Ice-Candy Man

Bapsi Sidhwa

Bapsi Sidhwa: A Biographical Sketch

Introduction

Sidhwa is widely recognized as one of the most prominent Pakistani-Anglophone novelists writing today. She was raised in the Parsi community, a religious and ethnic minority in Pakistan.

Critics regard Sidhwa as a feminist postcolonial Asian author whose novels—including *The Crow Eaters* (1978), *The Bride*(1981), and *Ice-Candy-Man* (1988; republished as *Cracking India* 1991)—provide a unique perspective on Indian and Pakistani history, politics, and culture. Her characters, often women, are caught up in the historical events surrounding the geographical and social division—or "Partition"—of India and Pakistan in 1947, and the subsequent development of Pakistan as an independent nation. Her recurring themes include human relationships and betrayals, the coming of age and its attendant disillusionments, immigration, and cultural hybridity, as well as social and political upheavals.

Sidhwa skilfully 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.

Biographical Information

Sidhwa was born on August 11, 1938, in Karachi, Pakistan, then part of India. Her family belongs to the Parsi ethnic community which practices the Zoroastrian religion. Sidhwa received a bachelor's degree from Kinnaird College for Women in 1956.

After her first husband died, she married Noshir R. businessman, in 1963, with whom she has three children. In 1975 Sidhwa served as Pakistan's delegate to the Asian Women's Congress. She immigrated to the United States in 1983, and became a naturalized American citizen in 1993.

Since moving to the United States, Sidhwa has taught, lectured, and presented workshops in creative writing at several colleges and universities, including Columbia University, St. Thomas University, the University of Houston, and Mount Holyoke College in Amherst, Massachusetts. She held a Bunting fellowship at Radcliffe/Harvard in 1986 and was a visiting scholar at the Rockefeller Foundation Centerin Bellagio, Italy, in 1991.

Sidhwa also served on the advisory committee on women's development for former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. In 1991 she was awarded the Sitara-i-Imtiaz, Pakistan's highest national honor in the arts. She has also received a variety of grants and awards for her fiction, including a National Endowment for the Arts grant in 1987, a *New York Times Book Review* Notable Book of the Year award for *Cracking India* in 1991, and a Lila Wallace-*Reader's Digest* award in 1993.

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-turned-kidnappers. 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.

Principal Works

The Crow Eaters (novel) 1978

The Bride (novel) 1981

Ice-Candy-Man (novel) 1988;

An American Brat (novel) 1993

*The Bapsi Sidhwa Omnibus (novels) 2001 Includes The Crow Eaters, The Bride, Ice-Candy-Man, and An American Brat.

A Study of Bapsi Sidhwa's Works

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

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 Lahorebefore 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 neighbourer 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 trian arrives from Gurdaspur, everyone on the plateform 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 belp 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. Lenni'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.

Postmodernism, Postcolonialism and Bapsi Sidhwa

Introduction

Postmodernism is the name given to the period of literary criticism that is now in full bloom. Just as the name implies, it is the period that comes after the modern period. But these are not easily separated into discrete units limited by dates as centuries or presidential terms are limited. Postmodernism came about as a reaction to the established modernist era, which itself was a reaction to the established tenets of the nineteenth century and before.

What sets Postmodernism apart from its predecessor is the reaction of its practitioners to the rational, scientific, and historical aspects of the modern age. For postmodernists this took the guise of being self-conscious, experimental, and ironic. The postmodernist is concerned with imprecision and unreliability of language and with epistemology, the study of what knowledge is.

An exact date for the establishment of Postmodernism is not easy, but it is said to have begun in the post-World War II era, roughly the 1950s. It took full flight in the 1960s in the social and political unrest in the world. In 1968 it reached its zenith with the intense student protests in the United States and France, the war for independence in Algeria, and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. The beginning of space exploration with the launch of Sputnik in 1957, culminating in the 1969 landing of men on the moon, marks a significant shift in the area of science and technology.

At the same time, Jacques Derrida presented his first paper, *Of Grammatology*(1967), outlining the principles of deconstruction. The early novels of Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. and Alain Robbe–Grillet were published; Ishmael Reed was writing his poetry. The Marxist critics, Fredric Jameson and Terry Eagleton, who saw a major shift in the social and economic world as a part of the postmodern paradigm, were beginning their creative careers. As time progressed, more and more individuals added their voices to this list: Julia Kristeva, Susan Sontag, and, in popular culture, Madonna.

In a speech at Independence Hall in Philadelphia on July 4, 1994, Vaclav Havel, president of the Czech Republic, said the following:

The distinguishing features of such transitional periods are a mixing and blending of cultures and a plurality or parallelism of intellectual and spiritual worlds. These are periods when all consistent value systems collapse, when cultures distant in time and space are discovered or rediscovered. They are periods when there is a tendency to quote, to imitate, and to amplify, rather than to state with authority or integrate. New meaning is gradually born from the encounter, or the intersection, of many different elements.

This speech outlines the essence of Postmodernism in all its forms: the mixing, the disintegration, and the instability of identities.

REPRESENTATIVE AUTHORS

Donald Barthelme (1931-1989)

Donald Barthelme, Jr. was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on April 7, 1931. He has been characterized as an avant-garde or postmodernist who relies more on language than plot or character. He is well known as a short story writer, novelist, editor, journalist, and teacher.

Jacques Derrida (1930-)

Jacques Derrida was born in El Biar,Algeria, on July 15, 1930. His work beginning in the 1960s effected a profound change in literary criticism. In 1962 he first outlined the basic ideas that became known as deconstruction in a lengthy introduction to his 1962 French translation of German philosopher Edmund Husserl's *Origin of Geometry*. The full strategy of deconstruction is outlined and explained in his difficult masterwork, *Of Grammatology,* published in English in 1967. It revealed the interplay of multiple meanings in the texts of present day culture and exposed the unspoken assumptions that underlie much of contemporary social thought.

Terry Eagleton (1943-)

Terence Eagleton was born on February 22, 1943, in Salford, England. As one of the foremost exponents of Marxist criticism, he is concerned with the ideologies found in literature, examining the role of Marxism in discerning these ideologies. His concise *Marxism and Literary Criticism,* 1976, discusses the author as producer, and the relationships between literature and history, form and content, and the writer and commitment. He is the foremost advocate of the inclusion of social and historical issues in literary criticism.

Michel Foucault (1926-1984)

Michel Foucault was born in Poitiers,France, on October 15, 1926, and received a diploma in 1952 from Ecole Normale Superieure and the Sorbonne, University of Paris. He used what he called the archaeological approach in his work to dig up scholarly minutia from the past and display the "archaeological" form or forms in them, which would be common to all mental activity. Later he shifted this emphasis from the archaeological to a genealogical method that sought to understand how power structures shaped and changed the boundaries of "truth." It is this understanding of the combination of power and knowledge that is his most noteworthy accomplishment.

Toni Morrison (1931-)

Toni Morrison was born Chloe Anthony Wofford on February 18, 1931, in Lorain,Ohio, to a black working class family. After the publication of her first novel in 1970, Morrison's writing quickly came to the attention of critics and readers who praised her richly expressive style and ear for dialogue.

THEMES

Deconstruction

This is the term created by Derrida that defines the basic premise of Postmodernism. It does not mean destruction, but rather it is a critique of the criteria of certainty, identity, and truth.

Derrida says that all communication is characterized by uncertainty because there is no definitive link between the signifier (a word) and the signified (the object to which the word refers). Once a text is written it ceases to have a meaning until a reader reads it. Derrida says that there is nothing but the text and that it is not possible to construe a meaning for a text using a reference to anything outside the text. T

he text has many internal meanings that are in conflict with themselves (called reflexivity or self-referential) and as a result there is no solid and guaranteed meaning to a text. The text is also controlled by what is not in it (referents outside the text are not a part of its meaning). The consequence of this position is that there can be no final meaning for any text, for as Derrida himself says, "texts are not to be read according to [any method] which would seek out a finished signified beneath a textual surface.Reading is transformational."

Disintegration

One of the main outgrowths of Postmodernism is the disintegration of concepts that used to be taken for granted and assumed to be stable. These include the nature of language, the idea of knowledge, and the notion of a universal truth. The application of deconstruction to the understanding of language itself results in disintegration of that very language. Even these words are not stable in the sense that they cannot convey an unalterable message.

The consequence of this is that once language is destabilized the resultant knowledge that comes from that language is no longer a stable product. The end result therefore is that there can be no universal truths upon which to base an understanding or a social construct.

In literary works, authors often disrupt expected time lines or change points of view and speakers in ways that disrupt and cause disintegration in the very literature they are writing. *Gravity's Rainbow* by Thomas Pynchon is a good example of this.

Cultural Studies

One major impact of Postmodernism on the structure of college and university courses is the introduction of multiculturalism and cultural studies programs. These are sometimes directly related to specific areas on the planet and sometimes to specific focus groups. Often these are not limited by political concerns and boundaries but are economically and socially organized, a major concern expressed in the writings.

Multiculturalism

Another aspect of multiculturalism is combining specific interest areas into one area of study. This aspect of Postmodernism broadens the experiences of college students through the study of literature and history of peoples from other parts of the world. Classes whose structures combine sometimes disparate elements are found in these new departments. For example, a study of prisons and prison literature might be combined with literature from Third World countries under the broad label of Literature of the Oppressed.

STYLE

Schizophrenia

An important aspect of Postmodernism in literature and entertainment media is the relaxation of strict time lines, sometimes called discontinuous time. Often an author will construct a sequence of events that have no time relationships to each other. In literature this requires the reader to create a time line, which the author may upset later in the story. Therefore, the writers show one event, then show another that happened at the same time as the first. This kind of temporal disruption is called "schizophrenia" by Jameson.

Recurring Characters

Some authors introduce a single character into several different works. Vonnegut does this with Kilgore Trout and Tralfamadorians, who appear in several of his novels.

Irony

Irony is a specialized use of language in which the opposite of the literal meaning is intended. Its former use often had the intent to provoke a change in behavior from those who were the object of the irony. But for the postmodernist the writer merely pokes fun at the object of the irony without the intention of making a social (or other kind of) change.

Authorial Intrusion

Occasionally an author will speak directly to the audience or to a character in the text in the course of a work—not as a character in the tale but as the writer. Vonnegut does this in several of his novels, including *Breakfast of Champions*.

Self-Reflexivity

Many literary works make comments about the works themselves, reflecting on the writing or the "meaning" of the work. These works are self-conscious about themselves. In some instances the work will make a comment about itself in a critical way, making a self-reflexive comment on the whole process of writing, reading, or understanding literature.

Collage

This style is characterized by an often random association of dissimilar objects without any intentional connection between them or without a specified purpose for these associations. For example, the rapid presentation of bits and pieces from old news tapes that are often used at the beginning of news programs is a collage. While it intends to introduce the news, it is not the news nor is it any hint of the news to come.

Prose Poetry

This idea seems to be a contradiction in terms but it is an effective style of writing. The passage will look like a paragraph of prose writing, but the content will be poetic in language and construction. Rather than being a literal statement, the language in this paragraph will be more figurative.

Parody and Pastiche

Oftentimes writers will take the work of another and restructure it to make a different impression on the reader than that of the original author. Some writers lift whole passages from others, verbatim, resulting in something quite different from the original writer's material.

Parody is the imitation of other styles with a critical edge. The general effect is to cast ridicule on the mannerisms or eccentricities of the original.

Pastiche is very much like parody but it is neutral, without any sense of humor. It is the imitation or a pasting together of the mannerisms of another's work, but without the satiric impulse or the humor. Jameson says that because there is no longer a "normal" language system, only pastiche is possible.

Simulacra

This is a term that comes from Plato meaning "false copy" or a debased reflection of the original that is inferior to the original. Author Jean Baudrillard claims that a simulacrum is a perfect copy that has no original. The postmodernists use this technique of copying or imitating others without reservation or hesitation. They treat it as just another process in their creative effort. Many science fiction movies deal with simulacrum characters.

Movement Variations

As might be expected in a relatively new philosophic movement, there are a variety of different understandings, proposals, and approaches reflecting on the particular interests of writers and contributors to that new philosophy. Postmodernism's origin in the aftermath of World War II was not a universally scripted event. By the time Derrida and others were presenting their major papers on the basics of Postmodernism, many others were already approaching these concepts in individual ways. Additionally, as time moved on and Postmodernism developed as an accepted area of discussion, the basic ideas of Postmodernism were branching off into many facets of contemporary life. Among these variations are Marxism and political studies, Poststructuralism, feminism and gender studies.

Feminism

Feminist readings in Postmodernism were initiated as a way to consciously view and deconstruct ideas of social norms, language, sexuality, and academic theory in all fields. Feminist theorists and writers (and they were not all women, e.g., Dr. Bruce Appleby, Professor Emeritus of Southern Illinois University, is a long-standing contributor to feminist writings and theory) were concerned with the manner in which society assumed a male bias either by direct action—for example, paying women less for doing the same job; or by inaction—using the term "man" to mean all of humankind. In either case, the female segment of society had been excluded. Even the modernist penchant for binary sets for discussions, good/bad, white/black, established an unspoken hierarchy that made the first of the set more important than the second. In that way the "male/female" set defined the female half as being less important or inferior to the male half of the set. This was not acceptable to the feminist writers and to those in the subsequent feminist movement. Feminist writers and theorists attempted to separate the ideas of sex (which is biological) and gender (which is a social construct), and use those ideas as a lens through which to deconstruct language, social mores and theories, economic policies, and longstanding historical policy.

Marxism

It is not much of a stretch to move the discussion of gender discrimination into a discussion of class discrimination, which is the focus of many of the Marxist critics. While some issues are

different, it is easy to see that bias based on gender is just as destructive as the elitism in a society based on class differences.

Political Marxism is a topic that engenders strong emotional opinions, especially among those who see it as a threat to Western political systems. However, the basic issues that drove Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels to formulate their theories in the nineteenth century are still valid in a discussion of literature and art and the relationship between class and the arts in a society. Marxist critics assert that the products of artistic endeavors are the results of historical forces that are themselves the results of material and/or economic conditions at the time of the creation of the art.

Art then becomes the product of those who control the economic and the intellectual production of the society. Therefore, the nature of the description of an era in human history is the product of the dominant class at the time the description is given. The present era called postmodern is so labeled by the dominant class. (It is important to note that since the present era has not yet come of age, the eventual naming of it may shift if the dominant class also shifts. What that shift may be is unknown at this time.) This concept has been reduced to the simple statement that the victor writes the story of the battle.

Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism is a term often used interchangeably with Postmodernism. While these two terms share a number of philosophic concepts, there are some differences.

Postcolonial Literature

"Postcolonial Literature" is a hot commodity these days. On the one hand writers like Bapsi Sidhwa and Arundhati Roy are best-selling authors; and on the other hand, no college English department worth its salt wants to be without a scholar who can knowledgeably discourse about postcolonial theory.

But there seems to be a great deal of uncertainty as to just what the term denotes. Many of the debates among postcolonial scholars center on which national literatures or authors can be justifiably included in the postcolonial canon. Much of the discussion among postcolonial scholars involves criticisms of the term "postcolonial" itself. In addition, it is seldom mentioned but quite striking that very few actual authors of the literature under discussion embrace and use the term to label their own writing.

It should be acknowledged that postcolonial theory functions as a subdivision within the even more misleadingly named field of "cultural studies": the whole body of generally leftist radical literary theory and criticism which includes Marxist, Gramscian, Foucauldian, and various feminist schools of thought, among others. What all of these schools of thought have in common is a determination to analyze unjust power relationships as manifested in cultural products like literature (and film, art, etc.). Practitioners generally consider themselves politically engaged and committed to some variety or other of liberation process.

It is also important to understand that not all postcolonial scholars are literary scholars. Postcolonial theory is applied to political science, to history, and to other related fields. People who call themselves postcolonial scholars generally see themselves as part of a large (if poorly defined and disorganized) movement to expose and struggle against the influence of large, rich nations (mostly European, plus the U.S.) on poorer nations (mostly in the southern hemisphere).

Taken literally, the term "postcolonial literature" would seem to label literature written by people living in countries formerly colonized by other nations. This is undoubtedly what the term originally meant, but there are many problems with this definition.

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.

Postcolonial literary critics re-examine classic literature with a particular focus on the social "discourse" that shaped it. For instance, in Orientalism, Edward Said analyzes the works of Honoré de Balzac, Charles Baudelaire and Lautréamont, exploring how they were influenced by and helped to shape a societal fantasy of European racial superiority. Postcolonial fictional writers interact with the traditional colonial discourse, but modify or subvert it; for instance by retelling a familiar story from the perspective of an oppressed minor character in the story, for example Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea (1966), which was written as a pseudo-prequel to Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre. Often the protagonist of a postcolonial work will find him/herself in a struggle to establish an identity, feeling conflicted between an old, native world that is being abolished by the invasive forces of modernity and/or the new dominant culture.

Postcolonial literature uses a wide range of terms, like "writing back", re-writing and re-reading, which describe the interpretation of well-known literature under the perspective of the formerly colonized.

Other authors use different analogies for the colonized, but also very different approaches. The "anti-conquest narrative" recasts indigenous inhabitants of colonised countries as victims rather than foes of the colonisers. This depicts the colonised people in a more human light but risks absolving colonisers of responsibility for addressing the impacts of colonisation by assuming that native inhabitants were "doomed" to their fate.

In Africa, Chinua Achebe set the standards for African literature with 1958'sThings Fall Apart. Ayi Kwei Armah in "Two Thousand seasons" tries to establish a history for Africa from an African perspective.

In the Americas, Isabel Allende from Chile contributes to Latin-American literature and occasionally writes in a style called magic realism also used by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, a certain way of vivid storytelling.

In Asia, the areas of postcolonial writing are the Muslim and the Indian literature. Meena Alexander is probably best known for lyrical memoirs that deal sensitively with struggles of women and disenfranchised groups. Other notable postcolonial writers are J.M. Coetzee, Athol Fugard, Hanif Kureishi, Doris Lessing, Earl Lovelace, Gabriel García Márquez, Bharati Mukherjee,V. S. Naipaul, Bapsi Sidhwa, Wilbur Smith,Wole Soyinka, Derek Walcott and Kath Walker.

Events leading to post colonialism: a little about colonialism

Before post colonialism there was colonialism. Colonialism can be broken down simply as the following; in the beginning, a large power, for various reasons, has to colonize. This means that colonies had to be established by a large power. The large power seeks to expand its borders for any of a number of reasons. Some of these include: “civilizing” the native inhabitants (people who lived in the area before the settlers), converting their religion to Christianity, or using resources and/or raw materials found in the new territory. Colonialism is the way (usually brute force) that a country or empire takes natural resources, raw materials, markets etc. from its colonies. Colonialism most commonly was the abuse of the native people by settlers making a life in the new colony; settlers who were put there by the larger power. Colonialism and the oppression of the colonies by the large power can only go on for so long. Eventually, the colonies will fight back which ultimately leads to a revolution, if the colony is successful. A revolution and the rejection

of oppression ultimately leads to an independence day, everything after that day is post colonialism.

Defining postcolonial literature from a critics point of view

What qualifies as postcolonial literature is debatable, in fact it is a constant debate. Some would say that it is anything written after the colonies independence, however that seems a bit broad. The term, postcolonial literature, has taken on many meanings and has been shaped by the study of books written post colonialism. After years of postcolonial literature theories, ideas and arguments, most postcolonial critics have found common ground on three main rules. These rules are more like subjects. If a piece of literature is written after the independence day and disscusses or explores any of the subjects, it may be considered postcolonial. The three subjects include:

1. Social and cultural change or erosion. It seems that after independence is achieved, one main question arises; what is the new cultural identity?

2. Misuse of power and exploitation. Even though the large power ceases to control them as a colony, the settlers still seem to poses power over the natives. The main question here; who really is in power here, why, and how does an independence day really mean independence?

3. Colonial abandonment and alienation. This topic is generally brought up to examine individuals and not the ex-colony as a whole. The individuals tend to ask themselves; in this new country, where do I fit in and how do I make a living?

Bapsi Sidhwa and Postcolonial Literature

Bapsi Sidhwa does not believe in the classification of authors according to movements. She thinks that such terms are coined only by critics to facilitate themselves. However she is not against these terms as well. Speaking about postcolonial literature she says: I have heard often heard the phrase "post-colonial". In fact, it has been cited to death. But I still do not know what it means. Do I become “post-colonial” because I am writing after India and Pakistanachieved freedom? The fact is that, as a child, I never considered myself governed by anybody but our own people. I never had that sense. To me the British Raj was already a thing of the past, and today there is no visible legacy of it (as in monuments or statues) left in Pakistan. If a stranger came to Pakistan he would see nothing that would remind him that the British once ruled inPakistan. So this is one part of our history which does not mean all that much to me. Maybe this is because I have no memory of it, have read little about it. My experiences are mine, and have not much to do with being “post-colonial” or otherwise. I write about my experiences in my particular part of the world.

Post-colonial is a label coined by critics.If it means a lot to critics, it is fine by me. I don't object to it. But I do feel that as a writer such labels put you into very strange slots. There are so many writers who wrote during British rule but did not say very much about the Raj. For instance, there is Ismat Chugtai, and even Khushwant Singh. Their writings, before and after Partition, form one seamless whole. The reality of India and Pakistan does not suddenly become different for them. It remains the same.

However she admits that she writes in English only. And "the more important point in all this is that the western world does not know us. And many of us feel that it is time our voice was heard there, that our cultures should be seen by them. I have always been very conscious of this. Here we are, living in huge communities in hidden corners of the world. It is time that these were seen, understood and recognized for what they are. We may be living in other parts of the world worshipping other religions, but we also laugh, cry, and deal with similar issues, have the same

notions, and live through similar turbulences...I see injustice happening everywhere because of the hegemony of the western world. One of the things a writer can do is speak of the humanity of our people, their poverty and their naiveté ...

She wants to give a voice and a face—an identity to poor people. In this way the thinking pattern and motives behind writing are "postcolonial". She is a postcolonial writer whether she calls herself so or not.

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 Persis 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-a-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, 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 Indiaand 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, Sidhvva 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-Candy-Man,* 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 *Ice-Candy-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-Mann* 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.

Pakistani Literature in English

I grew up in a bilingual home where my father seldom spoke anything but English; my mother was truly at home only in Urdu. This world simply did not exist in tales about churails, badshahs and parrots recounted by Bua, nor the English stories of teddy bears and Father Christmas that I read as a child. The only book, which remotely touched on my bilingual inheritance, was Kipling's Jungle Book. Confusingly, my older, literary cousins in London used the word "Kiplingesque" as disparagement. Much later, I discovered John Masters. Alas the literary cousins did not think much of him either.

