortune, and a splendid summoning of the lurking foundations of religious prejudice.

Along these lines however Bapsi has been blamed by some diehard Indian patriots for showing a Pakistani perspective of history, we should not overlook this is a novel and not a work of social documentation; it limits itself to one tyke’s point of view through which the contradicting, differing voices she hears are refracted.

Truth be told the perspective Bapsi embraces, is one of the novel’s best ploys. We trust we are witnessing the occasions of Partition through the eyes of a pure kid, however deliberately set glimmer forward flag, in an inconspicuous way, that the grown-up Lenny is really remembering the past keeping in mind the end goal to understand the occasions that perplexed her when she was too little to fathom; at the same time, she confines herself to the encounters and tangible view of the youngster she was.

In this manner we are given a two-fold—even dialogic—point of view that layers blamelessness on experience, thoughtfulness on knowledge of the past.

### **Ice-Candy-Man A Feminist Analysis**

Originally published as Ice-Candy Man, Cracking India is a semi-autobiographical text in which Bapsi Sidhwa through the lens of her childhood memories recounts the events surrounding Partition. It represents a series of female characters who have survived in a chaotic time of 1947 in India, the period of worst religious riots in the history of India. This religion based division resulted in mass violence, murder, and rape. The novel Ice-Candy-Man may be read as a postcolonial novel attempting to portray the life and times of the

Partition of India giving due importance to the other marginal sections of society based on the distinction of gender, class, caste, or religion. Sidhwa, through Ice-Candy-Man critiques the stereotypical images of women and fights for their empowerment. Ice-Candy-Man is a significant testimony of a gynocentric view of reality in the backdrop of a religious turbulence. This novel highlights feminist concerns about women's issues, particularly their experience of victimization and suppression within patriarchal societies and how this suppression takes a brutal form in the face of national upheaval.

The narrator is a young Parsee girl named Lenny, who is suffering from polio. Her lameness is suggestive of handicap, a woman writer faces, because writing – an intellectual exercise – is considered a male bastion, outside the domain of women. Lenny as a narrator moves from one phase of her life, i.e., childhood to adolescence. Throughout the course of the novel she observes men's lascivious and degrading attention towards women, voraciousness of male sexual desires, women's plight as they are reduced to the status of sexual objects. We can see that right from her childhood the sexual identity thrust upon Lenny – "I can't remember a time when I ever played with dolls....relatives and acquaintances have persisted in giving them to me." Lenny as a girl learns that marriage of girls is of utmost importance in the society. The intense concern for her marriage even in her childhood puts Lenny in dismay. She states, "Drinking tea, I am told, makes one darker. I'm dark enough.....It's a pity Ad's fair and Lenny so dark. He's a boy. Anyone will marry him," implying that a woman has to be beautiful to be desirable while a man is exempted from such conditioning. Her schooling is stopped as suggested by her doctor Col. Bharucha, because she was suffering from polio – "She'll marry—have children—lead a carefree, happy life," implying that a woman has no need for education, for her only duty in this patriarchal society is marry, rear children and be efficient in household duties. Patriarchal society views women as physically weak to venture into the world outside the four walls of their houses, thus, limiting them to the domestic sphere where they have to accept the dominance of her male counterpart.

The formative influence of Lenny is her Ayah Shanta who is a Hindu girl of eighteen. It is Ayah who epitomizes the strength of the femininity and infuses in Lenny the ideas of freedom and will. The Ayah has accumulated a good number of admirers – the Ice-Candy-Man, the Government House gardener, the Masseur, the zoo-attendant, the restaurant owner, and a knife-sharpening Pathan. She is able to influence the men around her, although much of her influence stems from her physical appeal but her natural beauty and sensuality attract men, creating an intriguing source of power. As Lenny observes these men she realizes that the gaze of Ayah' admirer indicates not just lust, but a powerful desire for ownership, calling to attention the objectification a women's body.