In 1961, my chachi, Attia Hosain, published her novel, Sunlight on a Broken Column. There was such excitement in the family. I tried to share it with teachers and friends at my school in England, but no one was interested. Even worse, when I returned to Pakistan for good at 19 (after 10 years) I became aware of another discourse among once-colonized intellectuals — that subcontinentals could not write creatively in English and should not even try! Nevertheless I went on reading and enjoying V.S. Naipaul and others.

In 1967 the expatriate Zulfikar Ghose published the riveting The Murder of Aziz Khan. This was the first cohesive, modern English novel written by a writer of Pakistani origin. The plot about a poor Punjab farmer destroyed by a group of industrialists, though fiction, was so close to the bone, that the chattering classes were abuzz, speculating "who-was-who". Ghose's remaining novels were set in South America, his wife's country and few reached Pakistan. However, his poetry appeared in the first two major anthologies of Pakistani English writing: First Voices (1965) which also included the young Taufiq Rafat; and Pieces Eight (1971) which introduced Adrian Husain, Nadir Hussein, Salman Tarik Kureshi and Kaleem Omar. Soon I began to hear of an exciting new poet, Maki Kureishi. Wordfall (1975) consisting of wonderful poems by Omar, Rafat and Kureishi, remains one of my favourite books. We would all gather regularly at Adrian Husain's multi-lingual, literary meetings, 'Mixed Voices'.

In 1980, Bapsi Sidhwa's first novel, The Crow Eaters was published by JonathanCape in England, which caused a tremendous stir. I remember my aunt and my sister chortling out loud because they found it so funny. I still find it one of Bapsi's best, but I particularly like the accomplished Ice-Candy-Man (1988) which holds a place of its own as partition literature. For me, its special quality lies in the use of an entertaining and canny English-speaking child as narrator, who employs multi-lingual cadences of Pakistani English.

Meanwhile a new academic discourse revealed that some of the best English literature was coming from minority and migrant groups in the West and Britain's erstwhile colonies. In 1984, the British-born playwright Hanif Kureishi, having won the 1981 George Devine Award, came toPakistan for the first time. By then I had become a freelance journalist. My interview with him raised many issues of identity and belonging. Hanif had thought himself English, but England has perceived him as Pakistani — and his work tried to bridge the two. He wrote a haunting memoir The Rainbow Sign (1986) about this and hisPakistan trip, which was published with his Oscar-nominated screenplay My Beautiful Laundrette.

Sara Suleri's creative memoir Meatless Days opened up a new dimension for me: I had never read a work which occupied a space between fiction and non-fiction, with chapters divided according to metaphor. I loved its beautiful tightly-knit prose too, as did my teenage daughter, Kamila.

Over the next few years, the number of Pakistani English language writers grew rapidly. Adam Zameenzad published four novels and won a first novel award, as did Hanif Kureishi, while

Nadeem Aslam won two. Tariq Ali embarked on a Communist trilogy, and an Islam quintet; Bapsi Sidhwa received a prize in Germany, an award in the USA, and published her fourth novel The American Brat (1993). Zulfikar Ghose, who had written around 10 accomplished novels, brought out the intricate and complex The Triple Mirror of the Self about migration and a man's quest for identity, across four continents.

Despite this, in Pakistan, everyone said, "Oh, there are so many Indians writing English, but why aren't there any Pakistanis?" But I was reading, reviewing and interviewing Pakistani writers, all the time including playwright Rukhsana Ahmad and short story writer Aamer Hussein inEngland. We also had some rather good resident English language poets, but they had no outlets — Pakistan's publishing and newspaper industry was in crisis and the international fanfare revolved around South Asian English novels, not poetry or short fiction. Even so, a younger generation, including Alamgir Hashmi and Athar Tahir had emerged.

In 1996 Ameena Saiyid of OUP asked me to put together an anthology of Pakistani English writing to commemorate Pakistan's Golden Jubilee. The hunt for material was quite challenging, though I found that through interviews I had collected a lot of rare, first hand, biographical information. I chanced upon the Pakistani-born Moniza Alvi's work for the first time in the British Council Library and learnt that she was a promising mainstream British poet. But the real surprise came from America. I knew of some short story writers such as Tariq Rahman and Athar Tahir in Pakistan and Talat Abbasi in New York, but the real surprise came from America. In answer to my query Professor M.U. Memon sent me a list of Pakistani-Americans including Tahira Naqvi, Javed Qazi and Moazzam Sheikh; Moazzam, in turn pointed me to Sorayya Y. Khan. Suddenly I found I had 44 published writers of Pakistani origin for the book.

The anthology, Dragonfly in the Sun, which took its name from a Ghose poem, was a retrospective of fiction, poetry and drama, which followed the development of Pakistani English writing. In the process I re-discovered Shahid Suhrawardy, Ahmed Ali, Zaibunnissa Hamidullah, Mumtaz Shahnawaz. There was one unexpected problem: many contributors would not give their date of birth! So I had to resort to a loose grouping, instead of a chronological order.

The major event in our lives was that Kamila's first novel was accepted for publication in 1998. By the time my next anthology was out, Kamila had published her second and my octogenarian mother had written a memoir. Amazingly, our three books appeared in the space of a year.

Dragonfly raised questions of identity: How did I define 'Pakistani"? Why had I included expatriates? To me it seemed that with globalization, most people have more than one identity. If a writer claims to be Pakistani, that is enough and will influence his/her writing, responses, perspective.

Therefore my second anthology Leaving Home (2001) explored the Pakistani experience of migration in its widest perspective, through fiction and essays. I had discovered that the first South Asian English book, Travels by Sake Dean Mohamet, began with a migration. He had served in the East India Company, migrated to Ireland and written his memoirs in 1794 to explain his homeland to Europeans — and I included an extract symbolically as a prologue.

The rest of the book was divided into three sections. The first "When Borders Shift" opened with an extract from Bapsi Sidhwa's novel The Bride, about the 1947 train massacres. The second "Go West" took its title from Javaid Qazi's comic tale of a Pakistani student's fantasy of America. The third, "Voting With Their Feet" began with Irfan Husain's essay on why the brightest and best were leaving Pakistan.

In between the book also explored many other dimensions. Hamida Khuhro described the changes she saw in Karachi after 1947; Aquila Ismail's "Leaving Bangladesh" was a harrowing eye-witness account of 1971; Kamila Shamsie's "Mulberry absences" was a mediation on exile and language; Zia Mohyeddin recalled his memories of Leela Lean in London; the half German, Anwer Mooraj wrote about pre-and-post-warGermany. All these were juxtaposed between fiction, mostly by expatriates, such as Rukhsana Ahmad, Zulfikar Ghose and Aamer Hussein, but there were also stories by resident Pakistanis including Tariq Rahman, Athar Tahir and Humair Yusuf. I also included two distinguished Urdu writers Intizar Husain and Fahmida Riaz who wrote occasionally in English — and that in itself was a form of migration.

Since 2001, Pakistani English literature has come into its own. Uzma Aslam Khan and Mohsin Hamid have made spectacular debuts too. Saad Ashraf, Sorayya Khan and Feryal Ali Gauhar have published accomplished new novels. However Pakistani women, who chose English as a creative vehicle, occupy a unique space. They must constantly challenge stereotypes imposed on them as women and as writers by the patriarchal narratives and cultures of both English and Pakistani literatures. This is the focus of my new anthology And the World Changed: Contemporary Stories by Pakistani Women, (June 2005) to be published by Women Unlimited. Twenty two writers are represented, including well-known authors and exciting new talent such as Humera Afridi, Hima Raza and Soniah Kamal. Collecting and collating material has been a journey of discovery and surprise and here the oral narratives of my childhood and my bilingual world, all co-exist, held together by themes of a 'Quest'.

Background to Bapsi Sidhwa's Novels Or Bapsi Sidhwa and Women Rights

"I feel if there's one little thing I could do, it's to make people realize: We are not worthless because we inhabit a country which is seen by Western eyes as a primitive, fundamentalist country only. . .I mean, we are a rich mixture of all sorts of forces as well, and our lives are very much worth living."

Bapsi Sidhwa

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, 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

thousand 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, inLahore. 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, *Ice-Candy-Man* marked her move into international fame. 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..."

(Ice-Candy-Man)

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" (Ice-Candy-Man).

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 large-scale 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 *Ice-Candy-Man*. In 1991 Sidhwa received the Sitara-i-Imitaz,Pakistan's highest national honor in the arts, along with the Liberaturepreis 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-five 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".

Bapsi Sidhwa's Passion for History and for Truth Telling

With the publication of her third novel,*Ice-Candy-Man*, Bapsi Sidhwa established herself as Pakistan's leading English-language novelist, a position she confirmed with the publication of her most recent novel, *An American Brat* which also heralds a new direction in her fiction. In that book Sidhwa shifts the predominant locale of her work from Lahore in Pakistan to various cities across America as she explores the Parsi/Pakistani Diaspora. Her first three novels, however, are all set in Pakistan, and in each there is a strong sense of place and community which she uses to examine particular aspects of Pakistan's postcolonial identity.

Sidhwa's early novels, while very different from one another share in common what Anita Desai has accurately 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.

Sidhwa's first novel, *The Crow Eaters* is a ribald comedy in which Faredoon Junglewalla (Freddy for short) narrates the story of his life. The action of the novel commences at the turn of the century and continues through to the eve of Independence and Partition. Historically, The Bride begins more or less where *The Crow Eaters* left off. It tells the story of Zaitoon, a young Punjabi girl who is adopted by a Kohistani tribesman after her parents are slaughtered in the riots which accompanied the partition of the subcontinent. Sidhwa's passion for history is evident in both these novels; through the stories of Faredoon Junglewalla and Zaitoon, one pre-Independence, the other post-Independence, she attempts to present a true picture of Pakistan. But without meeting head-on the bloody events which gave birth to her country Sidhwa cannot be true to her passion for history.

In her third novel, *Ice-Candy-Man*, she turns her attention to that terrible period of her country's history as she dramatically recreates Lahore (the predominant setting of all three of these novels) during the tumultuous months of Partition.

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.

There is always a strong sense of place in this novel, Lahore is vividly brought to life through the wealth of local detail Sidhwa includes, and there is a strong sense, too, of community. Like the author herself, the hero of the novel is a Parsi, and through Freddy, his family, and their Parsi friend, the culture of this minority community is imaginatively recreated.

Though the focus on Parsi customs and beliefs is interesting in itself, the decision to set her story within the Parsi community is made on solid literary grounds too. Her choice of a Parsi hero enables Sidhwa to marginalize her narrator, to make him a slightly detached observer of the events played out by the Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs as history moves inexorably, step by step towards 1947. She also appears to be suggesting that to understand the whole one must understand all the constituent parts (the various ethnic/religious groups). Her lens in this novel focuses primarily on the Parses, but through their contact with other groups the whole is gradually glimpsed bit by bit.

Along the way there are many clear historical signposts. The date, for example, is introduced on a number of occasions, and references to Partition or Independence recur throughout the novel. The presence of the British Raj, which had such a significant, if illegitimate role in the birth of Pakistan, is evident, for example, in the character of Colonel Williams. It is also brought to mind by Freddy's friend Mr. Charles P. Allen, whose name reminds the reader, particularly the western reader, of *Plain Tales from the Raj* (1975), which in turn evokes Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills*(1888), and the whole history of the British Raj in India.

Subtly, through these minor figures, Sidhwa is writing back against the traditional pictures of the Raj—by implying that colonel Williams accepted bribes, and by showing Freddy arranging visits to dancing girls in the Hira Mandi for Charles P. Allen. The British Raj is thus transformed from the proud father of so many British versions of history to the somewhat seedy progenitor of Sidhwa's version of Pakistan's history.

Sidhwa is also, as a Pakistani writer, writing against Indian views of the past, against predominantly Indian versions of Partition which have increasingly been challenging British interpretations of those events. And as a Parsi she even appears, on occasions, to write against Pakistani interpretations of history—as with Freddy's foreboding words which bring the novel to a close:

"We will stay where we are... let Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, or whoever rule. What does it matter? The sun will continue to set—in their arses."

By causing her novel to be seen in the context of the numerous novels of Partition, and through the emphasis placed on Freddy's words by their position at the close of the novel, Sidhwa is making a strong political statement about the nature of Partition, which will be taken up more fully in her next two novels.

Whereas *The Crow Eaters* draws to a close with the horrors of Partition imminent, those horrors are the starting point of *The Bride* (which was actually written earlier than *The Crow Eaters*). *The Bride*, then, commences at the beginning of the first chapter of Pakistani history. And as *The Crow Eaters* was successfully set in the marginalized Parsi community, so Sidhwa chooses to treat another marginalized ethnic group of Pakistan in *The Bride*.

Qasim's marginalized position as a Kohistani tribal is made clear at the outset of the novel. The description of the harshness of tribal life in the opening chapter, and the brief description of his life in Jullundur where his tribal customs set him apart from the people of the plains, emphasize this position. And his marginalized position is confirmed, re-enforced when he witnesses the brutal attack on the refugee train early in the book.

Despite the horror of the attack, which he himself only just escapes, "Qasim watches the massacre as in a cinema." His detachment is objectified: "Although he is horrified by the slaughter he feels no compulsion to sacrifice his own life. These are people from the plains—not his people." There is no suggestion of fear or cowardice in Qasim's behavior—quite simply he would be prepared to sacrifice his life for one of his own people, but not for Muslims of the plains.

The attack on the train which is told in the first-person to add the sense of horror, together with the later attack on the refugee camp causes readers of *The Bride*, like readers of *The Crow Eaters*, to recall once more the many Partition novels, like Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* (1976), in which similar attacks take place; indeed attacks on refugee trains are so common in novels of Partition that they are almost a leitmotif for the period. In *The Bride*, however, the horror of "the chaotic summer of 1947" is only the starting point of the novel rather than its subject.

When she is fifteen, Zaitoon, the young girl Qasim adopts after the attack on the Lahore-bound train, is taken to her stepfather's ancestral home in the mountains to be married to one of his kinsmen. This allows Sidhwa to contrast the often brutal ways of Qasim's people with the gentler life Zaitoon has known in Lahore, and sets the scene for an exploration of the cultural divisions Sidhwa sees within independent Pakistan. At the heart of her examination of the conflicts she perceives between two essentially male-dominated worlds, lies a very strong interest in the position of women in Pakistani society. This Interest in women is skillfully highlighted by the introduction of the young American woman, Carol, who is married to a 'modern' western-educated Pakistani husband. Her presence in the novel does not emphasize the cross-cultural differences between East and West so much as the cross-gender differences that exist within Pakistani society. Women, unlike men, are expected to be silenced voices, inhabiting the shadows cast by their fathers, husbands, the family home—silences and shadows which deny an individual her identity, make her anonymous.

Sidhwa uses the burka as the ultimate symbol of shadow and silence: when Zaitoon borrows a baurka (tribal women do not wear the burka, and Qasim will not allow Zaitton to wear one) she can walk past her father unrecognized; similarly, Carol, offended by the stares of a group of tribal men sarcastically comments, "Maybe I should wear a burkha!", suggesting that this would be a shadow which would hide her and metamorphosis her into an anonymous part of womankind. In this respect the generally negative connotations of shadows and silence in this book have a positive aspect too, which should not be overlooked.

In Lahore the women are at ease, are truly themselves only when they inhabit these shadows together in the absence of men. The zenana, for example, is seen as a refuge from the male world. It is described as: a domain given over to procreation, female odours and the interminable care of children…

Redolent of easy hospitality, the benign squalor in the women's quarters inexorably drew Zaitoon, as it did all its inmates, into the mindless, velvet vortex of the womb. The positive sisterhood of the zenana, or women's quarter, is offset by the image of the zenana as a prison—the women are described as inmates—while the comfort and safety of the 'velvet vortex of the womb' is partially denied by the fact that it is also a 'domain given over to procreation' and thus not entirely free from the influence of men. The picture of Pakistan Sidhwa presents in*The Bride* is not one of harmony, rather she focuses her critical lens on the many conflicts and divisions that

she sees as part of life in that country, particularly those which must continually be faced by women in Pakistan.

The important shaping-presence of the now-departed British Raj is also evident in this novel, Sidhwa reminds the reader, as she did in *The Crow Eaters*, of the role of the British in the division of the sub-continent into two countries, India and Pakistan: "The earth is not easy to carve up. India required a deft and sensitive surgeon, but the British, steeped in domestic preoccupation, hastily and carelessly butchered it. They were not deliberately mischievous - only cruelly negligent! A million Indians died. The earth sealed its clumsy new boundaries in blood as town by town, farm by farm, the border was defined."

The birth of Pakistan was not a time for rejoicing. Rather, Sidhwa casts the British not in the role of caring surgeon, but as bloody abortionist, the child of whose botched work survives, alive but damaged and literally dripping with the blood of its parent India. But in this novel the ills of Pakistan are by no means laid solely at the feet of the British Raj. Pakistan's continuing maladies are due to corrupt Pakistani politicians and businessmen, like the 'Leader' Nikka Pehalwan works for, and to the colonial patronage of the United States which is gradually ousting the legacy of the British Raj.

Similarly, Pakistan's colonial past, and the English literary heritage out of which novelists like Sidhwa have emerged and now write against is recalled when in their early months in Lahore, "Qasim perched a frightened Zaitoon on the tall, proud snout of the Zam-Zam cannon, known because of Kipling as 'Kim's gun." This reference shows too that Sidhwa is aware that many western readers (who will make up the majority of her readership) will read her in the shadow of Anglo-Indian writers like Kipling, and that their first view of India/Pakistan may have been the picture of Kim sitting "in defiance of municipal orders, astride the gun Zam-Zammah."

In both *The Crow Eaters* and *The Bride*, partition has been important, but not the shaping-force of either novel. In her third novel, *Ice-Candy-Man*, Partition is the shaping-force. And as in her earlier novels, Sidhwa chooses a marginalized narrator—a child, a female, a Parsi, a victim of polio—a narrator who is so marginalized that in less-skilled authorial hands she could easily have vanished off the page altogether.

In a scathing review of the book for the *New Statesman*, Marianne Wiggins suggests that "Much of Sidhwa's trouble in telling this tale lies in her choice of narrative voice," and that "As character fails, so does any sense of the politics of the time—so does any sense of place." The extent of Wiggins's miss-reading of the novel is astonishing: there is a strong sense of place, of Lahore, and there is a strong sense of the politics of the time, a strong historical consciousness in this novel, as there is in her two previous novels.

Despite Wiggins's objections to the young narrator, it may be that the atrocities of 1947 are best seen through the innocent, naïve eyes of a child, who has no Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh axe to grind, and who is thus likely to present a more objective view of what she sees. As a child Lenny is free both from the prejudices of religion, and from the prejudices against women and the constraints imposed on her sex which she will be subject to as she grows older:

"Our shadow glides over a Brahmin pundit... Our shadow has violated his virtue. The Pundit cringes... He looks at his food as it is infected with maggots. Squeamishly picking up the leaf, he tips its contents behind a bush and throws away the leaf...

I am a diseased maggot. I look at Yousaf. His face is drained of joy, bleak, furious. I know he too feels himself composed of shit, crawling with maggots.
Now I know surely. One man's religion is another man's poison. I experience this feeling of utter degradation, of being an untouchable excrescence, an outcast again, years later when I hold out

my hand to a Parsee priest at a wedding and he, thinking I am menstruating beneath my facade of diamonds and sequined sari, cringes."

The authorial voice, in this case the powerful voice of hindsight, clearly compares religious prejudices to the prejudices against women, within the various religious groups themselves as well as in Pakistani society in general. Moreover, by using a child narrator Sidhwa is truer to her own memories than if she wrote through the prejudiced eyes of an older narrator. It may be worth remembering that Sidhwa herself was a young girl in Lahore in the years leading up to Partition, and thus, like Lenny, witnessed the historical events of the time through childhood eyes.

Wiggins's ill-conceived and unrestrained criticism of the authorial voice is effectively answered in Lenny's self-condemning question, "How can anyone trust a truth-infected tongue?" This is a wonderful conceit, an elaborate metaphor which contains both paradoxical and ironical elements. The word 'infected' loads its partner 'truth' with unusually negative connotations and causes us to reflect on the nature of the truth we want to hear. Though we require Lenny to be a reliable witness to the historical events she sees, and to tell an historical truth (within the bounds of Sidhwa's fictional truth) in her narration, we are made uneasy by the unwise, instinctive truth which causes, her to betray Ayah. Only a child could own such a truth-infected tongue. It is this same childish innocence which causes Lenny to draw a number of wrong conclusions about the petrol which is loaded in and out of her mother's car, and about the women in the 'prison' across the road. But it is testament to Sidhwa's skill as a novelist that the reader always sees the 'real' truth of the situation, while at the same time recognizing the validity of Lenny's truth.

Again, we are reminded that there is no single truth—there are always many ways of interpreting the events which are being played out in Sidhwa's Lahore of 1947. An unreliable or apparently unreliable narrator is always, one hopes, used for a purpose. In*Ice-Candy-Man* the fact that Lenny's unreliable narration proves, after all, to be reliable in its own way, causes us to at least question the British and Indian versions of the truth that have hitherto been accepted.

The decision to make her narrator a child also allows Sidhwa to restrict her world to a very small geographical area ofLahore. This compressed world of a child's vision is populated by a relatively small group of people, which like the focus on the Parsi community in *The Crow Eaters* or the focus on the Kohistani tribals in *The Bride*, provides a useful microcosm through which Sidhwa can convey the wider history of the period; thus Ayah's followers include a Hindu, a Muslim, a Sikh, a Pathan from the mountains, a Jat from the plains, who together are representative of the population mix of Lahore prior to Partition.

The British Raj enters Lenny's little world, too, when Mr. And Mrs. Roger come for dinner, and her tutor (the aptly named) Mrs. Pen is an Anglo-Indian. The sickening violence of the period (revealed in all its enormity in the great set-piece story that Lenny's young friend Ranna tells of his own escape from the slaughter that overtook his village) which is difficult for a child (Lenny or Ranna) to understand is paradoxically seen more clearly by the reader through the uncomprehending eyes of a child. It is the innocence and disbelief of the children in this book—Lenny, her brother Adi, Cousin, Ranna—together with the humanity of people like Lenny's mother, who smuggles rationed petrol at great personal risk to help her Hindu and Sikh friends escape Lahore, and some wonderful, deft comic moments, that save the novel from an all-consuming bleakness, and provide hope for the future. This essential humanity, this innocence, this instinctive understanding of the need for restraint, is apparent too in other Partition novels.

Contrary to Wiggins's view, Sidhwa's young narrator is always convincing, and even her faulty memory, always skillfully controlled by Sidhwa, adds authenticity to the novel, as the following passage illustrates:

"Mozang Chawk burns for months... and months... despite its brick and mortar construction: despite its steel girders and the density of its terraces that run in an uneven high-low, broad-narrow continuity for miles on either side: despite the small bathrooms and godowns and corrugated tin shelters for charpoys deployed to sleep on the roof—and its doors and wooden rafters—the building could not have burned for months. Despite all the ruptured dreams, broken lives, buried gold, bricked-in rupees, secreted jewelry, lingering hopes... the fire could not have burned for months and months...
But in my memory it is branded over an inordinate length of time: memory demands poetic license."

That comment on memory reveals an authorial presence which subtly lends power to the narrator's voice, and a sense of hindsight which strengthens, adds authority to the immediacy of the intimate first-person narration, and draws together past and present. The dinner-party at Lenny's parent's house, during which Lenny and her brother hide under the large table and eavesdrop on the conversation overhead, allows Sidhwa to introduce a discussion of the major political issues of the day—Swaraj, the demand for Pakistan—and the major political players—Gandhi, Jinnah, Wavell, Congress, the Muslim League, the Akalis—which would otherwise be outside the world of her young narrator.

Similarly, Lenny overhears much about the current political situation (much of which she doesn't understand at the time) as she sits with Ayah and her followers. And it is because of what she overhears, because of the opinions she has been exposed to, that Lenny suddenly becomes aware of the different religions all around her, and understands that in the Lahore of 1947 people are not simply themselves: "It is sudden. One day everybody is themselves—and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. People shrink, dwindling into symbols. Ayah is no longer just my all-encompassing Ayah—she is also a token. A Hindu." This signals a growth from innocence to experience, which prompts us to place more trust in the rapidly maturing narrator. But despite her growing maturity there are still some things that Lenny can only interpret through childhood experience.

Lenny's attempt to understand this, to her incomprehensible, attack in her own terms follows shortly afterwards:

"I select a large life-like doll with a china face and blinking blue eyes and coarse black curls. It has a sturdy, well-stuffed cloth body and a substantial feel. I hold it upside down and pull its pink legs apart. The knees and thighs bend unnaturally, but the stitching in the center stays intact.

I hold one leg out to Adi."Here," I say, "pull it."

"Why?" asks Adi looking confused.

"Pull, damn it!" I scream, so close to hysteria that Adi blanches and hastily grabs the proffered leg... Adi and I pull the doll's legs, stretching it in a fierce tug-of-war, until making a wrenching sound it suddenly splits. We stagger off balance. The cloth skin is ripped right up to its armpits spilling chunks of grayish cotton and coiled brown coir and the innards that make its eyes blink and make it squawk "Ma-ma." I examine the doll's spilled insides and, holding them in my hands, collapse on the bed sobbing.

Adi couches close to me. I can't bear the disillusioned and contemptuous look in his eyes.

"Why were you so cruel if you couldn't stand it?" he asks at last, infuriated by the pointless brutality."

By having Lenny transport the cruelty she witnesses into the once-safe world of dolls, Sidhwa introduces an image which is as haunting as any vivid, bloody description of the Banya's death

could have been, and forces the reader to re-examine the inhumanity behind the atrocious act, the pointless brutality of Partition. Adi is 'infuriated by the pointless brutality' shown by Lenny towards her doll because he doesn't understand it, just as we find ourselves unable to understand the brutality which causes the death of the Banya, and the brutality that underlies all the violence of this terrible period. And because we, as readers, still have the mob's brutality fresh in our minds, Adi's words echo our fury and emphasize the metaphysical element of Lenny's action, and the fury which drove her to destroy her doll. Unlike Qasim in *The Bride*, Lenny cannot maintain an impersonal distance from the violence she witnesses. Indeed, that violence gradually disrupts the very center of her own small world, as first she comes across the gunny-sacked body of Ayah's preferred admirer, Masseur, and then sees Ayah herself abducted from the family home by an angry mob.

Alamgir Hashmi does not share Marianne Wiggins's hostility towards Sidhwa's narrator, but he too has some reservations about the historical content of the novel. He writes that *Ice-Candy-Man*"concerns the Partition events of 1947, and is more interesting for its characterization, developing narrative techniques and the child's point of view than what it actually has to tell about the events." Yet *Ice-Candy-Man* is deeply political in its retelling of the events of Partition from a Pakistani rather than an Indian perspective, and it is a novel laden with historical references.

Admittedly, at times the historical signposts in this novel do appear misleading. The early reference to Gandhi's intention "to walk a hundred miles to the ocean to make salt," for example, is wholly out of its time-scale. Gandhi's salt march to Dandi Beachtook place in the early months of 1930, not in the early months of 1947.

However, this is far from being a case of inaccurate historical detail; rather memory is playing a part here—what Lenny is told and what she remembers hearing first-hand merge at times, as is common with our childhood memories, and this reference to Gandhi is for Lenny a received truth even if it is historically out of its time. It has become part of the ethos of the age. Similarly, she confuses the burning of Lahore with the celebration of Holi—a Spring Festival which would have taken place some months earlier. The introduction of such tricks of memory shows how thoroughly Sidhwa understands her young narrator, and makes her a more rather than less reliable witness. The historical signposts or references in this novel are necessarily limited because Lenny doesn't understand much of what she hears.

As Lenny herself says: "Obviously (*Ice-Candy-Man*'s) quoting Bose (Sometimes he quotes Gandhi, or Nehru or Jinnah, but I'm fed up of hearing about them. Mother, Father and their friends are always saying: Gandhi said this, Nehru said that. Gandhi did this, Jinnah did that. What's the point of talking so much about people we don't know?)" But a number of significant historical events do occur in the novel.

And in her attempt to write against Indian versions of history, to present instead a Pakistani version, she complains, too, about the way Jinnah has been treated in Indian and in British histories: "And, today, forty years later, in films of Gandhi's and Mountbattens lives, in books by British and Indian scholars, Jinnah, who for a decade was known as 'Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity,' is caricatured." In re-imagining Jinnah, Sidhwa again displays the important presence of hindsight in her fiction ('today, forty years later') and draws on a quotation from the Indian poet and freedom fighter, Sarojini Naidu, to support the validity of her portrayal of Jinnah.

Sarojini Naidu is not the only literary figure Sidhwa introduces into her story. Her references to such figures as Iqbal and Longfellow show her own dual literary heritage, out of which Pakistani writing in English has also grown. The most interesting literary reference, though, which occurs early in the novel links Sidhwa's title to Eugene O'Neill's play *The Iceman Cometh*: "Ice-Candy-Man is selling his popsicles to the other groups lounging on the grass. My mouth waters. I have confidence in Ayah's chocolate chemistry... lank and loping the Ice-Candy-Man cometh."

In O'Neill's play, published in 1946, Sidhwa has found a framework for her dramatic re-creation of Lahore during the months leading up to Partition. Through this intertextual referencing, and by responding to a particular literary text, Sidhwa is re-confirming the role of fiction as a shaping-force in history, while at the same time exposing the influences that are working on her as a writer who divides her time between Pakistan and the United States. By referring to the influences of British and American Literary texts, Sidhwa is once again reflecting on the influence of Britain, and, more recently, America on the history of her own country.

Bapsi Sidhwa's voice is an important voice in Pakistani writing in English. Her treatment of the Parsi community in *The Crow Eaters* and *Ice-Candy-Man* provides the reader with an intimate view of a minor ethnic group in Pakistan that has hitherto not been in fiction, just as *The Bride* provides significant glimpses of the lives of Pathans and Kohistanis of the Tribal Territories. India has produced a number of Partition novels which have contributed to the strong body of fiction which treats the history of India. But Partition is as much a part of Pakistani history as it is a part of Indian history, and it is important to have a Pakistani version of that shared horror. *Ice-Candy-Man* is both Pakistani version of Partition and a major contribution to the growing list of Partition novels which continue to emerge from the sub-continent. Through her various marginalized narrators and through the experiences of the many marginalized characters in her first three novels, Sidhwa gives voice to hitherto silenced groups of Pakistan and in so doing tells other versions of her country's history.

Sidhwa's Quest for the Continuation of Parsi Community

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.

As a realist, she believes that a writer of fiction cannot alter the social reality but at least, he can make his voice audible to the sensible people. *The Crow Eaters* is Sidhwa's first published novel but she wrote her novel *The Bride* first. It was published later.

When her novel *The Crow Eaters* was published in Pakistan, it created a storm in its limited reading circles because it was alleged that she revealed her Parsi community's social and ethical secrets to the world. Abroad, the novel was praised for its literary value and strength. It has "a distinctive authorial voice which celebrates the achievements of a tiny community which has survived migration, resettled peacefully and prospered without losing their cultural identity,".

In fact, the book created a turmoil in the Parsi Community. The novel describes the social mobility of a Parsi family, the Junglewallas during the British rule in the early 20th century. The novel also shows the ambivalent attitude of the Parsi in the independence struggle.

In her another novel, *Ice-Candy-Man,* Sidhwa describes the events that took place during the Partition through a child-narrator Lenny. She presents the Parsi paradox of whether to support the independence struggle or not. Novy Kapadia's observations need attention here: "With Independence imminent, the dilemma is acute and the paranoid feelings of the Parsis, a

minuscule minority get accentuated. The Lahore Parsis have an acrimonious debate on the political situation at their temple hall meeting. Apprehensions of their status at the departure of the British emerge." It is observed that now the Parsi community's fascination with the Whites is gone and they hold. A status quo position, resulting in "a typical Parsi compromise." The community of the Parsis is concerned about its survival. Bapsi Sidhwa also provides the moral vision of her community.

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 atLahore 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 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.

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 *a* culturally hybrids in their faiths and mannerism.

The novels-like *An American Brat, The Crow Eaters* and *Ice-Candy-Man* hold a mirror to Parsi community for which Bapsi Sidhwa had to face a hostile reaction from orthodox section of Parsis. The reflection of the Parsi ethos and comic tone in her writings makes her one of the finest Asian writers in fiction. Jagdev Singh observes:

What distinguishes Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* U988) is the prism of Parsi sensitivity through which the cataclysmic event is depicted. *Ice-Candy-Man*is, so far, the only novel written by a Parsi on the theme of Partition. While the novel shows in the beginning the noncommittal attitude of the Parsi community towards the flux in which the various communities of India found themselves in the beginning of the twentieth century, it distills the love-hate relationship of the Hindus and Muslims through the consciousness and point of view of Lenny, an unusually precocious eight year old Parsi girl.

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. The novel *Ice-Candy-Man* has a great potential for textual and sociological criticism.

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 in-directly, 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-Candy-Man 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-Candy-Man 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-Cancly-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.

A Brief Study of Novels Based on Partition

A number of novels in the Indian sub-continent have been written on the theme of the Partition of India. This unforgettable historical moment has been captured as horrifying by the novelists like Khushwant Singh in *Train to Pakistan* (1956), *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) by Manohar Malgaonkar, Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*(1961) , Rajan's *The Dark Dancer,* Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man,* Chaman Nahal's*Azadi* and Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas.*

These novels examine the inexorable logic of Partition as an offshoot of fundamentalism and fanaticism sparked by hardening communal attitudes. These novels belong to the genre of the partition novel. These novels effectively and realistically depict the "vulnerability of human understanding and life, caused by the throes of Partition which relentlessly divided friends," as Novy Kapadia observes. She opines that throughout history, fanatics as well as ideologies, pushed to the emotional brink of daring their lives, have taken the plunge, which has triggered off a chain reaction of rigid mental fixations and attitudes.

Bapsi Sidhwa's novels are narratives of political and moral upheaval resulting in a masstrauma which continues to haunt the minds of generations. Generally, in the novels of Sidhwa, there are people from all walks of life and from all communities. They are Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis. The event of Partition has been depicted through the painful experiences of these ethnic groups. Novy Kapadia explicitly explains the situation as: "With a morbid sense of humour, Bapsi Sidhwa reveals how the violence of Partition has serrated the roots of people of different communities, irrespective of ideology, friendship and rational ideas. In such a depiction, Bapsi Sidhwa resembles the horror portrayed by William Golding in *The Lord of the Flies*(1954).

Golding indicated that there is a thin line between good and evil in human beings and it is only the structures of civilizations which prevent the lurking evil from being rampant. At the end of the novel *The Lord of the Flies*boys of Jack's tribe like barbarians got a sadistic delight in hunting Ralph. The situation is saved as a naval officer reaches the island to stop brutality ... Lenny's destruction of the doll also has allegorical significance. It shows how even a young girl is powerless to stem the tide of surging violence within, thereby implying that grown up fanatics enmeshed in communal frenzy are similarly trapped into brutal violence.' It becomes obvious that there is no solution to communal holocausts except struggle and resistance to communalism in a collective effort.

There are no winners in these riots and the communal holocaust devours everything that supports life-sustaining principles. It presents a scene of Holi, not of colours but of blood in the living inferno. The Partition of India proved to be the greatest communal divide in the Indian sub-

continent. In fact, the novel *Ice-Candy-Man* is *a* Pakistani version of the Partition just like Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*.

In the fictional world of *Ice-Candy-Man,*the readers are introduced to a plethora of characters from different communities and different walks of life. "Sidhwa's novel written at a period of history when communal and ethnic violence threaten disintegration of the sub-continent, is an apt warning of the dangers of communal frenzy. Bapsi Sidhwa shows thatduring communal strife, sanity and human feelings are forgotten." In fact, riots anywhere in the world follow the common pattern where distrust and rumour reign everywhere which leads to bloodshed and terror.

With a sprinkling of humour, parody and allegory Bapsi Sidhwa conveys a sinister warning of the dangers of compromising with religious obscurantism and fundamentalism of all categories. Otherwise a certain historical inevitability marks this historical process. Though her novel is about the traumas of Partition, Bapsi Sidhwa like Amitav Ghosh reveals that communal riots are contemporaneous and that 'those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it.'

Similar messages have been forwarded by other novelists in their novels based on the theme of Partition. While depicting the heart-rending saga of Partition, these novelists have also tried to adhere to its historical background.

In *The Shadow lines,* Amitav Ghosh depicts Hindu-Muslim riots in Bengal in 1964 which soon spread to erstwhile East Pakistan. Amitav Ghosh shows "how different cultures and communities are becoming antagonistic to a point of no return. Hence in *The Shadow Lines* he effectively uses political allegory to stress the need for a syncretic civilization to avoid a communal holocaust."

Attia Hosain's novel *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) is another novel about the communal divide and riots. Attia Hosain depicts the trauma of the Partition and communal riots through her narrator-heroine Laila.The action of the novel is revealed through the memories of her Taluqdar family disintegrating. Laila does not glorify her Muslim past or traditional customs. Attia shows her heroine Laila making a departure from tradition and customs. She rejects dogmatism and epicureanism.

The opening pages of the novel show Lailain an environment which is conservative. Laila's cousin married inPakistan returns to Hasanpur. They are engaged in a hot discussion on Muslim culture and traditions. It turns out to be a serious difference of opinion. Laila later recalls this experience with a sigh: "In the end, inevitably we querrelled, and though we made up before we parted I realized that the ties which had kept families together for centuries had been loosened beyond repair."

After the violence of the Partition, Laila moves around her plundered home. Later, she vividly recalls those shocking sights with a pang in her heart. She walks and strolls through the rooms of her ancestral home 'Ashiana', but she does not want to return. She has been fed up with the feudal order and now she wants to be Ameer's wife. She experiences the expansion of her limited self after discovering her new identity. A-famous critic compares the experience of trauma of Partition of Laila with Lenny (Ice-Candy-Man):

> "She comes to detest dogmatism, either in the name of religion or radicalism. Her views and perspective of life developed after intense personal struggle enable Laila to tackle the loss of her husband Ameer and the trauma of Partition. So both

> narrator-heroines, Lenny and Laila react against communal responses and the horrors of violence. The mature Laila rationalizes against communal tension whereas the young Lenny instinctively reacts against the horrors of communal violence."

All the novelists writing about, communal violence agree that it is no easy job to find out a solution to the problem of "communal holocaust except intense struggle against dogmatism".

In Ice-Candy-Man, Sidhwa shows how friends and neighbours turn out to be enemies overnight. A Muslim village Pir Pindo is attacked by Sikhs and Muslim men and women are killed. Sikh families in Lahore are attacked in Lahore and the chain reaction continues. People like Hari and Moti become converts to save their lives. Ayah's lover Masseur is killed.

Bapsi Sidhwa shows that the communal frenzy has a distorting effect on the masses and leads to feelings of distrust and frenzy. In such an atmosphere of communal frenzy and hatred, simple people like Ice-Candy man lose their temper when he sees the mutilated bodies of Muslims. Revenge becomes the only motivation in his life. Friendships and personal relations are forgotten. The atmosphere becomes malicious and Ice-Candy man joins the frenzied mob which abdicates Ayah and keeps her in the brothels of Hira Mandi.

Later in the novel, Ice-Candy man tries to mend his ways and forcibly marries Ayah and changes her name as Mumtaz. But she finds this disgusting and with the help of Lenny's Godmother she reaches a relief camp in Amritsar. *Ice-Candy-Man* tries to get her but in vain. The novel conveys a serious warning of the dangers of communalism and religious obscurantism.

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 lighly 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 toLahore.

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 immentioning 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 co-ordinated 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 Par-sis. . . . 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.

The Novel Today and Ice-Candy-Man by Bapsi Sidhwa

The twentieth century has been called as the age of interrogation. In this new age of science and reason, there has been a gradual crumbling of old and traditional values. Writers enjoy more freedom than ever before. One can write a novel on any subject. Experimentation has become an essential activity now in the all fields of knowledge. J.B. Priestley observes, "If we are asked what has been happening to the English novel today, we are tempted to reply, 'Everything" and to let it go like that."

In fact literature is an expression of life in its myriad shades and variety. George Eliot says that literature is the nearest thing to life. It is a mode of amplifying human experience. Literature and life are inextricably intertwined. Literature is a human document. One shares the joys and sorrows of other people through literature. Novel has emerged as a powerful and effective vehicle to study and understand the complexity of modern life. Now time is no longer conceived as a movement of moments each of which passes away irretrievably. Time is now considered as a continuous flow, a continuum.

The English novels today reflect the changes in the fundamental beliefs of the age. By presenting these ideas in a popular literary form the novelist exercised a very considerable influence on society. After the First World-War, two tendencies in literature were visible. One group criticized the standards of conduct and belief. The second group created new forms of expression and became self-assertive in its effort to propagate new creed to fill the vacuum caused by the destruction of theold. Both the groups had a pagan attitude to life and exuberant individualistic outlook. After 1930 the novelists showed a loss of carefree joyousness and they turned away from hedonism and concern with individual values and either interest themselves in religious orthodoxy or tried to find in Marxism a panacea for the ills that threatened society.

The influence of Freud gave way to Marx. A spirit of revolt against the existing order created a sense of restlessness in postwar literature. The artist slowly lost his significance. Some writers sought salvation in religion or philosophy or in dreams of uncompromising artistic truth. The novel drew its material from diverse sources and showed a continuous progress.

Novel in the Indian sub-continent is a recent development. Literature in the Indian sub-continent is the result of the bull work of two different cultural forces —Indian and the English. It has its historical roots in the growth and development of literature in a country struggling to get independence from the British rule. The rise of nationalism in India stimulated the minds of Indian people. The new educated middle-class had become active in its literary pursuits. People realized that love for one's dialect and language was good but they could not avoid English language. They felt that they could express themselves to the rest of the world through English language. After the First World-War, a new class of writers in India writing in English and in local dialects emerged. One hears about the names of writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Laxmi, Balkrishan, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya etc.

The two World-Wars shook the entire world and it had its impact on Indian literature. Political and social developments in the West influenced literature in the East. Indian literature also began to show ideological orientation in its thematic concerns. Marxism, psychoanalysis of Freud and Jung, theories of literary criticism influenced the sensibility of writers in Asia. "The novel in India can be seen as the product of configurations in philosophical, aesthetic, economic and political forces in the larger life of the country. Despite obvious regional variations, a basic pattern seems to emerge from shared factors like the Puranic heritage, hierarchical social structure, colonial education, disjunction of agrarian life and many others that affect the form of a novel as well as its content," observes Meenakshi Mukherjee in her book *Realism and Reality*. It

is obvious that writers in Asiahave made an attempt to adapt an imported form to suit their indigenous requirements.

After Partition in 1947, artists and writers in Pakistan engaged themselves to develop and cultivate a new spirit, a mark of their newly born identity —Pakistani identity. Since Pakistan was carved out of India, it could not cut away its Indian origin and kinship. "Language being a cultural phenomenon, it is conditioned by its local and the socio-historical forces in operation locally. Consequently, the literature of a particular language has its own special form," observe K. M. George. India andPakistan share so much in common like language, music, culture, social milieu, beliefs and problems. The only difference of opinion *is* on political issues. People on both the sides share the same joys and sorrows, same dreams and aspirations. Only names of places have changed in the narratives of Indian and Pakistani writers. Writers like Manohar Malgaonkar, Arun Joshi, Anita Desai, Khushwant Singh, Bhabani Bhatacharya, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy do not seem new and foreign to the readers in Pakistan. Similarly writers like Sadat Hassan Manto, Bapsi Sidhwa and Attia Hosain are not unknown in India because we share the same concerns, tragic or pleasant.

Partition of India has been a traumatic experience for people on both the sides of Wagah border. This unpleasant historical event has left deep scars on the psyche of people from both these countries. Writers like Khushwant Singh, Bhisham Sahni, Chaman Nahal, Manohar Malgaonkar, K. S. Duggal, B. Rajan, Attia Hosain and Bapsi Sidhwa have written on the theme of Partition in their novels. They have tried to recreate reality and traumatic events based on their perception and information. Pakistani writers like Sidhwa have tried to present their point of view in their narratives. Bapsi Sidhwa is a Parsi and her concern for her Parsi community in her novels is obvious. In her novel *'Ice-Candy-Man* Sidhwa has tried to present a realistic picture of the events that took place in West Punjab, now in Pakistan. The locale isLahore and its adjoining villages. Sidhwa through the child-narrator Lenny depicts the scenario realistically.

In her interviews and writings, Sidhwa asserts that she was deeply hurt to see the portrayal of Jinnah in novels written by Indian and western writers. She saw the film of M.K. Gandhi in which Gandhi has been presented as a saint, a Mahatma and a great leader whereas Jinnah's portrayal has been negative. She wanted a redressal of this mistake by presenting Jinnah as an intelligent and a leader of his community. Sidhwa in an interview with David Montenegro observes:

In *Ice-Candy-Man, I* was just redressing, in a small way, a very grievous wrong that has been done to Jannah and Pakistanis by many Indian and British writers. They have dehumanized him, made him a symbol of the sort of person who brought about the partition of India.