Communal riots break out in Lahore. The Sikhs and Hindus start migrating to Amritsar and the Muslims are asked to quit Amritsar. While migrating, the people of the warring community attack each other and it is the women and children who suffer the most. The narrative takes a horrifying turn with the arrival of a train from Gurdaspur in which the Ice Candy Man expects his relatives return to Lahore from Amritsar. The train arrives and it is loaded not by passengers but with the dead bodies – "A train from Gurdaspur has just come..... Everyone in it is dead. Butchered.....two gunny-bags full of women's breasts!" The women were not only killed but first tortured, raped and then butchered like animals. Through this event Sidhwa questions the hypocrisy of people who glorified the image of the Indian woman and worship them as goddesses, but at the time of upheaval the same image is soiled for the sake of revenge. The bag of severed breasts is transformed into a public form of communication, a verification of nationalist power. With the arrival of the train, frenzied Dilnawaz becomes blood thirsty of the people of the warring community. This is when Ayah's suffering begins. Dilnawaz (the Ice Candy Man) leading the Muslim mob raids Godmother's house in search of the Hindus. Mad with rage, he throws Ayah into the hands

of the frenzied mob just for Ayah being a Hindu girl – “They drag Ayah out. They drag her by her arms.....her bare feet – that want to move backwards – are forced forward. Her lips are drawn away from her teeth, and the resisting curve of her throat opens her mouth like the dead child’s scream-less mouth.” Four men stand pressed against her.....their lips stretched in triumphant grimaces...” The image of these men satisfied and triumphant as they carry her away is horrifying for Lenny. Ayah is then raped mercilessly, beaten up and thrown away among the brothels of Hiramandi and is later forced to marry Dilnawaz who renames her as Mumtaz. This event of reaming the Ayah highlight the fact that a woman has no right over her identity, her sense of identity is associated with her husband.

This episode of Ice-Candy-Man and Ayah destroys Lenny’s conceptions about love. She was shocked to see Ice-Candy-Man pushing his wife Ayah into the business of prostitution. The site of women being raped during the riots petrifies her. She watches men turning into beasts; they were declaring superiority over each other by sexually assaulting women. Rape is the greatest violence because it implies that a woman has no rights on her own body and it can be used by anyone to meet their end. Such acts of violence are an intimate destruction of the feminine, and can also be read as an attempt to annihilate male honor. Feminine form was reconceived as canvas for nationalist messages in 1947 Lahore. The metaphor of female body or mother is often used for a nation. Thus the dignity, purity and honor of women have always been taken as sign of the dignity and integrity of a nation. Ranna’s community has a clear plan to safeguard the women from being used in such a way – “Rather than face the brutality of the mob they will pour kerosene around the house and burn themselves.....The young men will engage the Sikhs at the mosque, and at other strategic locations, for as long as they can and give the women a chance to start the fire.” Thus the idea of protection shifts from keeping the women alive as long as possible to allow the women enough time to kill themselves. Such a plan reveals the importance of women’s purity to male constructions of community. The entire purpose of this encounter is to safeguard women’s bodies from public shaming. Honor was “located in the body of the woman”. Once raped, violated, and mutilated, they cannot be incorporated back into the spaces of the home or the nation. Sidhwa uses the figures of Lenny’s caretakers, to explore the fates of women who survived these acts of violence. Women, once they fall prey to men’s violence like Lenny’s two Ayah’s, cannot hope for their restitution to their own families. Through Ayah, Sidhwa demonstrates the loss of feminine power, and had the story ended at this point, the novel would be nothing but a traditional Partition novel, with the men as victors and the women as victims.

However, Sidhwa belonging to that group of women writers who affirms that women should utilize their potentials beyond the domestic life and assert their individuality, does not end the novel with the pitiable situation of the Ayah. Sidhwa’s two strongest examples of feminine power are yet to come. Prior to Partition, Lenny’s mother played the role of a dutiful wife, catering to her husband’s every need and managing the household. During the events of Partition, however, Lenny’s mother begins to subvert the patriarchal social order by rescuing and housing women. Lenny’s mother and aunts construct a refuge for these “fallen women” who raped or forced into prostitution attempting to reunite the women with their families or to find housing and work for those who, seen as permanently shamed and defiled, and cannot return home. They also smuggle gasoline to help their Hindu and Sikh friends cross the border safely to India. In rescuing these women, Lenny’s mother has clearly moved beyond the traditional role of housewife to become a social activist. It is the two women who undertake the risky job of saving lives in danger. She portrays women not only as victims but also as saviors. They are shown performing heroic duties to bring order to this chaotic world. Through Lenny’s mother the narrator suggests that women should have a purpose in life besides domesticity. Another character who epitomizes feminine power is Lenny’s Godmother (one of her aunts) whose name is Rodabai. Her authoritativeness, self-confidence, capacity to handle extreme situations deftly is evident by her dealing with the