Sidhwa finds that Muslims in Punjab suffered more because the Sikhs retaliated with much greater brutality. The novel *Ice-Candy-Man* brings out Sidhwa's qualities as a prolific writer and a good story-teller. She also presents the moral vision of her Parsi community. Thus, novelists in India and Pakistan continue to share their culture, heritage, dilemma, problems and dreams.

Tone of the Novel

In the very beginning of the novel *Ice-Candy-Man,* Bapsi Sidhwa's narrative genius grips the attention of readers. Set in Lahore, the novel sets the tone and tenor of the events in the narrative. The narrator in the novel Lenny manifests the tone of neutrality while describing the climactic incidents of Hindu-Muslim riots. The Parsi community is worried over these new developments and is unable to express its loyalty openly either to the British government or the nationalists. The Parsi Anjuman, the congregation of the Parsis discuss the issue at the fire Temple in Lahore. The Parsis are also worried about their business and economic security. At last, Col. Bharucha concludes by saying: "Let whoever wishes rule! Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian! We will abide by

the rules of their land. This strikes the tone and note of neutrality. In fact, "The neutral attitude of the narrator child Lenny, has its roots in this racial psychology of the Parsis. In this way, the attitudue of the Parsi community revealed here is the externalized collective sub consciousness of Lenny," observes Jagdev Singh in his paper entitled 'Ice-Candy-Man: A Parsi Perception on the Partition of India.' One finds unbridled ventilation of the pent up rancour between the Hindus and Muslims. In the beginning, the Parsis stay away from the turmoil but later they shake off their passivity and neutrality and help the suffering people like the 'ayah'.

The Pakistani Identity of Bapsi Sidhwa

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 in-directly, 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-Candy-Man 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-Candy-Man 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.

Ice-Candy-Man: An Introduction

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 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 neighbourer 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. Lenni'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.

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 Child-narrator. 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-Candy-Man 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-Candy-Man 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, wide-set 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 brethern, 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 Godmothers 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-Candy- Man 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."

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 injier 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 view-points 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 plateform 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 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-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.

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*.

Structure of Ice-Candy-Man

Ice-Candy-Man is Bapsi Sidhwa's famous novel which is politically motivated. As a Pakistani writer, Sidhwa observes that M.K. Gandhi has been deified by Indian and British historians. When she saw the movie on Gandhi, she was shocked to see the portrayal of Jinnah as a villain. She felt that Jinnah was caricatured, and Gandhi was presented as a Saint. In an interview with David Montenegro, Sidhwa observes:

In *Ice-Candy-Man,* I was just redressing, in a small way, a very grievous wrong that has been done to Jinnah and Pakistanis by many Indian and British writers. They have dehumanized him, made him a symbol of the sort of persson who brought about the partition of India.

Sidhwa believes that Muslims in Punjab suffered more because the sikhs retaliated with much greater brutality. In her moral vision, she presents common men helping each other and she exposes the politicians. She portrays life in familiar surroundings in undivided India with the themes of marriage and the survival of the Parsi community.

The novel *Ice-Candy-Man* brings out Sidhwa's qualities as a prolific writer, heightened sense of story and character and her moral vision of her community. Astute characterization is a trait of Sidhwa's writing style. The novel has three distinct strands, according to Dhawan and Kapadia. They are political, narrative and the child narrator. It is the only novel of Sidhwa in which she employs a child-narrator. The child Lenny in the novel sees the adult world as a growing child. As the story moves, the history of partition slips into the background and the human struggle for survival becomes primary. The novel is written in the present tense about an historical event. Novy Kapadia observes that Lenny can be compared to the persona that Chaucer adopts in his Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*. Kapadia observes that "the device of the child-narrator enables Sidhwa treat the holocausts of Partition without morbidity, pedanticism or censure. It also helps to maintain the balance between laughter and despair. Sidhwa's blending of astute characterization and sharp humour provides insights into the Parsi psyche and makes the novel both entertaining and revealing." Here Sidhwa attempts the modernist/post-modernist vein of narrative experimentation.

The novel *lce-Candy-Man* comprises thirty-two chapters which provides a glimpse into events of turmoil during the partition of India. Historic truth is only a back drop of the novel. The narrative focuses on the tragic fate of the ice-candy-man. He is a Muslim youngman who is a close friend of an eighteen-year old Ayah who works in a Parsi household to look after Lenny. Lenny suffers from Polio and she has to depend on her Ayah. K. Nirupa Rani observes that "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." It is interesting to note that Ayah is the centre of attraction in the locality. She has thirteen admirers including Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Parsi youngmen.

The plot of the novel is compact and the central issues engaging and thought-provoking. In Sidhwa's novels themes diverge from traditional to contemporaneity. Her main concern ranges from a pre-Independence social scene to Partition and its consequences. The main action in the novel takes place in Lahore though there are no graphic description of the area. Cicely Havel observes, "Long before Sidhwa left Pakistan Bapsi Sidhwa's work had reflected the cultural multiplicity in which she lived. It was only at the moment of international success and physical migration that what might be called her non-aligned gaze became a ground of contest and she was suspected of alienation." Yasmeen Lukmani praises Sidhwa for her showmanship and the quality of 'larger than life' in her novels. The English critic Anatol Lievin Praises *Ice-Candy-Man* for its 'enormously refreshing' challenge to the 'prim and stilted' norm of modern Indian fiction. Anita Desai observes, "Lame lenny, Sidhwa's autobiographically based heroine, can be related to Oscar of Gunter Grass's *Tin Drum"*. Cicely Havel observes about Sidhwa that "it is her Zoroastrianism which enables Sidhwa to show the comic as a reflection of the tragic, just as her fortunate position as a non-combatant allows her to stand aside from partisan accusation. Lenny's childish sexuality mirrors Ayah's and her cousin's importunings are potentially explosive."

Thus, Bapsi Sidhwa has emerged as a new but important voice in commonwealth fiction. Her novels have established Sidhwa's reputation as Pakistan's leading English language writer.

Ice-Candy-Man as a Political Novel

Ice-Candy-Man is Bapsi Sidhwa's famous novel. Its American publishers Milkweed Editions (1991) published it under the title *Cracking India*. It is a serious political novel. Sidhwa uses the child-narrator technique in the narrative of the novel. There are three strands in the novel namely political, narrative and the child narrator. Anita Desai observes that lame Lenny who is Bapsi Sidhwa's autobiographically based heroine can be related to Oscar of Gunther Grass's *Tin Drum*. The physical disability of Lenny not only isolates her but also gives "an additional obliquity to the childish perspective which so many writers have used to make strange the supposed rationalism of the adult world." Here the narrative has been presented from a child's point of view. It is told in the present tense and in first person through the voice of a young girl Lenny, eight years old.

As the story progresses, the history of Partition struggle becomes less important and the human struggle assumes epical dimensions. She also narrates the events leading to India's partition from a child's point of view. R.K. Dhawan and Novy Kapadia find Lenny's growing up "marked as much by a loss of political and racial egalitarianism as by her developing sexuality." So Lenny becomes the persona in *Ice-Candy-Man* who renders credibility by becoming a part of reader's consciousness. Being a novel about a historical and political event, it contains enough information about local and national politics and leaders. The Parsi community is seen to be in a fix over the question of loyalty. Its leaders are not able to decide whether to support Swaraj or to remain loyal to the throne. By now the situation has become clear and independence almost imminent.

> "The dilemma is acute and the paranoid feelings of the parsis, a minuscule minority get accentuated. The Lahore Parsis have an acrimonious debate on the political situation at their temple hall meeting."

In *Ice-Candy-Man,* Bapsi Sidhwa shows the Parsi community pondering over choices —to support independence movement or to remain loyal to the Raj. Now a number of Parsis like Colonel Bharucha, Lenny's father and Dr. Mody begin to support the nationalists. Some people advise to observe the developments on the political arena. In the meeting, the Parsis agree to be on the side of the ruler, whether British or Indians. It turns out to be a resolution of self-interest. Here the Parsi community is shown as lacking political participation in the Indian independence movement.

Bapsi Sidhwa in an interview with David Montenegn admits of her political intentions in her writings as:

> The main motivation grew cut of my reading of a good deal of literature on the partition of India and Pakistan.. .What has been written has been written by the British and the 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.

In the narrative *of Ice-Candy-Man,* one finds references to the names of political leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawahar lal Nehru, Lord Mountbatten, Subhash Chandra Bose, Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Sidhwa eulogise them but presents them with their weaknesses, Sidhwa is critical of Gandhi when she speaks through one of her characters: "He's a politician yaar... it's his business to suit his tongue to the moment." Lenny also passes comments on the personality of Gandhi when she calls him "a mixture of a demon and a clown." When Bapsi Sidhwa saw the film Gandhi, she

was shocked to find Gandhi presented as a saint. She was pained to see the role of Jinnah in the film as negative. She found Gandhi completely deified, sanitized into a saint. She confesses:

> I felt, in *Ice-Candy-Man,* I was just redressing, in a small way, a very grievous wrong that has been done to Jinnah and Pakistanis by many Indian and British writers. They have dehumanized him, made him a symbol of the sort of person who brought about the partition of India... Whereas in reality he was the only constitutional man who didn't sway crowds just by rhetoric.

In short, Sidhwa tries to bring Gandhi down from the high pedestal and project him a purely political figure like Jinnah. She does this from a Pakistani's point of view. Political and ethnic considerations and bias emerge stronger than secular thinking. Sidhwa shows that the Muslims in East Punjab suffered more because of the majority of Hindus and Sikhs. She gives detailed descriptions of attacks on Muslims by Sikhs with 'much greater brutality.' Sidhwa believes that Hindu leaders failed to be just in their role as statesmen.

In this novel, Sidhwa gives scant credit to politicians. Her moral vision is that it is the ordinary person who "battles wrongs" like Lenny's Godmother who helps Ayah to escape from Hira Mandi and move to a refugee camp in Amritsar or Lenny's mother who helps her Hindu neighbours flee from violence stricken Lahore, not people in the corridors of power. The horrors of Partition are aptly depicted by Sidhwa without histrionics or preaching and by some clever use of Urdu poetry. The human cost is shown for example in young Ranna's story, the most harrowing account of what atrocities are perpetrated by human beings when induced to remove restraints of civilized life through external events or political propaganda. Like *Tamas, Ice-Candy-Man* is also a political text which shows the consequences of political decisions. Bapsi Sidhwa also paints, a vivid picture of the political scenario when the nationalists were struggling to break the shackles of slavery. She also shows ambivalent attitude of the Parsi community towards the shift of power in 1947. She presents the Parsis as cultural hybrids. Sidhwa writes that through her writings, she has tried to give a voice to her readers in Pakistan along with a sense of self-esteem. She regrets that Pakistanis have not been portrayed favourably by third world writers, and in *Ice-Candy-Man,* she has redressed this mistake. She looks up and says:

> "We are not worthless people because we inhabit in a poor country that is seen by Western eyes as a primitive, fundamentalist country only."

The novel *Ice-Candy-Man* shows Sidhwa's qualities as a writer, her keen sense of observation, sense of story, character, and her moral vision of her Parsi community. She has emerged as a trend setter in Pakistani literary world.

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 Ice-Candy Man becomes a person of refined sensibility; he steeps 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 ice-candy 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 Ice-Candy-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-Candy-Man 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 Ice-Candy-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 tilling 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 donot 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 inLahore. 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 inLahore also transforms Ayah. She becomes an easy victim and is raped by angry Muslims. Later she is married by Ice-Cany-Man and he keeps her in Hira Mandi, the place of dancing girls. Ice-Candy-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 amymore. 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 Lenni'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 Feminist Perspective

Ice-Candy-Man offers a significant treatment of a gynocentric view of reality in which the feminine psyche and experiences are presented with a unique insight. The women characters of the novel are aware and confident of their individuality and cannot be easily subjugated. Lenny, her Ayah Shanta, her mother and Godmother affirm their autonomous selfhood and exhibit capability of assuming new roles and responsibilities. They also expose the patriarchal biases present in the contemporary social perceptions.

Ice-Candy-Man commands attention and admiration on several counts. It is the second novel by a woman writer (the first being *Sunlight on a Broken Column by* Attia Ho-sain), dealing with the theme of Partition of India, but it is the first by a non-partisan writer as Bapsi Sidhwa, being a Parsee, does not belong to either of the two communities which perpetrated mayhem on each other. Therefore, it is likely to be a more neutral and objective account of the traumatic event of Partition which caused divisiveness, disharmony, mutual suspicion, hardening and then tuning into hostility of feelings of friendliness and good-neighborliness and the eventual holocaust. While Attia Hosain does not delve deep into the gory details of the massacres, Sidhwa depicts the events overtaking the Partition in their naked cruelty and ruthlessness. It is a bold attempt on the part of a woman writer to take up a theme which is different from the traditional issues the women writers generally assay—the issues of romantic involvements and the sentimental stuff. Also it is no mean achievement on Sidhwa's part to depict the process of sexual maturation of a young girl while living in a country like Pakistan where the measure of freedom for women is considerably less than it exists in India. But above all, the novel becomes a significant testament of a gynocentric view of reality in which the feminine psyche and experiences are presented with a unique freshness and aplomb. I shall attempt to demonstrate in the course of the paper how the gynocentric perspective determines the narrative strategy, resulting in the production of a truly feminist text. For the purpose of contrast, I shall posit a male discourse on the same theme, that is, Khush-want Singh's celebrated novel, *Train to Pakistan*. Strategy, even in the literary context "retains all its other inferences related to military strategy of skilful use of a stratagem, or a *maneuver* for obtaining a specific goal or result. Strategy is a move in a game, and the objectives are not available at the surface level of the narrative. It occupies a space between language and plot and between plot and character. Through the structural device (as is done by Jane Austen in *Mansfield Pork*in which the moral control and power to order things passes from the male characters into the hands of Fanny Price who had been marginalized in the beginning of the book) Bapsi Sidhwa turns the female protagonists into the moral centre, while most of the male characters either remain apathetic or indulge in destructive violence and dis-integrative action. The analysis of *Ice-Candy-Man* reveals that the female characters pulsate with a will and life of their own. While these characters are unselfconscious of the biological essential ism of their sex, they cut loose the constraints imposed by the gender which is a social construct (and can therefore be deconstructed), and which has come into existence through centuries of biased, motivated and calculated orchestration of the aggressive patriarchal postulates. In a "patriarchal social set up, masculinity is associated with superiority whereas 'femininity is linked with inferiority, and while masculinity implies strength, action, self-assertion and domination, femininity implies weakness, passivity, docility, obedience and self-negation. *Ice-Candy-Man,*though ostensibly a hero-oriented novel, subtly but effectively subverts the ingrained elements of patriarchy, privileging female will, choice, strength along with the feminine qualities of compassion and motherhood.

The central consciousness of the fictional world *of Ice-Candy-Man* is represented by a young girl, Lenny, who is lame. The lameness of the narrator-protagonist becomes suggestive of the handicap a woman creative writer faces, when she decides to wield the pen, because writing, being

an intellectual exercise, is considered a male bastion, outside the routine of a woman's submissive domesticity. Her recuperation symbolizes the overcoming of the constraint on the intellectual activity of writing by Bapsi Sidhwa. By making Lenny the narrator of the novel, the novelist lends weight and validity to the feminine perspective on the nature of surrounding reality.

An essential difference between a feminist text and a male discourse is that in the latter it is the male who is invested with the qualities of heroism, sacrifice, justice and action while generally the female protagonists remain the recipients of the male bounty and chivalry, in a feminist text, it is the woman who "performs" and controls and promotes the action by her active involvement and concern and in the process it is she who acquires the attributes of heroism and glory. In *Ice-Candy-Man,* the narrator's relationship with her cousin (he remains cousin throughout the novel, without the specific identity of a name) upholds the principle of equality (or even superiority of woman), as she does not allow him to manipulate her sexually and he remains a drooling figure, adoring her for her vivaciousness. In no way does Lenny's lameness become a source of self-pity or a constricting force on her psyche. She remains assertive, at times even aggressive and holds her own when it comes to the crunch. And who is the formative influence on Lenny? Her Ayah, Shanta.

The Ayah is a flame of sensuousness and female vitality around whom the male moths hover constantly and hanker for the sexual warmth she radiates. She acts like the queen bee who controls the actions and emotions of her male admirers: the Fal-lattis Hotel cook, the Government House gardener, the butcher, the compactly minded "head and body masseur" and the Ice-Candy-Man. The measure of Ayah's power is seen when she objects to the political discussion among her multi-religious admirers as she fears discord the Ice-Candy-Man defers to her wish and says, "It's just a discussion among friends . . . such talk helps clear the air . . . but for your sake, we won't bring it up again." Epitomizing the strength of the feminity of a female, she infuses in Lenity the ideas of independence and choice. Flirtatious and coquettish, the Ayah is fully aware and confident of herself as an individual, who cannot be taken advantage of. At the same time, she is fiercely loyal to the interests of the family she serves and is extremely protective of Lenny, as a mother would be, besides being emotionally attached to her. She suffers during the Partition riots, she is abducted by the cronies of the Ice-Candy-Man, ravished and raped by the hoodlums, kept as the Ice-Candy-Man's mistress for a few months and then is forced to become the Ice-Candy-Man's bride. Her name is changed from Shanta to Mumtaz and she is kept at a *kotha*even after her marriage. During the interregnum between her abduction and marriage, she, in the words of Godmother, is "used like a sewer" by "drunks, pedlars, sahibs and cut-throats," with the connivance of the Ice-Candy-Man. But as soon as the opportunity presents itself, she seizes, her freedom and gets away from the man she does not love. She is firm and decisive. "I want to go to my family.... I will not live with him," she tells Godmother. And this decision is in spite of the Ice-Candy-Man's love for her who weeps, snivels and pleads humbly with the Godmother to let her remain with him as he has married the Ayah. He receives a thrashing at the hands of the burly Sikh Guard at the Recovered Women's Camp gate, where Ayah is admitted and turns into a*madfaqir,* going to the extent of following the Ayah to Amritsar. Lenny's mother conforms to the traditional Image of a fidel, faithful and serving wife who seems to be capable only of humouring things out of her husband. She submits to the moods of the man she is wedded to, tolerating in the process, the conven-tional hegemony given to the male of the species among human beings. And here it appears, the writer could not muster courage enough to invest her (Lenny's mother) with qualities different from those she does, considering the social ethos in the country of her habitat. But the feminist in Sidhwa cuts a caper, and achieves her end in a subtle and complex way. While in *Train to Pakistan,* it is Juggut Singh (Jugga) who, ennobled by his feelings of love for his beloved Nooran, saves, at the cost of his own life, the whole train-load of Muslims migrating to Pakistan in a bid to get away from the clutches of the violent riots, in *Ice-Candy-Man,* it is Lenny's mother and Lenny's aunt who play the sterling humanitarian and heroic role of fighting

for the lives and property of Hindus. Clearing herself of Lenny's accusation that she has been helping in the communal conflagration, she says: "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 your ayah, to their families across the border." Thus, it is the two women who undertake the risky job of sav.ing lives in danger and the fact acquires significance in the fictional scheme of things.

Towering high among the women protagonists is the vibrant figure of Lenny's Godmother (one of her aunts) whose name is Rodabai. Godmother's personality sparkles with razor-sharp wit, her indefatigable stamina, her boundless love for Lenny, and her social commitment. Her sense of humour, her deer-like agility, in spite of her old age, and her power to mould, modify and order not only individuals but even the system, when she so desires, earn her respect and admiration of people around her. But besides these qualities she is endowed with profound understanding of human existence and her wisdom is revealed when she consoles the Ayah, in the aftermath of what has been done to her: "That was fated, daughter. It can't be undone. But it can be forgiven. . . . Worse tilings are forgiven. Life goes on and the business of living buries the debris of our pasts. Hurt, happiness . . . all fade impartially ... to make way for fresh joy and new sorrow. That is the way of life." The most glorious example of her self-confidence, authoritativeness, capacity to handle cri-sis-situations deftly is provided by her dealing with the Ice-Candy-Man and the rescue of the Ayah she effects after she has been kidnapped and is kept at a *kotha*. The Ice-Candy-Man is propped with the power of the pimp-community, consisting of lawless elements. Endowed with a glib tongue, he is not an easy person to deal with. I would like to quote snatches of the confronting conversation, in order to bring out, in full measure, the power to annihilate the adversary Rodabai possesses:

Affected at last by Godmother's stony silence, Ice-Candy-Man lowers his eyes. His voice divested of oratory, he says, "I am her slave, *Baijee*. I worship her. She can come to no harm with me."

"No harm?" Godmother asks in a deceptively cool voice—and arching her back like a scorpion its tail, she closes in for the kill. "You permit her to be raped by butchers, drunks, and *goondas* and say she has come to no harm?"

Ice-Candy-Man's head jolts back as if it's been struck.

"Is that why you had her lifted off—let hundreds of eyes probe her—so that you could marry her? You would have your own mother carried off if it suited you! You are a shameless badmash! *Nimakharam l* Faithless!'-'

Godmother's undaunted visit to the disreputable "Hira Mandi" (the area of *kothas)* and the rescue of the Ayah, once she is convinced that the Ayah is being kept by force against her will, are commendable indeed. Godmother concentrates in her character what the feminists feel is very important for a woman to realize her individuality: the feeling of "self-worth."

As against Sidhwa's novel, Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* is manifestly a male discourse in which it is the men who are in command and it is they who occupy the centre of the stage. The focus is on the hero, Juggut Singh mostly, and even though he is portrayed as a *budmash,* the writer's sympathy and admiration are obviously for him: for his devil-may-care attitude, his jauntiness, his physical stature (and later for his moral stature as well). When Juggut Singh has been arrested for the dacoity and the murder in the village of Mano Majra, the novelist comments: "Juggut Singh's head and shoulders showed above the turbans of the policemen. It was like a procession of horses with an elephant in their midst—taller, broader, slower with his chain clanking like ceremonial trappings. There is hardly a woman character in the novel who matches the heights Juggut Singh reaches. It is a man's world of Juggut Singh, the budmash

turned into a moral hero, Hukam Chand, the Magistrate and the Deputy Commissioner who tries his best to keep the situation under control in Mano Majra in the wake of turbulence caused by the Partition, Iqbal, the Marxist, whose ideology fails him in this time of crisis, Bhai Meet Singh, the priest of the village Gurd-wara, who wants to keep on the right side of the police and the police sub-inspector, who is angry with the Sikhs of Mano Majra for not mauling the Muslims. The relationship between Juggut Singh and his beloved Nooran is that of an overbearing lover and submissive beloved. Once his lust overtakes him, he lays her, her protests notwithstanding, and he talks to her peremptorily. Nooran's words about him confirm this point: *"That is all you want. And you get it*. You are just a peasant. Always wanting to sow your seed. Even if the world were going to hell yon would want to do that. Even when guns are being fired in the village. Wouldn't you?" And when, frightened by the sound of gun-shots, and by the prospect of her absence being noticed, she tells him that she will never come to see him again, he says angrily, "Will you shut up or do I have to smack your face?" Let us now compare the relationship between Lenny and Cousin. The latter's carnal cravings are thwarted determinedly by Lenny. "Ever ready to illuminate, teach and show me things, Cousin squeezes my breasts and lifts my dress and grabs my elasticized cotton knickers. But having only the two hands to do all this with he can't pull them down because galvanised to action I grab them up and jab him with my elbows and knees; and turning and twisting, with rny toes and heels." No woman character in *Train to Pakistan* attains heroic stature; they remain sex objects, on altars of grand sacrifice and macho love or remain consigned to the parameters of the conventional concept of womanhood. Clearly, the perception of woman is patriarchal and, therefore, women are not individually realized beings. They remain on the margin of the plot, while the task of further-ing the action is given to the male protagonists. (Of course, Nooran indirectly galvanises Jugga into the significant humane act.) While Khushwant Singh's *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* portrays a fully realized, towering character in the person of Sabhrai, who remains an impressive figure throughout the book, with her qualities of faith in the Great Guru, moral uprightness, empathy and religious poise, the women characters in *Train to Pakistan* remain pale shadows of their male counterparts.

But then we come across the oppression and exploitation of her younger sister by Rodabai (Godmother). In spite of the younger sister's slaving obedience (she is called Slavesister), she is treated shabbily and frequently humiliated by Rodabai. Slave-sister's humiliation in the presence of others becomes unseemly and unpalatable. She is leading the life of a bonded slave, forced to suppress her self in every interaction (confrontation, to be precise) with the old lady; she is not allowed to exercise her discretion or her will in any situation. Does this relationship serve any creative purpose in the novel? On the face of it, it just appears to be a dispensable part of the plot, whose removal would not affect the coherence or the compactness of the structure. But I think, Sidhwa wants to convey an important message, or warning that the exploitation, manipulation and suppression of one individual by another are not confined to the male-female relationship. These can exist between a female-female relationship as well and become as vicious and debilitating for the victim as when a male dominates and exploits a woman. 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 amorfgst themselves. This makes Sidhwa's feminist credo broader, fairer and more responsive to the human condition.

Ice-Candy-Man, thus, becomes a feminist text in the true sense of the term, successfully attempting to bring to the centre-stage the female protagonists. These protagonists, while on the one hand, come alive on account of their realistic presentation, on the other, tliey serve as the means of consciousness-raising among the female segment of society. Literature is a powerful tool in the hands of creative writers to modulate and change the societal framework, and Sidhwa through her extremely absorbing and interesting work seeks to contribute to the process of change that has already started all over the world, involving a reconsideration of women's rights and status, and a radial restructuring of social thought. Sidhwa belongs to that group of women

creative writers who have started to depict "determined women for whom the traditional role is inadequate, women who wish to affirm their independence and autonomy and are perfectly capable of assuming new roles and responsibilities." These writers wish to build a world which is free of dominance and hierarchy, a world that rests on the principles of justice and equality and is truly human.

Ice-Candy-Man: A Saga of Female Suppression and Marginalization

Ice-Candy-Man projects the violent and chaotic days of India-Pakistan Partition in 1947. Through the character of Lenny, Sid-hwa has given graphic details of the political changes occurring in the country, as well as its effect on the citizens of India. The novelist has very realistically illustrated women's plight and exploitation in the patriarchal society. Men establish their masculine powers and hence fulfil their desires by brutally assaulting women. Men as aggressors feel elated and victorious whereas women endure the pain and humiliation of the barbarity enacted upon them. Sidhwa, as a novelist, talks of emancipation of women. Hence the novel ends on a positive note. Women strive to come out of their plight and finally move forward from their degraded and tormented state to start their lives afresh.

Feminism as a movement has played a very vital role in projecting the suppressed status of women in the patriarchal society. In the domain of patriarchal culture, woman is a social construct, a site on which masculine meanings get spoken and masculine desires enacted. As Sushila Singh puts it in *Feminism and Recent Fiction in English:* "Human experience for centuries lias been synonymous with the masculine experience with the result that the collective image of humanity has been one-sided and incomplete. Woman has not been defined as a subject in her own right but merely has an entity that concerns man either in his real life or his fantasy life. Many contemporary writers have projected the plight of women based on caste, creed, religion, gender-prejudices, community and beliefs, and are trying to suggest some pragmatic solutions to them. Though the conservative social norms and myths of feminine behaviour are challenged all over the world yet a change in the attitude of patriarchal society towards woman is at a snail's pace. Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *Ice-Candy-Man* represents a series of female characters who have survived in a chaotic time of 1947 in India, which can be registered as the period of worst religious riots in the history of India.

Sidhwa has given a very realistic and transparent picture of carnage during Hindu-Muslim riots in 1947. The novel mirrors men becoming adversary on the basis of their religion and also represents the changing political scenario of the country. Emotional turmoil, individual weakness, barbarities of communal riots and the brutalities inflicted on women amidst this iconoclastic ruthlessness and communal frenzy have been very realistically projected by the novelist. The whole story has been narrated by the female protagonist Lenny who relates the horrors of violence and her personal observations and reactions. The protagonist not only observes but also analyses 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, and relates the peculiar disadvantages, social and civil, to which they are subjected.

Lenny as a narrator moves from one phase of her life, i.e., childhood to adolescence. During this journey, she understands the changes taking place in the society, men's attitude towards women and women's subjection. The whole phase helps her to develop a more mature vision

towards life. She gives a closer look at the relationship between men and women which awakens her young mind to develop a vision of her own.

The narrator relates her life as "My world is compressed." As a physically handicapped girl, her world is restricted to the four walls of the house. As a child she spends most of her time with her Godmother. She terms her Godmother's room as, "My refuge from the perplexing unrealities of my home on Warris Road." As a child she had no inclination to have female possession though from time to time she was advised to have one by the women of her family. She recalls: "I can't remember a time when I ever played with dolls though relatives and acquaintances have persisted in giving them to me." This reflects the sexual identity thrust upon her time and again. Her schooling is stopped as suggested by Col. Bharucha, her doctor, because she was suffering from polio. He concludes, "She'll marry—have children—lead a carefree, happy life. No need to strain her with studies and exams." Lenny concludes that the suggestion made by Col. Bharucha sealed her fate. It reveals the limitations associated with a girl's life. Development of feminine virtues with female nature and carrying out the responsibilities associated with the domestic affairs are considered as the only aim for women. Patriarchal society considers women as physically weak to venture into the world outside the four walls of their houses and too deficient to make important decisions. Hence women are relegated to the domestic sphere where they have to accept the hegemony of a male counterpart. Since ages it is considered that it is a woman's duty to tend house, raise children and give comfort to her family. Shashi Deshpande, a contemporary novelist, suggests that women should be given enough space to realize their true personality. She points out in an interview to Geetha Gangadharan:

The stress laid on the feminine functions, at the cost of all your potentials as an individual enraged me. I knew I was very intelligent person, but for a woman, intelligence is always a handicap. If you are intelligent, you keep asking, "Why, why, why" and it becomes a burden.

Simone de Beauvoir also holds the same view about social conditioning. According to her, mothers are highly responsible for inculcating feminine traits of submission and self-abnegation in women. She writes in*The Second Sex* that the girl-child is often concerned in this way with motherly tasks; whether for convenience or because of hostility and sadism, the mother thus rids herself of many of her functions; the girl in this matter made to fit precociously into the universe of curious affairs; her sense of importance will help her in assuming her femininity. But she is deprived of happy freedom, the carefree aspect of childhood, having become precociously a woman, she leaves all too soon the limita-tions this estate imposes upon a human being; she reaches adolescence as an adult, which gives her history a special character.

Lenny as a girl learns that marriage of girls is of utmost importance to their parents. Independence and self-identity are meant for men. 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. Everyone says, 'It's a pity Adi's fair and Lenny so dark. He's a boy. Anyone will marry him."

She" recognizes the biological exploitation of women as she grows. As a child she cherishes her mother's love and her father's protection but the whole episode of Ice-Candy-Man and Ayah destroys all her conceptions about love. She was shocked to perceive Ice-Candy-Man pushing his wife Ayah into the business of prostitution. She concludes, "The innocence that my parents' vigilance, the servants' care and Godmother's love sheltered in me, that neither Cousin's carnal cravings, nor the stories of the violence of the riots, could quite destroy, was laid waste that evening by the emotional storm that raged around me. The confrontation between Ice-Candy-Man and Godmother opened my eyes to the wisdom of righteous indignation over compassion. To the demands of gratification and the unscrupulous nature of desire. The site of Hindu and Muslim women being raped during the riots petrifies her. She watches men turning into beasts

leaving no room for moral and human values. Women including Ayah were becoming prey of men. Lenny was shocked to see the human mind which was built of nobler materials getting so easily corrupted. Men were declaring superiority over each other by sexually assaulting women. Women had nothing in their favour. Envy, malice, jealousy, rage for personal power and importance in men were leading to violence and injury. Shashi Deshpande states:

rape is for me the grossest violation of trust between two people. Whether it is someone in the family or your husband or any other man who commits a rape, it destroys the trust between men and women. It is also the greatest violence because it is not only the woman's body but it is her mind and feeling of her right to have a control on her body which is gone.

Sidhwa has also projected the aftermath of such inhuman and barbaric acts against women after the riots. She has projected the farcical social behaviour which victimizes women alone for any bodily violence and leaves them to wail with their bitter experience which gives them a feeling of pain and sense of loss. Lenny is shocked to see the changing attitude of men towards one another. Religious enmity easily erased the threads of friendship. She concludes:

And I became aware of religious differences. It is sudden. One day everybody is themselves—and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian. People shrink, dwindling into symbols.

She knows that men of different religions can never become friends again. To take revenge was their only motive in life. Lenny concludes, "Now I know surely. One man's religion is another man's poison." Lenny is not ready to accept the prevailing social condition. As a grown up she analyses the whole situation and draws some conclusions. She decides to hunt for her lost Ayah, who also became a prey of the Hindu-Muslim riots. Lenny decides to talk to her mother regarding Ayah. She wants to save Ayah from the terrible profession of prostitution as told by her cousin. Lenny decides, "If those grown men pay to do what my comparatively small cousin tried to do, then Ayah is in trouble. I think of Ayah twisting Ice-Candy-Man's intrusive toes and keeping the butcher and wrestler at arm's length. And of those stranger's'hands hoisting her chocolate body into the cart. . . . I decide it's time to confront Mother." Due to Lenny's continuous persistence at home, she is informed about Ayah's whereabouts. The novel ends with Ayah being sent back to her parents' home.

Throughout the novel, Lenny appears as a courageous and bold girl who is not ready to succumb to the communal frenzy. She is inquisitive, daring, demanding and lively. Sidhwa has given a feminist touch to the character of Lenny who moves forward in life despite various hindrances and obstacles. As she observes the lives of various women around her, she understands the limitations associated with women's lives in patriarchal society. She is shocked to see men betraying and sexually assaulting women and exploiting them. Sidhwa as a writer encourages women to transgress the line of marginalization. She states in an interview:

As a woman, one is always marginalised. 1 have worked among women to create an awareness of their rights and protested against repressive measures aimed at Pakistani women and minority community.

Lenny's mother is another interesting female character of the novel. As a servile housewife, she limits her life to the four walls of her home. She reticently follows her husband, who is the decision-maker of the family. Lenny's mother is a representative of those traditional women who as subordinates never express their desire to establish themselves as better human beings. Sidhwa seems to illustrate through. Lenny that men have to dilute their ego and women have to eschew the image of weaker sex or deprived femininity. Mindsets need to be changed in order to establish equality between the sexes. The patriarchal society should perceive women beyond the roles of daughters, wives and mothers. Traditional male fantasies have created a particular image of

women to suit their interests—submissive, servile, docile and self-abnegating. These fantasies have become alive, as women have been meticulously trained by the patriarchal/social system to assimilate them. A big transformation is required at the social level, which will acknowledge women as human beings with souls, desires, feelings, ambitions and potentials. Simultaneously women should utilize their potentials beyond their domestic life to assert their individuality. The novel*Ice-Candy-Man* projects through Lenny's mother that women should have a purpose in life besides domesticity which should be developed by them to the best of their abilities. Women need to liberate themselves from the constraints of 'womanliness' which will erase the existing discrepancies regarding their marginalization. Lenny's mother exhibits a change in her personality by the end of the novel. She becomes acquainted with the political changes occurring in the country during India-Pakistan division. She emerges as a social worker. Along with -Lenny's Electric-Aunt, she helps the victims of 1947 riots. She provides people with petrol who wanted to cross the border and helps the raped and exploited women. Lenny's mother shows a lot of similarity with Bhabani Bhattacharya's female character Monju in *So Many Hungers*.Monju appears as a fuller and maturer woman by the end of the novel. In the beginning she projects the womanly traits of being happy and content with her life and family. But gradually, with the passage of time, the pathetic incidences of Bengal famine and pictures of human life transform her. She learns to think beyond the realms of her own life and as a human cannot remain blind to and detached from the miseries and traumas of others. With a soul to feel and a mind to think it is very difficult to shut oneself behind the door when people are screaming for help and rescue. Similarly Lenny's mother could not resist herself from helping the victims of 1947 riots.

Sidhwa exposes the patriarchal practices of the society which marginalize their growth and development and also represents women's psychology that has been toned by centuries of conditioning.

Hence, we can conclude that Sidhwa as a writer has a constructive approach towards women's predicament. Women may not just fill a place in the society but they should fit in it. By leading a contented life they paralyze their lives but if they desire they will have courage to break through their their plight and afford opportunity for betterment.

Ice-Candy-Man: The Geography of Scars and History of Pain

History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived. In *Ice-Candy-Man,* Bapsi Sidhwa conjures life and time in the sub-continent during the British Raj from 1935 to 1947, the period of the Partition of India and Pakistan. The narrative of the novel constitutes "the thick description of history"' in all its ramifications in the dramatic portrayal of interaction among diverse strata in various communities—their modes of the personality variants within a society by recording individual opinion, habit, belief, behaviour and psychological disposition in the context of cultural themes such as values, religion, politics and ethos.

In seizing the lost truth—the "other" in history, the text reveals an intuitive grip of the events that makes it refreshingly different from the scores of other novels with similar concerns. Here I am inclined to attribute this version of history to the writer's view of history as a woman that makes the whole rendering further distanced from the stereotypes. The narrative encapsulates with compelling sensitivity and empathy the protagonist girl child Lenny's initiation in the adult world marked by a highly diverse and disparate cultural climate. The episodic structure of the novel describes within the framework of the larger theme of Lenny's growth and attainment of some understanding of human situations, the personal, political ideological pursuits, anxiety,

pain, stupidity, suffering, joy possessing the epoch before and immediately after the Partition of India in Lahore. The shrewd but sensitive tendering of the past by girl child—its geography of scars, its history of pain—raises doubts about the credibility of the projection of the child's "point of view." One may find within the child's point of view a mature woman's perceptions or authorial omniscient point of view permeating and overlapping and as a result, a volitional blend of innocence and experience. In defence of this narrative approach, it could be observed that events of past really expand later and thus we do not have complete emotions about the immediate present. Only in the past we could invest meaning. Filled out in memory, the dead could take a final form only later. In the female infant Lenny's perceptions the living could be unformed, like herself in the making. Sliding into the adult's point of view, the narrative relates the random history of the female subtexts to the potential narratives of love and betrayal in a mode that enables both the narrator and the reader to discover patterns of cultural significance.

I

In versatile strokes of humour, fantasy, scatology and caricature, the upper middle class Parsee community—Godmother, Old husband, Slave sister, Mother, Father, Electric-Aunt, Cousin, Dr. Mody, Dr. Bharucha are portrayed. We are allowed to participate in their cultural codes, allegiances, insecurity, and political and human ideals. The Parsees situated in a metropolitan city of the then united India, sandwiched between two invidiously hostile Hindu/Sikh and Muslim communities—a delicate juncture, were more vulnerable in the contemporary political context becauseLahore had to play a major part in the Partition of India. A period when such massive historical figures such as Gandhi, Nehru and Jinnah loomed large, Lenny's immediate world is made of a Hindu Ayah Shanta, with whom she has developed a close bond, Imam Din, Masseur and Ice-Candy-Man, Shankar Haria, a Sikh neighbour Mr. Singh and his children, English Officer Mr. Roger, Anglo-Indian Mr. and Mrs. Pen etc. The narrative in its shifting focus makes us see the scene, hear the sound, and sense the flavour of a highly desperate cultural configuration coexisting in their intrinsic vulnerability, cruelty and ideological or religion-sanctioned logic. Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Parsee and English are all seen in terms of experiences that are too versatile to be reduced to a category of funny, farcical, tragic or grand. While fundamentalist propaganda and politics rage, divided loyalties breed brutality and betrayal, arson, looting and the dislocation of common man. A poignant drama of personal loss and agony of young Ayah Shanta intrudes in the larger scenario and transmutes the whole tone of the novel. The awful profligacy, the ugliness, sordidness and deceit converge into an agony and ecstasy that transcend physical and rational levels and expose us to secret logic of human desire and depravity—the ghost of the past embodying inexorably the major character, Ice-Candy-Man. The novel, from being a shrewd satiric record of the history of Indiaand Pakistan, becomes a lore of elegiac dimension that has already been anticipated in Iqbal's lines serving as a prologue: "The fire of verse gives us courage and bids me no more to be faint with dust in my mouth. I am abject: to God I make no complaint/Sometimes you favour our rivals then sometimes with us. You are free/I am sorry to say it so boldly. You are no less fickle than we." The last part of the novel centring on Ice-Candy-Man makes us recognize the teleos of history that has cast him in precarious times. His historical antecedents reveal skeletons on the cupboard of history. In the plight of this bastard—a derelict whom we identify not only a victim of history and his own doomed longings but also more significantly of the culpable, contemptible, misogynistic hypocrisy of the Moghul ruling class that gave social sanction to the sordid subjugation of women to pander to the lust and voyeuristic urges. And, subsequently, it bred a class of male and female bastards—dispos-sessed and disowned, whose perpetuation of pimping and prostitution in the facade of beauty, art and poetry concealed covet-ousness, helplessness and deceit. In the case of Ice-Candy-Man nonetheless, there has to be no more degradation. The disarray of history and his own fatal flaw assign him intense desolation but that also lift him to a sphere of spiritual plane. Rejection by his unwilling beloved transform him into "a moonstruck Fakir who has renounced the world

for his beloved: be it a woman or God.". And Ice-Candy-Man's voice humming in our mind stirs a certain sense of awe;

> Don't berate me, beloved, I'm God-intoxicated:
> I'll wrap myself about you; I'm mystically mad.

The opening chapters of the novel however do not provide a clue to understanding the significance of the title. It is at the end that the whole panorama of the novel attains a metaphoric image in the title. One may infer a similar implication of the title in Wallace Steven's "Emperor of Ice Cream." The poem evokes the image of a slatternly woman at her wake attended by a man who represents pleasure and by wenches who are apparently fellow prostitutes. The meaning suggests the power of death over physical satisfaction. While the novel affirms the supreme value of human freedom to make right moral choices, "Ice" in both the titles metaphorically suggests innocence, cruelty, betrayal and the ultimate power of death that divests life of all illusions.

Lenny's version of life is a truth telling project. Her affliction with polio in infancy has made her routine different from other children. She is in a privileged position and has also access to social and prrvate gathering or the intimate lives of elders. She cannot be like others, she cannot lie. Says Godmother, "I'm afraid a life of crime is not for you. Not because, you aren't sharp, but because you are not suited to it.... A life sentence? Condemned to honesty??" Since her truth telling brings about a disaster in some lives, she recognizes that she is "an animal with conditioned reflexes that cannot lie." With ruthless candour, she describes her lameness, her exposure to her difference as physically handicapped and also as a female—the nature of male-female relationship—women as the object of lust, desire, the destructive outcome of sexuality. Lenny's parents, Ayah Shanta, her admirers, cousin make her sense the subterranean motives and urges both in political and personal lives. The city of Lahore in 1935 becomes alive, throbbing with life. Lenny pushed in a pram by her Ayah covers jail road, Queen Road, Past Y.M.C.A, past the Freemason's lodge (The Ghost Club) and across the mall to the Queen's statue in the park opposite the assembly chambers. She watches every scene, she loves it; Queen Victoria's statue imposes the English Raj in the Park, Felleti's Hotel Cook, the government house Gardener, and an elegant, compactly muscled head and body Masseur. Ayah Shanta and Lenny sit together. The Ice-Candy-Man of the title lurks in the background selling his popsicles lounging on the grass, a man who has to have an ominous significance in the story. In this Company, Lenny gathers knowledge of the pre-Partition politics in India, and also the mysteries of adult sexuality: "Masseur's knowing fingers, his voice gravelly with desire . . . consummate arm circles Ayah. Ayah's sound of pleasure." Fine confident strokes describe the character: "Ayah, chocolate brown and short. Everything about her is eighteen years old and round and plump. . . . And as if her looks were not stunning enough, she has a rolling bouncing walk that agitates the globules of her buttocks under cheap colourful saree and the half spheres beneath her short saree-blouse. The English man no doubt had noticed." Lenny notices things that love to crawl beneath Ayah's sarees: lady bird, glow worms and Ice-Candy-Man's toes: "They travel so cautiously that both Ayah and I are taken unawares. An absorbing gossip. I am sometimes bribed into commerce with the Ice-Candy-Man." She senses tension among the competing admirers of Ayah: "They look as if each is a whiskered dog circling the other, weighing in and warning his foe." The awareness of the subtle exchange of signals between man-man and man-woman mark her initiations into social-sexual codes. "I learn the human needs, frailties, cruelties and joys."