Ice-Candy-Man and the rescue of the Ayah from him. She scolds the Ice-Candy-Man for disgracing the Ayah, "What kind of man would allow his wife to dance like a performing monkey before other men? You're not a man; you're a low-born, two-bit evil little mouse!" When she realizes that Ayah does not want to live with him, she decisively sets about to rescue her and manages to send her back to her people.

Although Sidhwa indicts patriarchal culture and norms for perpetuating violence against women, she does not hold masculinity in dark light. In the case of Ice-Candy-Man, his behavior may be described in relation to the larger forces of collective psychosis. Sidhwa not only throws light on the suffering of women caused by men but she also explores the fact that women can also be instrumental and cause of the suffering and exploitation of other female subjects. In the novel Ice-Candy-Man we see that slave-sister is harassed by her own sister Godmother and lives in perpetual obedience to her. She is leading the life of a bonded slave, forced to suppress herself in every interaction with the old lady; she is not allowed to exercise her will in any situation. Sidhwa wants to convey that the exploitation, manipulation and suppression of one individual by another are not confined to the male-female relationship. The feminists, it seems, are being made alive to the dangers of replicating the patriarchal principle and thus perpetuating the class of the exploiters and the exploited amongst themselves. Another instance where a female is perpetuating violence against another female character is in the relationship of Pappo and her mother Muccho. Muccho takes Papoo as her rival and saddles her with all the household chores, beating and abusing her on the slightest of pretexts. But despite this, Papoo cannot be browbeaten into submission; she is strong and high-spirited. To break her spirit Muccho arranges her marriage with a middle aged dwarf. Papoo is drugged with opium at the time of the ceremony to suppress her revolt. Lenny curiously studies Muccho's face during the wedding ceremony and sees a contented smile on her lips. The sketch of Muccho suggests that women themselves are unconsciously bound by their conditioning and encumber their daughters with a repetitive fate, treating marriage as a cure of all ills.

Sidhwa talks of emancipation of women and ends the novel on a positive note with Ayah being sent back to her home. Throughout the novel, Lenny emerges as a courageous and bold girl, she is inquisitive, demanding and daring who moves forward in life despite various hindrances. She understands the limitations associated with women's lives in patriarchal society. The suffering of Ayah is not the suffering of a single woman but it represents the pain of the thousands of women who were kidnapped, beaten, raped, and butchered like animals. Lenny, her Ayah, her mother and Godmother exhibit capability of assuming new roles and responsibilities. Despite her conviction that she is now an impure person, the ayah retains her will to go back to her family and face life anew. Lenny's relationship with her cousin upholds the principle of equality, for she does not allow him to manipulate her sexually. In no way does Lenny's lameness constrict her psyche. Rather than being dominated by the male, she chooses not to conform, telling Cousin that she is not interested, making her own preferences known. Her cousin, consequently, is placed in a subservient role and laments his lack of power over.

Sidhwa in the backdrop of the communal violence reconstructs the postcolonial history from the perspective of the marginalized sections of society. Through narratives like Cracking India, women are able to reclaim their autonomy and express their account of Partition history. Throughout the novel Sidhwa has critiqued the stereotypical images of women as dark, mysterious, exotic and homely. The patriarchal society should perceive women beyond the roles of wives, daughters and mothers. A big transformation is required at the social level, which will acknowledge women as human beings with desires, feelings, ambitions, and potentials.