Not only are the people inhabiting Ayah's world portrayed with vividness and spontaneity, the mother and father, Godmother—childless, abrasive are made to look real. Lenny's special relationship with the Godmother is recorded with genuine feeling: "The bond that ties her strength to my weakness, my fierce demands to her nurturing, my trust to her capacity to contain that trust-my loneliness ... to her compassion . . . stronger than the bond of motherhood." The Electric-Aunt, addicted to navy blue, swift moving cousin, her son who makes Lenny know herself

as an object of sexuality—her difference. Adi, her brother, reminds her of her ugliness. "I am skinny, wizened, sallow, wiggly-haired ugly. He is beautiful." The narrative varies from plain matter of fact to metaphoric that amaze and amuse because of the indigenous mode of perceptions: Lenny cannot imagine Ice-Candy-Man working alongside Ayah in her house. "Mother'd throw a fit! ... with his thuggish way of inhaling from the stinking cigarettes clenched in his fist, his fleshy scarves and neck of jasmine altar ... a shady almost disreputable type." The sinister but charming implication of Ice-Candy-Man could be read in the portrait. "He talks news and gossip flow off his glib tongue like a torrent. He reads Urdu newspapers and the Urdu Digest. He can, when he applies himself, read the headlines of the Civil and Military Gadgets, the English daily. The rising German forces." The very description constitutes spurious, promiscuous personality who, we learn later, is a bastard born in Kotha and can enact glibly the .protocol of a Nawab as well as of a -pimp. The focus on Shanta and Ice-Candy-Man serves Sidhwa's purpose of connecting the personal with the national concerns and expand the boundary of her fictional world. The novel is smoothly allowed to attain more space and contain not only the story of Ayah Shanta's love for Masseur, Masseur's murder in the riots, attrition, her abduction and cruel degradation but also the tense political scenario of the time. Things are happening at a charged pace. It is the time when the political agitations in the Raj are gaining momentum: "The European mystery is erased In secret of his conjuring trick is known." The arrival and exaltation of Gandhi is received with mixed reaction—comic and wary: "Gandhiji reaches out and suddenly seizes my arm in a startling voice. What a sickly-looking child, he announces. . . . Flush her stomach! Her skin will bloom like roses." He is a man who loves women. And lame children. And the untouchable sweeper... so he will love the untouchable sweeper's constipated girl child best ... It wasn't until some years later . . . when I realized the full scope and dimension of the massacre... that I comprehended the concealed nature of the ice lurking deep beneath the hypnotic and dynamic femininity of Gandhi's non—violent exterior."

Nehru however is inscribed with obvious awe and admiration and contrasted with Jinnah. The Nehru and Lady Mountbatten connection does not cease to excite most writers who deal with India's history. Jinnah's profile is summed up in a few succinct lines—austere, driven, pukka Sahib accented, deathly ill: Sidhwa's protagonist fancies a tragic-romantic story of Jinnah's love, marriage and loss—his Parsee wife and that he died because of heartbreak. Unlike the historiography, literature has chosen to conceive Jinnah in romantic terms. Sidhwa also takes his clue from Sarojini Naidu who paid tribute to Jinnah in gushing language: "preeminently the clam hauteur of his accustomed reserve,... an intuition quick and tender as a woman's humour gay and winning as a child . . . dispassionate in his estimate and acceptance of life."

The conflict between Jinnah and Gandhi threatens the political climate. There is news of breaking the country. Ayah informs her: "They will dig a canal." Lenny becomes aware of the catalytic power of religious differences. It is sudden, one day everybody in themselves and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. People shrink, dwindle into symbols. Ayah is no longer just my all-encompassing Ayah. She is also a token. A Hindu. With the approaching climate of disquiet, the fundamentalism is provoked. While the Parsee community maintains caution, the Muslims Imam Din and Yusuf are turning into religious zealots: they take Friday afternoon off for the *Jumha*prayers. The vivid dramatic description illustrate Sidhwa's power of capturing moments with photographic accuracy. One Friday they set about preparing themselves ostentatiously. Squatting atop the cement wall of the garden tank . . . they wash their heads, arms, neck, the cans and noisily clear their throat and noses . . . crammed into a narrow religious slot they are diminished; as are Jinnah and Iqbal, Ice-Candy-Man and the Masseur.

Equally realistic details evoke the low caste female child, Papoo and her family belonging to the sweeper class, they are alienated because of the caste hierarchy—"because they are entrenched deeper in their low Hindu caste. While the Sharmas and Dau-latrams, Brahmins like Nehru, are

dehumanized by their lofty caste and caste marks." Sidhwa's pen sketches the heterogeneous configurations—caste—community with astute understanding: The Rogers of Birdwood Barracks, Queen Victoria and King George are English Christians. They look down their noses upon the Pens who are Anglo-Indian, who look down theirs on the Phaibus who are Indian Christian, who look down upon all non-Christians. The convoluted caste politics in colonial India, its grim implications—the will to power associated with deeply entrenched insecurity—form a cultural configuration from which Parsees as Sidhwa sees are fastidiously aloof: "In this milieu, Godmother, Slavesister, Electric-Aunt and my family are reduced to irrelevant nomenclature: "we are Parsee, what is God?"

The easy flow of the narrative coordinates and incorporates a wide sweep of characters and episodes in interaction of diverse cultures, compulsions, implicated in the sociology and politics of culture. Punjabi abuses build up the ambience of the sweeper caste: Papoo an eleventh year daughter of Mucchoo shall be given to an older dwarfish man in marriage. Papoo is treated with sordid cruelty. Mucchoo screeching at Papoo: "I turn my back; the bitch slacks off I say something, she becomes a deaf mute. I'll thrash the wickedness out of you."

The scatology involved in story—telling intruding into the narrative here and there unobtrusively makes us grasp the displaced communal prejudice with ugly potentials. The butcher continues: "You Hindus eat so much beans and cauliflower. I'm no surprised your Yogis levitate. They possibly fart into their way right up to heaven." Lenny observes Ayah Shanta is not laughing, she senses endemic hostility between different religions. Everybody is a party to it. With unrelenting accuracy Lenny describes a Brahmin: "our shadow glides over a Brahmin sitting cross legged, . . . our shadow has violated his virtue. . . . He looked at his food as if it is infested with maggots . . . and throws away the leaf." The interacting Sikh, Hindu, Muslim and Parsee give the narration a caricature's edge and provide some moments of innocent humour: "The little Sikh boys running about with hair piled in top-knots, are keeping mostly to themselves," or " Cousin tells Lenny that the twelve o'clock heat of the sun addles their brains" or Muslim family with their burka-veiled women they too sit apart. Dressed in satins and high heels, the little Muslim girls wear make up." Equally identifiable in the subcontinent is the scene: "A group of smooth skinned Brahmins and their pampered male offspring form a tight circle of supercilious exclusivity." Lenny hears their yelling: Parsee, crow-eaters! The mutual misinterpretation of the communities aggravates the confusion of the time.

The narrative's wittiest rendering is that of Parsee community, where slapstick and scatological references give a bounce and realism to the mimetic description and this is where the narrator feels most at home. The Parsee household, its cultural codes—patterns of communication, jokes—render characters like Godmother, old-husband, Dr. Manek Mody, Slavesister, Electric-Aunt, Cousin and Dr. Bharucha distinct individuality. Their idiosyncrasies, failings and convictions are vividly dramatized. The hilarious moments also neutralize the tense ambience of the outside world. Slavesister is often being subjected to reprimand. The narrator finds Godmother in a good form:

His Sourship [Old Father] had his bath. Manek, you'd better take your term before Cleopatra [Slavesister] decides to settle down to her business on the commode. "Really, Rodabai.... I hate to say it, but you really are going too far. . . may I ask who you are to tell Manek not to meddle? Are you somebody? Queen Cleopatra of Jail road perhaps?"

Milan Kundera in his essay "63 words" defines obscenity as the root that attaches us most deeply to our homeland. This depiction tellingly brings to the fore the rootedness of the novelist as much in the description of Mother's prayer of the Great Trouble Easers, the angels Mushkali Assa and Behram Yazd.

II

The cultural praxis of the colonized people fighting hard to overthrow imperialism was already afflicted with an endemic inner malaise. Their movement for freedom and Independence was, in effect a combat between two nations, two races, two people, two cultures and two ideologies over a territory India. The fight was over who owns India, who rules India, who representsIndia. The rift makes itself apparent in the volatile moments of sloganeering much before the event of Partition in 1947, as the image figures in the mind of child Lenny:

Adi and I slip past the attention of our vigilants and join the tiny tin pot processions lhat are spawned on Warris Road. We shout ourselves hoarse crying. Jai Hind! Jai Hind', or Pakistan Zindabad!' depending on the whim or the allegiance of the principal crier.

And as the time passes, the sectarian passion gains further momentum,.every segment of the city life comes under the spell of sporadic violence of actions and words. DIG Police Roger is murdered—body found gutted. Muslim, Sikh, Hindu leaders rise for power and autonomy. Master Tara Singh is quoted as saying, "We will see how the Muslim swines get Pakistan: we will fight till the last mart." The arrival of Holi festival in 1947 is greeted with ominous ring by Muslims: Holi with their blood! Allah Ho Akbar—Pakistan Zindabad. Violence grows more gruesome, The narrative transcription of the lurking menace evokes a sense of fear, waste and vacuity. In terse, taut narrative the sinister design of the time is apprehended: 'Lahore is burning The abandoned houses of Sharmas, Dau-latrams. . . . that Delhi Gate . . . There's Lahori Gate . . . There's Mochi Darwaza ... Isn't that where Masseur lives? Ayah asks.

'Yes that is where your masseur stays' Ice-Candy-Man said, unable to mask his ire. 'It is a Muslim mohalla'.

Lenny's observations tellingly register the demonstrations of invidious hatred between the communities:

a mob of Sikhs, their wild long hair and beard rampant, large fevered eyes glowing in fanatic faces, pours into the narrow lane roaring slogans, holding curved swords, shoving up a manic wave of violence that sets Ayah to trembling as she holds me tight. A naked child, twitching on a spear struck between her shoulders, is waved like a flag: her screamless mouth agape she is staring straight up at me.

And then slowly advancing mob of Muslim goondas: packed so tight that we can see only the top of their heads. Roaring: Allah o Akbar! Yaaaa Ali!' and PakistanZindabad!'

The terror the mob generates is palpable—like an evil, paralyzing spell. The terrible procession, like a sluggish river, flows beneath us. Every short while, a group of men, like a whirling eddy, stalls—and like the widening circles of a treacherous eddy dissolving in the mainstream, leaves in its centre the pulping red flotsam of a mangled body.

The violence further increases, the market places and residential area flash in explosions: "Trapped by the spreading flames, the panicked Hindus rush in droves from one end of the street to the other. . . . Some collapse in the street. Charred limbs and burnt logs are falling from the sky." In Lenny's reflection, we discover the enormous desolation of this epoch:

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, secret jewellery, lingering hopes . . . the fire could not have burned for months and months. But in my memory it is branded over an inordinate length of time: memory demands poetic licence. And the Ice-Candy-Man is the medium of the news—his infor-

mation/misinformation—horrendous tales of macabre violence threaten the world of Lenny: "There are no young women among the dead: Only two gunny bags full of women's breasts." Lenny fancies: "I see mother's detached breasts: soft, pendulous, their beige nipples spreading," a totem of female victimization. The stories of girls and women found naked in the ditches are too familiar. Ice-Candy-Man's stories grow more appalling as his shriveled dried up face looks possessed. In this milieu however bathing of buffaloes in Lenny's household, father's coming back by bicycle goes on as ever. Moti Mucchoo and Pappu (the untouchable) remain unruffled—themselves victims and victimizing each other, they belong to no community. While Lenny shares the troubled fears of Ayah Shanta and her knowledge that her lover Masseur was violently murdered, she does not have the resources to understand the depth of Ayah Shanta's inconsolable grief.

Ice-Candy-Man again appears on the scene, this time with a violent crowd and he manipulates the child into speaking truth about Ayah Shanta's whereabouts and gets her abducted:

They drag Ayah out. They drag her by her arms stretched taut, and her bare feet—that want to move backwards—are forced instead. Her lips are drawn away from her teeth, and the resisting curve of her throat opens her mouth like the dead child's screamless mouth. Her violet Sari slips off her shoulder, and her breasts strain at her sari-blouse stretching the cloth so that the white stitching at the seams shows. A sleeve tears under her arm.

The last thing I noticed was Ayah, her mouth slack and piteously gaping, her dishevelled hair flying into her kidnapper's faces, staring at us as if she wanted to leave behind her, wide-open and terrified eyes.

The multiple interconnected events fuse in the last part of the novel which along with describing the plight of Rana's laceration and mutilation in the wake of riots drive home the extremities of sadism let loose and the most brutal and barbarous illustration of violence figures in the suburban villages Kot Rahim Makipura. In a young boy Rana's predominantly Muslim village, the poor Muslim peasant families huddle, together, comforted by each other's presence, reluctant to disperse: "the villagers remained in the prayer yard as dusk gathered about them. But it is at the dawn the attack comes:

the panicked women ran to and fro screaming and snatching their babies, and the men barely had the time to get to their ports . . . Tall men with streaming hair and thick biceps and thighs, roaring Bolay so Nihal! Sat Sri Akal.

Rana abandoned by his mother and sisters halfway ran. In the frenzy of riots he saw his uncles beheaded. His older brothers his cousins, "some one fell on him, drenching him in the blood."

Amidst the dead bodies, wailing women, raped and killed, Rana was running into the moonless night. He arrived at his aunt's village just after dawn. He watched it from afar, confused by the activity taking place, soldiers holding guns with bayonets sticking out of them, and was diverting the villagers. This village was not under any attack, perhaps the army trucks were there to evacuate the villagers and take them toPakistan. The moment he caught the light of recognition in the eye of his Noni Chachi, the pain in his head exploded and he crumpled at her feet unconscious.

Chachi washed the wound on his head with a wet rag. Clots of congealed blood came away and floated in the pan in which she rinsed the cloth.

'I did not remove the thick scabs that had formed over the wound', she says. 'I thought I'd see his brain!' The slashing blade had scalped him .... And old woman covered him with a white cloth, said, 'Let him die in peace!' (205)

He survived however and is now with Imam Din after the Partition settles.

III

The country divided on communal lines on the eve of Independence brought in its wake the twin traumas—the physical one of being dislocated and forced to migrate and the psychological one of living in 'alien' conditions—which millions of people experienced living on both sides of the religious divide. The riots subside, Ayah Shanta is found in Hira Mandi in the company of Ice Candy Man and we encounter the sordid concealed regions of our history and politics that subjected women and the poor to the worst kind of sadism and brutality and Ice-Candy-Man is the heir to this history. The historically insignificant portions buried in the backyard of history surface:

The Mogul princes built Hira Mandi—to house their illegitimate offsprings and favourite concubines ... who cares for orphans? . . . They are nothing but prostitutes . . . young girls kidnapped by pimps—forced into all kinds of depravities on pain of death.

The narrative of this juncture of the novel grows heavy with the oppressive power of past history that vitiates the present. We share the narrator's apprehension: "Is Ayah Shanta's progeny doomed to this life wherein beauty, sexuality, sublimity and sor-didness are mixed up? Since the Ice Candy Man recognizes in her "the rhythm of a Godd.ess, the voice of an angel. . . . How she moves. Like his ancestors he wants to celebrate her grace and the adolescent Lenny is mesmerized: "I am hypnotized by the play of emotions on the Ice-Candy-Man's plastic face, by the music in his voice. . . . Moghuls portrayed in miniature." But this history need not be. relived—it stinks. It reebs of a cultural politics in which the gross physical needs of the kings and the princes was the first priority. Lenny's Godmother is not going to abandon the mission of rescuing Shanta; she can see through the mouth of romantic love fostered by men with the support of the woman in a conspiracy of silence. Godmother is not going to be a party to the complicity in romanticizing and idealizing oppressive sexual relations. The event beginning with highly nostalgic, hypnotic, tone turns grotesque and frenzied, unmasking the cruelty beneath the facade of sentimental eulogy: "Is that why you had her lifted off—let hundred of eyes probe her—so that you could marry her? You would have your own mother carried off if it suited you!—Badmash!" Ayah be-comes a living ghost: "can the soul be extracted from its living body." Finally Ayah is dispatched with her scant belongings, wrapped in cloth bundle and a small tin trunk at the Recovered Women's camp. The broken bones and pimply influence of the Ice-Candy-Man and his cronies is of no avail.

The Ayah's story ends exposing the latent cruelty and fetishes of history that always ominously appear to be in the grip of blind forces—the hegemonistic politics—endorsing the per-petuation of misinterpretation and appropriation of underprivileged and women. Getting to know Shanta, Pappoo, Hamida on the one hand, the Godmother and her own mother on the other, help the adolescent narrator reach an understanding of human situations. She must become the author of herself. The writer appears to be identifying herself with the character. The character speaking deeply, comes as close to the truth as fiction can come to the truth of the human heart. This however coincides with the loss of innocence. The experiences related are the "rite of passage" to her. In gesting the pain of her world by facing it gives her strength and will to claim the power of her own moral position:

The innocence that my parents' vigilance, the servant's care and Godmother's love sheltered in me, that neither Cousin's carnal cravings, nor the stories of the violence or the mobs could destroy, was laid waste that evening by the emotional storm that raged round me. The confrontation between Ice Candy Man and Godmother opened my eyes to the wisdom of righteous indignation over compassion—to the demands of gratification . . . and the unscrupulous nature of desire.

Ice-Candy-Man is a sincere and successful effort to artistically portray the life in the subcontinent at a crucial juncture in history without indulging in hostile parodistic melodrama or extravagant, vociferous pyro techniques one may find in the recent subcontinental fiction. Tharoor or Khushwant Singh appear to be guided by a self-conscious, subversive ideology, Sidhwa's "truth telling" narration transcribes the destructive impulse of the time with such compassion in an unpretentious idiom that even most anaesthetized or cynical reader feels touched. Feeling flows in the narrative not intended to shock or to impress but to make us identify the marginalized culture outside the mainstream as a part of history. The text aligns diverse cultures, different epochs and captures a vast human context—socio political configurations, ideologies, spiritual longings, righteousness within and without in untheo-rized, un-formulated idiom, like a camera it impartially registers the subversive dynamics of time, in knowing it we hope to derive from it some knowledge of ourselves as the product of a common history/politics and common social constructs.

Ice-Candy-Man: A Parsi Perception on the Partition of Sub-Continent

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. There have been a number of novels written on the horrors of the Partition holocaust on both sides of the Radcliffe line: Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956), Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) and Chaman Nahal's*Azadi* (1975) present the Indian perception of the traumatic experiences while Mehr Nigar Masroor's *Shadows of Time* (1987) projects the Pakistani version of the tragic events, though both the versions are free from religious bias and written more in agony and compassion than in anger.

What distinguishes Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* (1988)' is the prism of Parsi sensitivity through which the cataclysmic event is depicted. *Ice-Candy-Man* is, so far, the only novel written by a Parsi on the theme of Partition. While the novel shows in the beginning the noncommittal attitude of the Parsi community towards the flux in which the various communities of India found themselves in the beginning of the twentieth century, it distills the love-hate relationship of the Hindus and Muslims through the consciousness and point of view of Lenny, an unusually precocious five-year-old Parsi girl.

While the novel has attracted attention from Indian scholars and media persons, the studies themselves have been sketchy and inadequate. Madhu Jain in her review of the novel highlights the dilemma the Parsi community faced at the dawn of Independence: "The Parsi dilemma is: whom do they cast their lot with?" But perhaps because of the limitations of space, she does not go beyond this observation to analyze how the pattern of communal relations were subjected to a maddening change during the Partition. Although Khushwant Singh's review of the novel is comparatively longer, yet it, too, refrains from tracing at length the changing pattern of communal relations which form an integral part of this book.

In view of the obvious inadequacy of critical attention that this novel has received, this paper attempts to analyze the framework of the changing pattern of communal relations that continuously breathes underneath the narrative structure of this novel in order to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses as an aesthetic whole.

Set in Lahore, Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* sets the tone and tenor of the events described in the very beginning of the novel. The tone of neutrality manifest in the narrator-character Lenny, in describing the climactic incidents of Partition, is anticipated in the Parsi get together for the Jashan Prayer, to celebrate British victory, at the Fire Temple in Lahore. While the Parsis have all along been loyal to the British government, they, however, fear the Partition of India and, consequently, are in a fix as to which community they should support. Col. Bharucha, the domineering Parsi doctor and the President of the 'Parsi An-juinair sounds the note of caution: "There may be not one but two or even three new nations! And the Parsis might find themselves championing the wrong side—if they don't look before they leap!" An "impatient voice" in the congregation replies sarcastically: "If we are stuck with the Hindus they'll swipe our business from under our noses, and sell our grandfathers in the bargain: if we are stuck with the Muslims they'll convert us by the sword! And God help us if we're stuck with the Sikhs!" It is at this moment of Prufrockian dilemma that Col. Bharucha allays the fears of his community by advising them to cast their lot with whoever rules Lahore: "Let whoever wishes rule! Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian! We will abide by the rules of their land!" Thus the note is struck. The Parsis are going to be neutral in the tug of war among the three major communities of India. The neutral attitude of the narrator character, Lenny, has its roots in this racial psychology of the Parsis. In a way, the attitude of the Parsi community revealed here is the externalized collective sub-consciousness of Lenny.

As the action of the novel unfolds, we confront a pattern of communal amity where the three communities—the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs—are still at peace with one another. But the intimations of an imminent death and destruction lurk in the symbolic significance of Lenny's nightmares at the break of dawn. In one of these nightmares she faces an immaculate Nazi soldier "coming to get me [Lenny] on his motorcycle." Another nightmare that she recalls from her childhood which is more telling and suggestive is that of "men in uniforms quietly slice(ing) of a child's arm here, a leg there." She feels as if the child in the nightmare is herself. She pictures her Godmother as stroking her head as they "dismember" her. She says: "I feel no pain, only an abysmal sense of loss—and a chilling horror that no one is concerned by what's happening." The nightmare symbolizes the impending vivisection of India which was as cruel as the dismemberment of that child. Lenny's lack of pain, however, is suggestive of her community's indifference on account of its aloofness from the religio-political convulsion. This chilling horror that she feels over no one being concerned by what is happening sums up the lack of concern on the part of the authorities to check the unbridled display of barbarism during Partition. Still another nightmare that Lenny has is that of a zoo lion breaking loose and mercilessly mauling her: "the hungry lion, cutting across Lawrence Road to Birdwood Road, prowls from the rear of the house to the bedroom door, and in one bare-fanged leap crashes through to sink his fangs into my stomach. . . Whether he roars at night or not, I awake every morning to the lion's roar. He sets about it at the crack of dawn, blighting my dreams." The hungry lion which invariably appears at the crack of dawn seems to be a symbol of the flood of mutual hatred that the dawn of Indian Independence released to cause havoc to the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs on both sides of the border. Thus, with these three nightmares that Lenny has, the novelist prepares the reader for the gruesome and gory pattern of communal discord that became blatantly obvious during Partition.

Having planted these two authorial guide posts in the structure of the novel, Sidhwa deftly hands over narration to Lenny, who narrates the story of the changing pattern of communal relations. As the action of the novel moves forward, we perceive the pattern of communal amity that still exists in rural India, between the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs. On her maiden visit to Pir Pindo, a Muslim village thirty miles east of Lahore, Lenny has her first experience of rural life. She finds the Muslims of Pir Pindo and Sikhs from the neighbouring village of Dera Tek Singhsitting together and sharing their concern about the worsening communal relations in the cities. Sharing

the village Mullah's concern about it is the Sikh priest, Jagjeet Singh. His words have the ring of the religious concord in Pir Pindo and adjoining villages: "Brother, our villages come from the same racial stock. Muslim or Sikh, we are basically Jats. We are brothers. How can we fight each other?" As the conversation continues, we have a glimpse'of the contrasting communal attitudes of townsmen and country-folk, in the words of the Chaudhry of Pir Pindo: "our relationships with the Hindus are bound by strong ties. The city folk can afford to fight ... we can't. We are dependent on each other- bound by our toil; by Mandi prices set by the Banyas—they're our common enemy—those city. Hindus. To us villagers, what does it matter if a peasant is a Hindu, or a Muslim, or a Sikh?" The village Chaudhry's remarks have a historical authenticity. The Unionist Party of Punjab was a pro-farmer political party of the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs struggling against the stranglehold of the Hindu money-lending class. That this party should have won at the hustings in the 1937 Provincial Elections, despite a stiff resistance from the Congress and the Muslim League, is indicative of the unstinted support that it got from the villagers of all the communities inPunjab. A renowned sociologist, M.L. Darling echoes the Chaudhry's remarks when he says: "A class of Hindu money-lenders had arisen in the Punjab which had enriched itself by exploiting the helpless peasantry."[4]

In fact, the roots of communal amity in rural Punjab go so deep that the members of the two communities are ready to sacrifice even their lives for protecting each other. "If need be, we'll protect our Muslim brothers with our lives!" says Jagjeet Singh. "I am prepared to take an oath on the Holy Koran," declares the village Chaudhry, "that every man in this village will guard his Sikh brothers with no regard for his own life!" One gets the impression that rural Punjab is an oasis of communal fraternity in the desert of communal hatred that is ever expanding to spread its tentacles to engulf the two communities in the cities. At this stage of Indian history the pattern of communal relations between the two rural communities, despite buffetings from outside, was still that of harmony and concord.

The rumblings of communal discord soon reach Lahore. Lenny's parents often entertain guests who are drawn not only from their own community but also from the British and Sikh community. It is at one of these dinner parties that Inspector General Mr. Rogers expresses the view that the differences between the Congress under the leadership of Nehru and the Muslim League under Jinnah are pushing India to the brink of Partition. He feels that it is the English who are acting as a lid on this cauldron of flaming passions between the two communities. 'Mr. Singh, however, thinks that once India gains Independence, they will be able to settle all their differences, as these have been created by the British: "You always set one up against the other . . . you just give Home Rule and see. We will settle our differences and everything!"

Mr. Singh echoes the views of the Congress at that time that wanted to present the picture of a conflict-free society before the British so as to hasten the process of gainingIndependence. The Congress was conscious that internal divisions would delay the liberation of the country as the British could justify their presence on grounds of maintenance of peace and stability. An Indian historian, Mujeeb, highlights Mr. Singh's views vis-a-vis the Congress approach at that time: "[these] considerations made the Congress hold that the minority problem could wait till the country became independent."

Underlying the basic unity among the various religions of India is the Hindu Ayah and her multi-religious throng of admirers. Taking theft" turn one by one: the Mali Hari, the Ice-Candy-Man, the masseur, Sharabat Khan, Imam Din and Sher Singh, all converge on this focal point. The Ayah is undiscriminating towards all and it is in this that she becomes a symbol of the composite culture that India is. Interestingly enough, as the events roll ahead with a relentless speed, the group of Ayah's admirers begins to dwindle. A similar symbol of the unity of Indian religions is provided by the visitors to the Queen's Park where men of all religions and creeds rub shoulders with one another. With the imminence of Partition, the Park presents a picture of different

religious groups keeping away from one another's company. The passions run high even when men of different religious communities talk and chat with one another. A reference to Gandhi, Nehru and Patel's influence inLondon evokes a retort from Masseur who feels that in ousting Vavell, they have got a 'fair man' sacked. The Ice-Candy-Man goes a step further:

"With all due respect, malijee," says Ice-Candy-Man, surveying the gardener through a blue mist of exhaled smoke, "but aren't you Hindus expert at just this kind of thing? Twisting tails behind the scene . . . and getting someone else to slaughter your goats?" When the Government House gardener tries to cool the passions by imputing the differences between the Hindus and the Muslims to the English, the butcher with his "dead pan way of speaking" remarks:

"Just the English?" asks Butcher. "Haven't the Hindus connived with the Angrez to ignore the Muslim League, and support a party that didn't win a single seat in thePunjab? It's just the kind of thing we fear. They manipulate one or two Muslims against the interests of the larger community."

Thus the novelist shows the gradual emergence of the pattern of communal discord in urban India.

As the setting sun of the British Empire gathers its parting rays before sinking into oblivion, the lumpen element around Ayah meet less frequently at the Queen's Park and more at the 'Wrestler's Restaurant.' The geographical shift in their get-together is a premonition of the emergence of the pattern of communal discord. That British Queen whose statue stands abandoned in the Park, is soon going to relinquish her suzerainty over India and the Wrestler's Restaurant to which all flock now is a symbol of the wrestling ring that Partition is going to raise on the joint borders of India and Pakistan. Discussing the fate of the Punjab in the event of Partition, Masseur hopes that if thePunjab is divided, Lahore will go to Pakistan. The Government House gardener, however, hopes that this will not come true as the Hindus have much of their money invested there. At this the Sikh Zoo attendant, Sher Singh, shouts: "And what about us? The Sikhs hold more farmland in the Punjabthan the Hindus and Muslims put together!"

When Masseur advises Sher Singh that it would be good for their community to cast their lot with one country rather than be divided into two halves and lose thereby their "clout in either place," Sher Singh, like the lions he tends, turns on him: "You don't worry about our clout! We can look out for ourselves . . . you'll feel our clout all right when the time comes!"

Seeing Sher Singh in a high temper, the butcher, with his professional mercilessness, cites the English, who call the Sikhs a "bloody nuisance." At this Sher Singh and the "restaurant owning wrestler" threaten the Muslims with dire consequences in the event of Partition. The verbal skirmishes between the butcher and the Masseur on the one hand, and the Government House gardener, Sher Singh and the restaurant-owner on the other, show how deep the pattern of communal discord among the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs has become. The course of the changing pattern of communal relations seems to augur ill for the three communities as Partition looms large on the horizon.

Filtered, as these widening differences are, through the prism of the Parsi character-narrator, Lenny, her response to those relations becomes significant. Commenting on these changes, Lenny, and by implication, the novelist herself, remarks: "Gandhi, Jinnah, Nehru, Iqbal, Tara Singh, Mountbatten are names I hear. And I become aware of religious differences. It is sudden. One day everybody is themselves and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. People shrink, dwindling into symbols. Ayah is no longer just my all encompassing Ayah—she is also a token. A Hindu."

That these changes should have sunk even into the mind of the tender and immature Lenny, speaks of the extent to which the various communities of India had become conscious of their individual identity at the cost of the composite culture they had evolved after centuries. As time passes, Lenny becomes aware of the newfound religious fervour among Ayah's admirers. Not only are the differences within the caste hierarchy of the Hindus accentuated but also the racial differences among the Christians heightened. The English Christians look down upon the Anglo-Indians, who snub the Indian Christians who, themselves, in turn, regard all non-Christians with a supercilious air. In this atmosphere of heightened communal consciousness, the Parsis are reduced to "irrelevant nomenclatures." Bapsi Sidhwa, thus, paints a miniature picture of the pattern of communal discord that then prevailed and simultaneously turns the neutrality of the Parsis. In the mock-epic manner, she holds up these differences to ridicule by showing how they had even affected the classification of jokes: "Cousin erupts with a fresh crop Sikh jokes. And there are Hindu, Muslim, Parsi and Christian jokes." The denudation that jokes undergo because of the communal differences derides the very essence of these differences.

By showing the adverse influence of an imminent Partition, the novelist draws a line between national politics and the relationship among different communities. Partition is shown to be the result of irreconcilability of the adamant and rash leadership of India. In the dinner party, that has been referred to earlier, Inspector General Rogers wonders how far Hindus and Sikhs will be able to settle their differences with the Muslims so long as they acknowledge the leadership of men like Master Tara Singh, Gandhi and Nehru. In fact, the malevolent nature of the differences between the Congress and the Muslim League on the ordinary people of India is rightly anticipated by Sharbat Khan when he cautions Ayah: "These are bad times—Allah knows what's in store. There is big trouble inCalcutta and Delhi: Hindu-Muslim trouble. The Congress-wallahs are after Jinnah's blood." Ayah, however, shakes off this caution with a casual remark:

"What's it to us if Jinnah, Nehru and Patel fight? They are not fighting our fight," says Ayah, lightly.

However, Sharbat Khan does not agree with her assessment and is of the opinion that though that "may be true but they are stirring up trouble for us all." Here he becomes a persona of the novelist and comments that it was the intransigent sectarianism of the national leaders which wrought havoc on the pattern of communal amity existing in rural India.

As the fever of Partition runs high, Lenny notices "a lot of bushed talk." Everywhere "men huddled around bicycles or squat against walls in whispering groups." The fear of Partition and the violence it would unleash drives the common man to think about his safety. On her second visit to Pir Pindo, Lenny goes along with the members of Imam Din's family to Dera Tek Singh on the occasion of Baisakhi. As they reach the village, the festival is already in full swing. It is in the midst of these gay activities that Ranna senses the steel of suspicion and fear. Bapsi Sidhwa captures this feeling thus:

And despite the gaiety and destruction Ranna senses the chill spread by the presence of strangers; their unexpected faces harsh and cold. A Sikh youth whom Ranna has met few times, and who has always been kind, pretends not to notice Ranna. Other men, who would normally smile at Ranna, slide their eyes past. Little by little, without his being aware of it, his smile becomes strained and his laughter strident.

The apathy of Ranna's friends is symptomatic of the tension which the arrival of the "Akalis" in Dera Tek Singh has generated. Dost Mohammad, Raima's father, too, has noticed the intrusion of a new factor in the communal atmosphere of Dera Tek Singh. When he refers to them during his conversation with the genial-faced Granthi, Jagjeet singh, he learns about their sinister designs from the affable Granthi:

The Granthi's genial face becomes uncommonly solemn. ... He says: ". . . The Akalis swarm around like angry hornets in their blue turbans. . . . They talk of a plan to drive the Muslims out of East Punjab.'. . . They say they won't live with the Mussulmans if there is to be a Pakistan. . . . Trouble makers. You'll have to look out till this evil blows over."

The patterns of communal relations between Lenny's first and second visit to Pir Pindo are, therefore, poles apart. While during her first visit, the Sikhs and the Muslims had pledged their lives to save each other from any intruders, during her second visit, that enthusiasm has evaporated in the heat of the violence that the Akalis hold out for anyone who comes in the way of their resolve. The pattern of communal harmony has been replaced by the pattern of fear and suspicion between the two communities.

It is in this surcharged atmosphere that the Akali leader, Master Tara Singh, visitsLahore. Addressing a vast congregation outside the Assembly chambers he shouts: "We will see how the Muslim swine getPakistan! We will fight to the last man! We will show them who will leave Lahore! Raj Karega Khalsa, aki rahi na koi." His address is greeted with the roar of "Pakistan Murdabad! Death to Pakistan! Sat Sri Akal! Bolay so nihal!" The Muslims, in turn, shout "So? We'll play Holi-with-their blood! Ho-o-oli with their blo-o-d!" With both the communities having taken up their positions, the ensuing festival of Holi becomes a blood-soaked festival. The pattern of communal amity that existed before the Baisakhi of that year got shattered in the bloodbath of Holi during Partition.

What follows Partition is the unbridled ventilation of the pent-up rancour between the two communities on both sides of the border. While the Muslims of Pir Pindo—that fell on the Indian side of the border—are subjected to mass slaughter by the marauding gangs of the Akalis from the surrounding Sikh villages, the Hindus and Sikhs of Lahore undergo a similar harrowing experience. Their fate gets blighted when a train load of corpses from across the border reaches Lahore. Ice Candy-Man's relations lie dead in the heap of carcasses in the ill-fated train. Imam Din's entire family has been wiped out in Pir Pindo. Ranna alone has survived to tell the gruesome tale. While the ambers of Partition goad Ice-Candy-Man to join the marauding hooligans out to kill and destroy the vestiges of the Hindu and Sikh presence in Lahore, Imam Din remains calm in the face of all calamities. The distinction between the two becomes marked when a gang of Muslim hooligans comes to abduct Ayah. Imam Din goes to the extent of telling a lie about Ayah: "Allah-ki-Kasam, she's gone." In contrast. Ice-Candy-Man not only abducts her and throws her to the wolves of passion in a Kotha but also kills out of jealousy his co-religionist Masseur. Thus, the novelist shows that the defenders of Islam who turned Lahore into a burning city were not even true proponents of Islam. Imam Din's character, therefore, shines in this novel as that of Kamaln in B. Rajan's *The Dark Dancer* (1958).

While the flames of communal passions leap up in the skies of Lahore, the Parsis, who till now, have maintained a safe distance from this communal conflagration, act as the Messiah of the Hindus and Sikhs trapped in the burning city. They, as Lenny learns later on, help in their transportation to India. Even Ayah is rescued by Lenny's Godmother and is sent to her parents inAmritsar. Thus, inspired by a feeling of humanism, the Parsis shake off their passive neutrality and become the agents of a healing process.

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 events 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 Ice-Candy-Man becomes a person of refined sensibility; he steeps himself 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 rap.-prochement between the two warring communities—the Muslims and Hindus. Though Bapsi Sidhwa shows the possibility of the emergence 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 analysis of the changing pattern of communal relations shows a pattern of communal amity between the Hindus and Sikhs on the one hand and the Muslims on the other in the pre-Partition era, a growing impatience and mistrust between them on the eve of Partition culminating in the pattern of utter communal discord during Partition and the pattern of reconciliation in the breaking of the dawn of understanding between them in the distant horizon during the post-Partition era. Related very closely to these changing patterns of communal relations is the sea-change in the attitude of the Parsi community from the bald egg-shell of passive neutrality to an active neutrality towards the pattern of communal discord swirling around them during Partition.

Though Bapsi Sidhwa's novel does focus on the changing attitude of the Parsi community, it leaves out the exploration of the dilemma that the Parsi community had to resolve regarding its unnatural schismatic division between Indian and Pakistani Parsis. While the novel cannot be faulted for that, one does feelo the need of yet another Parsi novel on Partition which would explore and express this vital aspect.

Ice-Candy-Man: The Dehumanizing Effects of Communalism

I was a child then. Yet 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. The glow of fires beneath the press of smoke, which bloodied the horizon in a perpetual sunset, wrenched at my heart. For many of us, the departure of the British and the longed-for Independence of the subcontinent were overshadowed by the ferocity of Partition.'

The above statement very potently sums up the harrowing recollection of partition by Bapsi Sidhwa 'a Pakistani-Parsi Woman' and the leading diasporic writer of Pakistantoday (Bapsi Sidhwa in an interview with Julie Rajan). Bapsi Sidhwa is a Parsi who was born in undivided India and grew up in Lahore, Pakistan, married to a Parsi from Mumbai, India, divorced after a couple of years, married a second time to a Pakistan-based Parsi and moved to the U.S.A., thus having experiences of a lifetime in a comparatively short span of time. She has been a precocious polio-ridden child with an uncanny knack for life around her. As a young girl, Sidhwa witnessed first-hand the bloody Partition of 1947, in which seven million Muslims and five million Hindus were uprooted in the largest, most terrible exchange of population that history has known. The Partition was a result of a complicated set of social and political factors, including religious differences and the end of colonial rule in India. Sidhwa was also a 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 recalls 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 thousand of war refugees. Many thousands of these were 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." These events left a permanent scar on the psyche of the child Bapsi and years later she could not resist her powerful urge to record that decisive moment in the history of the two nations and the result was her most influential and much-acclaimed narrative—*Ice-Candy-Man/Cracking India*.

Ice-Candy-Man (1988) is one of those few books which have captured the events leading to Partition so vividly and authentically the others being *Train 16 Pakistan*(1956) by Khushwant Singh, *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) by Manohar Malgonkar. The novel is considered by many critics to be the most moving and essential book on the Indian Partition. 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 within 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 betweenPakistan 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 jewellery, 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.

It is a book of many voices, poignant, humorous, and desperate. It is a tale of upheaval in which every friend and enemy will be displaced. Eight-year-old Lenny, the spirited and imaginative daughter of an affluent Parsi family, narrates the story of the *Ice-Candy-Man* during the 1940s, as she witnesses Muslims, Hindus, Christians, and Sikhs fight for their land and their lives. As rumours of riots, fires, and massacres in distant cities become a reality, Lenny's tale follows the course of her quickly shifting life.

This multi-dimensional novel evoked a very good response from the critics and won many accolades for the author. Khush-want Singh, the celebrated author of *Train to Pakistan,* one of the most powerful accounts of Partition, commends Sidhwa: *"Ice-Candy-Man* deserves to be ranked amongst the most authentic and best [books] on the Partition of India" Another noted Indian woman novelist Geetha Hariharan finds a contemporary relevance in the novel as she comments: "Sidhwa captures the turmoil of the times, with a brilliant combination of individual growing-up pains and the collective anguish of a newly independent but divided country. Sidhwa's work, particularly the dehumanizing effects of communal ism, she movingly reveals in *Ice-Candy-Man* is painfully relevant to our present-day India."

Sidhwa's narrator is Lenny, a Pars! girl with a 'truth-infected tongue' who turns eight on the day Partition is announced. Lame in one foot and indulged by her reasonably well-off parents, Lenny is ferried around Lahore by her beloved Hindu Ayah (nanny) whose 'spherical attractions' draw a varied group of suitors eager to dispense ice-lollies, silk doilies, massages and other gifts. Here's how we first meet Lenny:

> Lordly, lounging in my briskly rolling pram, immersed in dreams, my private world is rudely popped by the sudden appearance of an English gnome wagging a leathery finger in my ayah's face. But for keen reflexes that enable her to pull the carriage up short there might have been an accident: and blood spilled on Warns Road. Wagging

his finger over my head into Ayah's alarmed face, he tut-tuts: "Let her walk. Shame, shame! Such a big girl in a pram! She's at least four!"

He smiles down at me, his brown eyes twinkling intolerance. I look at him politely, concealing my complacence....

"Come On. Up, up!" he says, crooking a beckoning finger.

"She not walk much . . . she get tired," drawls Ayah. And simultaneously I raise my trouser cuff to reveal the leather straps and wicked steel callipers harnessing my right boot.

Confronted by Ayah's liquid eyes and prim gloating, and the triumphant revelation of my callipers, the Englishman withers.

Lenny's deformed foot sets her proudly apart from other children, spares her the tedium of school—she receives private tuition by the odorous Mrs. Pen—and gives her entry into the world of adults. Cared for by Ayah, she observes her romances and admirers as well as the lives of other servants and relatives. There is Cousin who thinks he has turned into a honeycomb when he discovers ejaculation and is besotted with Lenny, or Dr. Manek who can fart on cue.

With her throng of characters, Sidhwa paints a microcosm of Pakistani society, filtered through Lenny's irreverent and innocent eye which values people regardless of their social standing and rejoices in their lusts and longings. Born into the tiny Parsi community, Lenny is outside the communal frenzy that follows, but emotionally torn by the violence engulfing her friends. If Sidhwa is partisan, it is in her contempt of politicians pursuing separatist agendas, dividing maps in state rooms.

The vortex of violence that soon follows sucks up Ayah and her Muslim admirer Ice-Candy-Man just as it rips apart other lives. But Sidhwa stays true to her characters: they refuse to give up on life, stop joking or turn into tragic symbols. All of which brings home the horror of what they survive. As men lose their senses, raping, killing, and looting, women reveal their strengths, building links across the divided communities, sheltering survivors, insisting on continuity.

The novel captures the dispirited effects of communal frenzy that follows the Partition through the innocent eyes of Lenny, much more likelier creator, polio-ridden, precocious and a keen observer of the happenings around. Lenny's disadvantage, as she is physically handicapped, turns out to the benefit of the readers. She is looked after by her Hindu ayah, "chocolate-brown and short. Everything about her is eighteen years old and round and plump. Even her face. Full-blown cheeks, pouting mouth and smooth forehead curve to form a circle with her head. Her hair is pulled back in a tight knot. . . she has a rolling bouncy walk that agitates the globules of her buttocks under her cheap colourful saris and the half-spheres beneath her short sari-blouses." As the above description suggests, her ayah is exceptionally beautiful and sensuous, capable of attracting people. Lenny is conscious of this fact as she reveals: "The covetous glances Ayah draws educate me. Up and down, they look at her. Stub-handed twisted beggars and dusty old beggars on crutches drop their poses and stare at her with hard, alert eyes. Holy men, masked in piety, shove aside their pretences to ogle with her lust. Hawkers, cart-drivers, cooks, coolies and cyclists turn their heads as she passes, pushing my pram with the unconcern of the Hindu goddess she worships." Among her admirers Ayah has Ice-Candy-Man, Masseur, Imam Din, Hari and many more. It is through her that young Lenny gets a feel of the life of the cross-section of Pakistani society. They feed and cater to her idyllic world of romances. They are what they are to her—human beings, full of human strengths and weaknesses. She loves them their company, their frailties, little disputes, jokes, funny stories and their jealousies to command the love and attention of Ayah. She never cares for their religious faith, their distinct loyalties and political talks till she hears the disturbing talk of Partition of the nation. Things don't remain the same as

this news spreads like a bush fire in her town. Her idyllic world of childhood innocence gives way to the tormenting adult world of Partition riots. The individual identities merge with the identities of the community and soon the society is sharply divided on the communal lines. Lenny cannot understand it, as she reflects:

There is much disturbing talk. India is going to be broken. Can one break a country? And what happens if they break it where our house is? Or crack it further up on Warns Road? How will I ever get to Godmother's then?

I ask Cousin.

"Rubbish," he says, "no one's going to break India. It's not made of glass!"

I ask Ayah.

"They'll'dig a canal . . ." she ventures. "This side for Hindustan and this side forPakistan. If they want two countries, that's what they'll have to do—crack India with a long canal"

Gandhi, Jinnah, Nehru, Mountbatten are names I hear.

And I become aware of religious differences.