## **Bapsi Sidhwa's novel, in one way or other, advocate the women rights. Discuss.**

Bapsi Sidhwa is an award winning Pakistani novelist striving above all to bring women's issues of the Indian subcontinent into public discussion. She was born in 1938 in Karachi, Pakistan (then part of India), but her family migrated shortly thereafter to Lahore. As a young girl, Sidhwa witnessed first-hand the bloody Partition of 1947, in which seven million Muslims were uprooted in the largest, most terrible exchange of population that history has known. The Partition was caused by a complicated set of social and political factors, including religious differences and the end of colonialism in Sub-continent. Sidhwa writes about her childhood, "the ominous roar of distant mobs was a constant of my awareness, alerting me, even at age seven, to a palpable sense of the evil that was taking place in various parts of Lahore". Sidhwa was also witness to these evils, including an incident in which she found the body of a dead man in a gunnysack at the side of the road.

Characteristically succinct, she says of the event, "I felt more of a sadness than horror". Her home city of Lahore became a border city in Pakistan, and was promptly flooded by hundreds of thousands of war refugees. Many thousands of these were women - victims of rape and torture. Due to lasting shame and their husbands' damaged pride, many victims were not permitted entry into their homes after being "recovered." There was a rehabilitation camp with many of these women adjacent to Sidhwa's house, and she states that she was inexplicably fascinated with these "fallen women," as they were described to her at the time. She realized from a young age that "victory is celebrated on a woman's body, vengeance is taken on a woman's body. That's very much the way things are, particularly in my part of the world". It appears as if realizations such as this inspired Sidhwa's later activism for the cause of women's rights.

Sidhwa claims to have had a rather boring childhood, with the exception of the years of strife surrounding the Partition, due partly to a bout with polio, which kept her home schooled. She cites *Little Women* as being the most influential book of her childhood, as it introduced her to "a world of fantasy and reading--I mean extraordinary amounts of reading because that was the only life I had". She went on to receive a BA from Kinnaird College for Women, in Lahore. At nineteen, Sidhwa got married, and soon after gave birth to the first of three children. While traveling in Northern Pakistan in 1964, Sidhwa heard the story of a young girl who was murdered by her husband after an attempted escape. She looked into the story and discovered that the girl was a purchased wife, a slave. This discovery moved Sidhwa into action. She began to tell the girl's story in the form of a novel.

Along with prevailing expectations of women's place during that time in Pakistan, the responsibilities of raising a family prompted Sidhwa to write in secret. Although Sidhwa speaks four languages, she made a conscious decision to write in English, partly due to the increased probability of worldwide exposure to issues that concerned her within the subcontinent. At that time there were no English language books published in Pakistan, so after Sidhwa finished writing the novel, she published it herself as *The Bride*. The novel was critically acclaimed for its forceful style and its undeniable ability to speak eloquently of human warmth amid horrible circumstances. She received the Pakistan National Honors of the Patras Bokhri award for *The Bride* in 1985.

Soon after publication of *The Bride*, Sidhwa began work on her second novel, *The Crow Eaters*. The novel is named after derogatory slang referring to the Parsi people, in reference to their supposed propensity for loud and continuous chatter. *The Crow Eaters* is a comedy, which signals an abrupt change from her earlier work. The Parsis, or Zoroastrians, are the socio-religious group to which Sidhwa belongs, a prosperous yet dwindling community of approximately one hundred thousand based predominantly in Bombay.

The Crow Eaters tells the story of a family within the small Parsi community residing within the huge city of Lahore. Complete with historical information and rich with bawdy, off-color humor, the novel is never boring, as Sidhwa's acute sense of humor constantly changes from the subtle to the downright disgusting. Nothing is above this humor, which often times leaves the reader feeling guilty for laughing out loud. The main character, Faredoon, relentlessly torments his mother-in-law Jerbanoo, especially about her self-indulgent complaints of impending death. Some of the most hilarious moments involve Faredoon's detailed and gory description of her funeral. The Parsis practice charity in life as well as death, and their funeral custom of feeding the body to the vultures reflects this belief.

Bapsi Sidhwa's third novel marked her move into international fame. *Ice-Candy-Man* was published in several other countries in 1988 under the title *Ice-Candy-Man*. Book sellers stateside feared that an American audience would mistake the unfamiliar occupational name (meaning popsicle vendor) for a drug pusher.

The novel is considered by many critics to be the most moving and essential book on the partition of Sub-continent. Told from the awakening consciousness of an observant eight-year-old Parsi girl, the violence of the Partition threatens to collapse her previously idyllic world. The issues dealt with in the book are as numerous as they are horrifying. The thousands of instances of rape, and public's subsequent memory loss that characterize the Partition are foremost. In the hatred that has fueled the political relations between Pakistan and India since that time, these women's stories were practically forgotten. In one of her infrequent bursts of poetry, Sidhwa writes, "Despite the residue of passion and regret, and loss of those who have in panic fled-- the fire could not have burned for. . .Despite all the ruptured dreams, broken lives, buried gold, bricked-in rupees, secreted jewelry, lingering hopes...the fire could not have burned for months. . ."

Sidhwa replaces flowing, poetic sentences with forceful criticism when she theorizes about what caused the fires to keep burning. Sidhwa repeatedly condemns the dehumanizing impact that religious zealotry played in promoting mob mentality, separation, and revenge during the Partition. Sidhwa's widely varied narration alternates between opulent description, subtle humor, and bone-chilling strife. The narrator, Lenny, is astute beyond her years, yet the questioning nature of the child is portrayed so skillfully that it allows the author to effectively deal with serious subjects both firmly and with subtlety, whichever suits her purpose. When she discovers that her mother is illegally stockpiling gasoline, Lenny wrongly assumes that her mother is responsible for the bombings that are plaguing Lahore. This image is both funny and disturbing, highlighting the strange mixture of innocence and fear that Lenny is dealing with. When the citizens of Lahore become more apprehensive of the impending Partition, they stratify strictly upon religious lines.

Lenny's perceptions of the differences in people changes at the same time. In reference to a Hindu man's caste mark, Lenny proclaims, "Just because his grandfathers shaved their heads and grew stupid tails is no reason why Hari should." "Not as stupid as you think," says Cousin. "It keeps his head cool and his brain fresh". Seemingly simple passages such as this one succinctly and with humor hint at a child's precise realization of the discriminatory nature of the caste system. The novel is made up of hundreds of such cleverly phrased passages, which make the book quite enjoyable to read despite the clarity with which the troubling passages are depicted.

Women's issues, the implications of colonization, and the bitterly divided quagmire of partisan politics that the British left in their wake are reevaluated in the novel, picked apart by the sharp questions of a child. Sidhwa's credibility in the eyes of the press and literary



critics of the subcontinent is remarkably accentuated by virtue of her being a Parsi, a woman, and a first-hand witness to the violence. The Parsis remained neutral during the Partition, a fact well remembered by two countries. Sidhwa uses this impartial position to its fullest, contributing greatly to the national discourse on the matter. Critical analysis of *Ice-Candy-Man* deals with a wide variety of topics in the novel, including several analyses of Sidhwa's subtext on male/female authority issues.

Sidhwa travels frequently to Pakistan in her capacities as a women's rights activist. Sidhwa works with women to help foster an awareness of their rights, including the organization of largescale awareness-raising public protests. She also utilizes her position as an acclaimed writer to make numerous public statements in the Pakistani media aimed against repressive measures that harm women and minority communities. She has worked as the voluntary secretary in the Destitute Women and Children's home in Lahore for years, and was appointed to the advisory committee to Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto on Women's Development.

Since moving to the United States in 1983, Sidhwa has received numerous literary awards both in the U.S. and abroad. In 1987 she was awarded both a Bunting Fellowship at Radcliffe\Harvard and a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts that allowed her to finish *Cracking India*. In 1991 Sidhwa received the Sitara-i-Imitaz, Pakistan's highest national honor in the arts, along with the Literaturepreis in Germany. In 1993 she published her most recent novel, *An American Brat*, a comical reflection on the confusing friction that different cultures impose upon a Pakistani girl in the United States. The same year she received the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Writer's Award, which, pleasantly enough, also included one-hundred-fifty thousand dollars. The author has received numerous other awards for her writing.

In her most recently published essay, for *Time Magazine*, she reflects on the Partition's victims of rape. "What legacy have these women left us? I believe that their spirit animate all those women that have bloomed into judges, journalists, ngo official, filmmakers, doctors and writers- women who today are shaping opinions and challenging stereotypes".

### **The female characters in *Ice-Candy-Man* pulsate with a will and life of their own. Discuss.**

*Ice-Candy-Man* is a major novel on the Partition which treats history of both India and Pakistan. It had been a shocking and traumatic experience shared by both the nations. *Ice-Candy-Man* by Bapsi Sidhwa is a Pakistani version of this traumatic experience like Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas*, Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* as Indian versions of this bitter reality. Like any other upheaval, political or religious in nature, Partition of the Indian sub-continent proved to be a disaster for both the Hindus and the Muslims. Women and children had been the worst sufferers and easy victims in communal riots. In her novels Sidhwa dwells on the Partition crises, the Parsi milieu with its social idiosyncracies and the problems of Muslim women in Pakistan.

In her first novel *The Bride*, Sidhwa deals with the repression of women in the patriarchal Pakistani society. This novel is based on a true story narrated to her during her stay in a remote area of Karakoram mountain range. She was told about this sad tale of woe and strife of a girl by army engineers and doctors. A girl from the plains of Pakistan was taken across the Indus for marriage by the local tribals after her marriage, the girl ran away. She hid herself in the rugged mountains and she was continuously chased by her husband and his men. She was caught while crossing a rope bridge on the Indus river. Her husband severed her head and threw her into the turbulent waves of the Indus. But Bapsi Sidhwa has made some departure from the real story. In her narrative, the girl does not die but escapes



to the other side. In her fictional presentation of the story, Sidhwa has introduced the tribes of the Karakoram with their customs and beliefs. The novel *The Bride* "provides an incisive look into the treatment of women. It is the most contentious of Sidhwa's novels, the most critical towards unjust traditions that undermine the structure of community. The novel relates how Zaitoon, trained as an obedient Muslim girl, is captivated by the fantasies of her protector father's visions of the lost mountain paradise," observes R. K. Dhawan. Fawzia Afzal Khan calls *The Bride* a challenge to "The patriarchal culture and values of Indian—Pakistani society."

In her novel *The Ice-Candy-Man*, Sidhwa deals with the problem of communal riots in the wake of Partition. It is a politically motivated novel. Sidhwa's depiction of communal riots is touching as well as shocking. Children and women suffer the most. The horrors of Partition are depicted without histrionics. Lenny, the child narrator is eight year old. She suffers from Polio and records her observations about her surroundings in a detached manner. She observes social change around her and narrates it from a child's point of view. Lenny's mother, Mrs. Sethi and other Parsi women help Hindu and Sikh families and kidnapped Hindu women to move to safer places. Lenny's Godmother rescues the Hindu Ayah who had been forcibly married to her Muslim friend, the seller of ice-candies. Ayah reaches Amritsar safely.

Feroz Jussawalla observes that *Ice-Candy-Man* (1988) is the truest bildungsroman in Bapsi Sidhwa's Parsi trilogy of *The Crow Eaters*, *An American Brat* and *Ice-Candy-Man*. Bildungsroman focuses on awakening and awareness of the changing environment. It also records the growth of a child into a mature individual. Lenny also awakens to a new identity. Sidhwa's heroines and heroes awake and get rooted in one's self. Feroz Jussawalla calls the tales of Sidhwa's Parsi protagonists as "the rites of passage of the Parsis of Bapsi Sidhwa's fiction. In her writings, Sidhwa asserts that though Pakistan got independence in 1947, women in Pakistan still "continue for their independence struggle till today." Her novels present a condemnatory view of the practices of the patriarchal Pakistani society. In her novel *The Pakistani Bride*, Sidhwa writes: "Women the world over, through the ages, asked to be murdered, raped, exploited, enslaved, to get importunately impregnated, beaten up, bullied and disinherited. It was an immutable law of nature. She also expresses her views about her writings that she is not writing feminist literature. Rather her novel *Ice-Candy-Man* is an important testament of "a gynocentric view of reality in which the feminine psyche and experiences are presented with a unique freshness and aplomb," according to Subhash Chandra. He observes that Sidhwa turns the female protagonists into the moral centre, while most of the male characters either remain passive or indulge in violence. The female characters in *Ice-Candy-Man* pulsate with a will and life of their own.

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