It is sudden. One day everybody is themselves—and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. People shrink, dwindling into symbols. Ayah is no longer just my all-encompassing Ayah—she is also a token. A Hindu. Carried away by a renewed devotional fervour she expends a small fortune in joss-sticks, flowers and sweets on the gods and goddesses in the temples.

The news of atrocities on Muslims nearAmritsar and Julliindhar are heard inLahore. The details are so brutal and bizarre that it is, hard to believe. After a fortnight or so an army truck dumps a family outside the gate of Lenny and she recognizes them to be the distant kins of Imam Din from a village in Punjab. The process of uprooting has started. The familiar faces have started dwindling or have changed beyond recognition. The people who were simply friends have now turned Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs or Christians, fighting for their land and faith even at the cost of their established social relationships. Lenny has a bitter realization by now: *"One man's religion is another man's poison."* (117, my italics) Suddenly the whole atmosphere is charged with religious slogans. The Sikhs are wielding their *kirpans* shouting *'PakistanMwdabadl* Death to Pakistan! *Sat Siri Akaal! Bolay se nihaall'* And Muslims are roaring:*'Allah-o-Akbar! Yaaaa Ali!'* and *'PakistanZindabad*. The Hindu houses are put on fire in Lahore in retaliation to what happens inPunjab. Sid-hwa captures this poignant moment in a very touching paragraph of the novel:

> Trapped by the spreading flames the panicked Hindus rush in droves from one end of the street to the other. Many disappear down the smoking lanes. Some collapse in the street. Charred limbs and burnt logs are falling from the sky.

The whole world is burning. The air on my face is so hot I think my flesh and clothes will catch fire. I start screaming: hysterically sobbing. Ayah moves away, her feet suddenly heavy and dragging, and sits on the roof slumped against the wall. She buries her face in her knees.

Communal frenzy has rocked the two sides and geographical division has led to division in souls of the people. People are being butchered, men, women, children, old, young, handicapped, diseased, indiscriminately on the either sides. Houses are set on fire, looted. Women have been the worst sufferers as they have been raped brutally and their limbs amputated. Ice-Candy-Man is no more the simple admirer of Ayah whom she scolds at times for his unruly behaviour, he has

become a militant Muslim fighting the cause of his faith and land. One day he comes breathless in sweat and dust to announce the worst outcome of these communal riots:

> 'A train from Gurdaspur has just come in' he announces, panting. 'Every one in it is dead. Butchered. They are all Muslim. There are no young women among the dead! Only two gunny-bags full of women's breasts!'

One by one most of the Hindus and Sikhs in Lahore have either left, killed or forced to convert in this bloody battle. Hari, the gardener, has been forced to adopt Muslim faith and has now become Himat Ali. Even Ayah is not spared and is kidnapped by a mob with the help of Ice-Candy-Man, her lover, to suffer humiliation, defilement and mental torture. At that instant she is not the woman whom Ice-Candy-Man always desired, she is a Hindu woman who deserves to be treated the way Muslim women have been treated by Sikhs and Hindus. She is forced to become Mumtaz, the wife of Ice-Candy-Man and also to dance and sleep with numerous people until she is recovered from that hell by Godmother. Masseur's body is found by the roadside in a gunny sack. Thus this surge of communalism spoils the harmony and peace of Lahore completely. Thousands have been uprooted and rendered homeless, thousands have lost their lives, thousands have been compelled to leave a legacy of lifetime in that one moment. Lenny realizes this change as she goes to the Victoria Park with her new ayah Hamida. The whole atmosphere has changed; she is not able to find any familiar face among those who are occupying her favourite spot. As she narrates: "Beaden Road, bereft of the colourful turbans, hairy bodies, yellow shorts, tight pyjamas, and glittering religious arsenal of the Sikhs, looks like any other populous street. Lahore is suddenly emptied of yet another hoary dimension: there are no Brahmins with caste-marks—or Hindus in dhotis with*bodhis*. Only hordes of Muslim refugees."Lahore is seething with aliens who have lost their settled homes in India and have been forced to go to Pakistan. Having lost their property, prestige and nearest and dearest ones in this riot they are struggling hard to recover from this sudden jolt. They are occupying the abandoned houses of Hindus and Sikhs who have left Lahore to meet the same fate at the other end.

The novel describes the horrors of the Partition very well and the reader is drawn into the tale. The fears, the insecurity, and the hatred that was bred in the people by the politicians of that time for their own vested interests is very much caricatured in the novel. The changing loyalties of the circle of friends who in the end become fiends brings forth the true horror of Partition when friends became traitors. The description of the massacre of Ranna's village shows how humans behaved like savages, killing their own countrymen. The Ice-Candy-Man sees a perfect opportunity to claim what he thinks is his. The Partition also psychologically affects the Ice-Candy-Man as his family is murdered brutally on the train. It turns him into a cruel person he then joins in the fray and kills Hindus, some of them his friends. All in all the Ice-Candy-Man is very much affected by the Partition and he uses the violence as a mechanism to claim Ayah but it backfires.

Thus here a sad tale of Partition is shown, where the crimes of the people killed the national spirit and no matter what was tried, it still remains as a deep scar on the psyche of the people. As Jinnah himself put it, 'Pakistan has been the biggest mistake of my life.' Partition of India is truly the sorest point in the subcontinent's history, when a new nation was born amidst turmoil and violence that later both countries have regretted and will do so for the rest of their existence. So will the Ice-candy-man regret his deeds for the rest of his miserable life.

The Ice-Candy-Man shows us the naked human emotions that are revealed whenever passions run high and it also shows how they can be good and evil in the same person. The novel has a simple narrative, enhanced by the use of humour, which effectively tells us the story of the Ice-Candy-Man. It precisely captured that decisive moment in history when 'one day everybody is themselves—and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian', when identities that existed side-by-side get sharpened like swords against each other. It is a story which has been

repeated in various attempts at genocide and 'ethnic cleansing' the world over, and which, in the case of India and Pakistan uprooted seven million Muslims and five million Hindus and Sikhs as they fled from massacres to cross newly-created borders.

The legacy of this tumult is the continual chafing of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, with periodic eruptions of violence stirred up now-and-then by political interests and local gangsters. So supposedly sensitive is the issue that government media in India will often demurely speak of 'attacks by members of one community against members of another'. This is a story in which individuals and their community identities are inseparable, a story of emerging nations as well as a story of single characters.

Not only Lenny, but everyone in this novel experiences substantial change in the context of the Partition. Ayah's traumatic transformation at the hands of Ice-Candy-Man, the suitor, who finally possesses her, and Ice-Candy-Man's own moral erosion through the Partition, figure the situation of all people involved in the ill-planned Partition, which resulted in migration, deaths, and incidents of rape and torture, all on a massive scale.

The links between individuals and nations are emphasized both by multiple plots and points of view. Specifically, while Lenny is the clear protagonist and narrator for most of the novel, Ranna, a Muslim child, whose experiences were particularly violent and traumatic, tells his own story. A significant aspect of the novel is the marginality of Britain and the Raj in the plot; colonialism sets this trauma in place, but postcolonial characters are its focus.

Thus the novel *Ice-Candy-Man* to a great extent focuses on the dehumanizing effects of communalism. The novelist is aware of the sensitivity of her readers on the two sides and has quite skilfully interwoven a gripping tale of everlasting impact. Being a Parsi, a microscopic minority, Sidhwa for the most part of the action has been a neutral observer and has at the same time a license to comment on the .events without being termed a propagandist or communalist. As she herself says in one of her interviews:

> "The struggle was between the Hindus and the Muslims, and as a Parsi (member of a Zoroastrian sect), I felt I could give a dispassionate account of this huge, momentous struggle."

Again at another place she almost reiterates the same thing: "As a Parsi, I can see things objectively. I see all the common people suffering while the politicians on either side have fun." But this does not mean that Parsis were silent spectators in this grimmest and most cruel human drama. They had their own share of things. Bapsi Sidhwa also wants people to know what Parsis had to offer during that period. We find Lenny's mother and Godmother helping the suffering women even at the risk of their own lives. It is ultimately Godmother who rescues Ayah from the clutches of Ice-Candy-Man and manages to send her to her family. Lenny's mother helps her Hindu and Sikh friends with gasoline etc. so that they can safely leave Pakistan. Lenny is suspicious of her mother's activities, as she secretly slips out of the house at odd hours, and charges her for her involvement in the bloody battle at that she explains her mission and her voice is not intended for Lenny alone it is for the whole world: "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." The novel, apart from being a classic of partition novel, is a celebration of writer's own community and its humanity and loyalty for the nation and the people it inhabits and shares things with.

Ice-Candy-Man: Communal Frenzy and Partition

Throughout history, fanatics as well as ideologues, pushed to the emotional brink of daring their lives, have taken the plunge, which has triggered off a chain reaction of rigid mental fixations and attitudes. Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *Ice-Candy-Man* examines the inexorable logic of Partition as an offshoot of fundamentalism sparked by hardening communal attitudes.

First published in 1988 in London, this novel is set in pre-Partition India in Lahore. It belongs to the genre of the Partition novel like Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964), Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* (1975), and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*(1956). However in English fiction it is the second novel on Partition by a woman author from sub-continent. The other novel is *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) by Attia Hussain. Both these sensitive women writers share similar perspectives on the calamities of Partition. The denouement of both novels is quite similar. Both stress a similar vulnerability of human understanding and life, caused by the throes of Partition which relentlessly divided friends, families, lovers and neighbours.

Ice-Candy-Man is a novel of upheaval which includes a cast of characters from all communities. There are Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis, so a multiple perspective of Partition emerges as viewed by all the affected communities. Bapsi Sidhwa uses a narrator to tell the tale. A precocious Parsi girl, eight years old with a handicapped foot, narrates the story of her changing world with sophistication and wonder. Lenny is like the persona that Chaucer adopts in his Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales,* rendering credibility by being almost a part of the reader's consciousness. With the wonder of a child, she observes social change and human behaviour, noting interesting sidelights, seeking and listening to opinions and occasionally making judgements. Her childish innocence is like the seeming naive display of Chaucer's persona, a source of sharp irony. The device of the child narrator enables Bapsi Sidhwa treat a historical moment as horrifying as Partition without morbidity, pedanticism or censure. The highlight of the novel is that the author throughout maintains a masterful balance between laughter and despair. The subtle irony and deft usage of language creates humour which does not shroud but raucously highlights the traumas of Partition. Sensitively the author shows the human toll of Partition, when a concerned Lenny asks: "Can one break a country? And what happens if they break it where our house is?"

The Parsi paradox of whether to support "Swaraj" or to maintain their loyalty to the British Raj is also humorously delineated. A piquant touch is given to this dilemma. With the impending news of Independence, the paranoid feelings of the Parsis, a minuscule minority, get accentuated. The Parsis inLahore at a special meeting at their temple hall in Warris Road, have an acrimonious debate on the political situation. The meeting is interesting as it expresses the insecurity of the Parsis not because of communal antagonism, but the apprehension of their status at the departure of the British. Already the unstinted loyalty to the colonial power is declining. Col. Bharucha and Lenny's father blame the British for bringing polio to India. So at the meeting, India's smallest minority tries to redefine their strategy which Col. Bharucha claims as "We must hunt with the hounds and run with the hare."

The ambivalent attitude of the Parsis towards Partition and Independenceemerged at the main-hall meeting at the Fire-Temple. Col. Bharucha, the President of the community in Lahore, advocates status quo. He warns fellow-Parsis to shun the anti-colonial movement and nationalist agitation. His reasoning is based on expediency. If there is "Home Rule," political glory, fame and fortune will be acquired by the two major communities, Hindus and Muslims. He considers Home Rule as a power struggle, saying "Hindus, Muslims and even the Sikhs are going to jockey for power and if you jokers jump into the middle you'll be mangled into chutney!"

He also advocates caution, because of the Parsis's long standing attitudes of loyalty to the British. This attitude stemmed from the Zoroastrian religious belief of loyalty to a ruler and a close relationship between state and community. The other cause for loyalty to the British was purely economic. The Parsis primarily traced their secured status as a prosperous minority to British rule, identified as the "good government" of the African prayer. So loyalty was a self-evident precept to the Parsis. Thus Col. Bharucha does not want any Parsi of Lahore to offend British sensibilities by espousing nationalist causes. In a tone of admonition he says, "I hope no Lahore Parsi will be stupid enough to court trouble—I strongly advise all of you to stay at home and out of trouble."

In her first novel *The Crow Eaters* (1978), Bapsi Sidhwa portrayed the dying businessman Faredoon Jnnglewalla vehemently protesting against the nationalist movement and exhorting his offspring to remain loyal to the British Empire. Col. Bharucha has a somewhat similar attitude. However withIndependence imminent and Partition inevitable, there is a subtle change in the attitude of the Parsis of Lahore. The patriarchal advice of Col. Bharucha is opposed. Dr. Mody promptly poses a plea for involvement in the freedom struggle. He says, "our neighbours will think we are betraying them and siding with the English."

The banker Mr. Toddywalla says that the Parsis should support the Indian community which appears to be in a dominant position or will acquire political power afterIndependence. So he asks the assembled congregation to formulate attitudes and actions on Independence based on self-interest. Finally the assembled Parsis resolve to remain in Lahore and abide by the rules of the land. Wafting in self-esteem they agree to Col. Bha-rucha's suggestion, "'Let whoever wishes rule! Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. We will abide by the rules of the land."

Some Parsis in the congregation express apprehension about remaining in Lahoreafter Independence and wish to migrate either to London or Bombay (where majority of their coreligionists lives). However such fears get over-ruled and the herd mentality desire of staying only in Bombay is also rejected. The final resolution is one of adaptability and compromise. The President of the Lahore Parsis Col. Bharucha says, "As long as we conduct our lives quietly; as long as we present no threat to anybody; we will prosper right here." Through this animated conversation, Bapsi Sidhwa reveals the implicit, lurking fear of the Parsis, a vulnerable minority losing their identity and getting swamped by the majority communities—either Hindus in India or Muslims in Pakistan. So even amongst the Parsis the smallest minority in undividedIndia, the Partition sparked off an impulse for migration from their homelands.Bombay was opted for, primarily due to safety in numbers rather than the safeguards of democratic India. Historically however the movement to Bombay, as the novelist also indicates, was minimal. The Parsis remained in urban areas of India andPakistan, trying to preserve their identity by not meddling in political matters. The advice of Mr. Toddywalla is followed, "But don't try to prosper immoderately. And remember don't ever try to exercise real power."

Amidst banter, repartee and humour Bapsi Sidhwa subtly portrays the underlying fears of the Parsis about Partition and Independence. The depiction of their mental turmoil can be compared to John Masters's depiction of the plight of the Eurasians commonly called Anglo-Indians before the British left the subcontinent. Bapsi Sidhwa shows how the Parsis are similar captives of circumstances in the upheaval of Partition.

Adaptability being part of their social code, the Parsis of Lahore adjust to the changing circumstances after Partition. In*The Crow Eaters,* Bapsi Sidhwa had only hinted at the necessity of changing allegiances after Independence but in *Ice-Candy-Man,* the change in attitudes is depicted. Col. Bharucha and Lenny's father curse the British for bringing polio to India. Lenny suffers from polio and the disease is considered as another example of British treachery. There is

already a sense of involvement, with the new reality as Lenny's parents, godmother and Parsi friends try to bring some semblance of sanity in Lahore.

With witty remarks and subtle usage of language, Bapsi Sidhwa presents the impact of Independence and Partition in vivid images. The altered social reality becomes even more striking, as narrated by the innocent eight-year-old Lenny.Independence becomes evident to Lenny when she visits the Queen's Garden: "I cannot believe my eyes. The queen has gone! The space between the marble canopy and the marble platform is empty. A group of children playing knuckles, squat where the gunmetal queen sat enthroned." So within her restricted space, Lenny aptly reveals the fading away of an Empire and its value systems. The theme of separation caused by Partition is also revealed in a simple but vividly poignant observation by Lenny. During her romp at the Queen's Garden, she notices the absence of the cosmopolitan gathering.

Through the wondering eves of the precocious Lenny, the novelist shows the disruption of a settled order and traumatic separations of friends, the legacy of Partition.

The impact of Partition is psychologically understood and narrated through the feelings of a child, who is a member of a minuscule minority. The sense of loss is aptly demonstrated as Lenny and her brother Adi wandering through the garden observe. "Adi and I wander from group to group peering into faces beneath white skull-caps and above ascetic beards. I feel uneasy. Like Hamida I do not fit. I know we will not find familiar faces here." The uprootedness of Partition is revealed as Lenny drifts through the Queen's Garden searching in vain for familiar faces and acquaintances. Even in the child there is a feeling of insecurity. She clings to the hands of her Ayah and cajoles her not to marry the Masseur. A Muslim, the Masseur is one of Ayah's numerous admirers and promises to marry and protect her during the throes of Partition. Overhearing this, Lenny desperately urges Ayah not to get married, as it would mean separation. Later when Ayah is abducted it is Lenny who urges her family to search for her. Lenny's responses show the dislocation of life during Partition. The Partition novels focus onPunjab and the dislocation of life and human feelings in that region. So Bapsi Siclhwa's novel is similar to the novels in this genre. The only difference is that the pointless brutality of communal frenzy is parodied as it is unfurled and narrated by the child-narrator Lenny. She and her younger brother Adi watch "the skyline of the old walled city ablaze and people spattering each other with blood." Fire destroys Hindu, Muslim and Sikh houses and shops at Shalmi. *"The* entire Shalmi, an area covering about four square miles, flashes in explosions." Fire knows no religion. The shrieks and shouts of the Sikh mobs when listening to Master Tara Singh at Queen's Garden give Lenny as many nightmares as when she recollects the roaring of the lions in the zoo. With such subtle comparisons and ironic exposures, Bapsi Sidhwa shows the brutalization which communal frenzy causes. Even lovers turn hostile. Ice-Candy-Man, the Muslim lover of the Hindu Ayah, watches Shalmi and Mozang Chowk burn with "the muscles in his face tight with a strange exhilaration I never want to see." The transformation of a fun-loving man who frolicked and acted the buffoon in the park into an ogre due to communal frenzy is aptly revealed by Lenny's honor at the sadism in his face. A vivid image which is a stark reminder of the brutality of the times. This is the way Bapsi Sidhwa handles the delicate theme of Partition, through subtle insinuations, images and gestures. So the stark horror, of loss, bloodshed and separation is portrayed without verbosity, sensationalism, lurid details and maudlin sentimentality. The sensitive portrayal of the horrors of Partition enhances the poignancy and cruelty of the event without the author ever appearing pedantic or pretentious.

Allegory is another literary device used by Bapsi Sidhwa to depict the trauma of Partition. The child-narrator Lenny is also affected by the violence at Lahore: "The whole world is burning. The air on my face is so hot I think my flesh and clothes will catch fire. I start screaming: hysterically sobbing." The scenes of violence and arson and above all the venomous hatred of friends who had months earlier rationalized about the impossibility of violence, have a frightening impact on the young Parsi girl Lenny. Violence breeds violence and Lenny is also a victim. Her

rage is directed at her collection of dolls. In a frenzy she acts: "I pick out a big, bloated celluloid doll. I turn it upside down and pull its legs apart. The elastic that holds them together stretches easily. I let one leg go and it snaps back, attaching itself to the brittle torso." The destructive urge overcomes Lenny and she is not satisfied till assisted by her brother Adi she wrenches out the legs of the doll and examines the spilled in-sides. This violent act by Lenny is an apt allegory on the mindless violence of Partition. With a morbid sense of humour, Bapsi Sidhwa reveals how the violence of Partition has serrated the roots of people of different communities, irrespective of ideology, friendship and rational ideas. In such a depiction, Bapsi Sidhwa resembles the horror portrayed by William Golding in *The Lord of the Files*(1954). Golding indicated that there is a thin line between good and evil in human beings and it is only the structures of civilizations which prevent the lurking evil from being rampant. At the end of *The Lord of the Flies,*boys of Jack's tribe like barbarians got a sadistic delight in hunting Ralph. The situation is saved as a Naval officer reaches the island and by his presence curbs the pointless brutality of the abandoned boys. Golding had written this novel after World War II and the allegorical meaning was evident. In the world of fiction, a grown-up stepped in to curb the atrocities and brutality of the boys, but when countries commit atrocities there is no restraining power. Lenny's destruction of the doll also has allegorical significance. It shows how even a young girl is powerless to stem the tide of surging violence within, thereby implying that grown up fanatics enmeshed in communal frenzy are similarly trapped into brutal violence. Lenny breaks down and cries at her pointless brutality, a sombre message by the novelist that unless there is re-thinking, brutality and insensitivity becomes a way of life, such is the conditioning of communalism.

Another Partition novel, Attia Hosain's*Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961), also uses a narrator-heroine to similar effect. Attia Hosain's narrator-heroine Laila reveals the trauma of Partition through her memories and insights of her Taluqdar family disintegrating. Like in the *Ice-Candy-Man,* the enigma of Partition is sensitively shown. When Zebra, her cousin married inPakistan, returns to Hasanpur, she quarrels with Laila about protection of Muslim culture and language. The disagreements were no longer youthful verbal quarrels but echoed bigger divisions. Laila surmises the cruelest aspect of Partition when she says, "In the end, inevitably we quarrelled, and though we made up before we parted I realized that the ties which had kept families together for centuries had been loosened beyond repair." Like Lenny, the grown-up Laila is also both nostalgic and restless. Laila ruminates and wanders in her disbanded ancestral home Ashiana after Partition. Memories come flooding back. However her nostalgia is controlled. Whilst walking through the rooms of Ashiana. she remembers the past, but does not wish for the old order to return. Her new-found identity and struggle to be Ameer's lover and wife, curbs any desire for a return to the cloistered feudal order. Instead it broadens her horizons of life. She comes to detest dogmatism, either in the name of religion or radicalism. Her views and perspective of life developed after intense personal struggle enable Laila to tackle the loss of her husband Ameer and the trauma of Partition. So both narrator-heroines, Lenny and Laila, react against communal responses and the horrors of violence. The mature Laila rationalizes against communal tension whereas the young Lenny instinctively reacts against the horrors of communal violence.

There are other similarities between the two novelists, Bapsi Sidhwa and Attia llosain. Both realize there are no easy solutions to communal holocausts except intense struggle against dogmatism. Laila's concerted attempts at breaking from traditional customs, the negation of despair and recognition of struggle are upheld by Attia Hosain. Her narrator-heroine does not lapse into a glorification of the past or take refuge in mysticism, epicureanism or jingoism. Similarly Bapsi Sidhwa shows there are no winners in the communal holocausts of Partition. This is revealed by clever juxtapositioning of images.

At the festival of Holi, instead of splattering friends with bright colours, people are splattering each other with blood. Bapsi Sidhwa shows the human loss in Partition:

> Instead, wave upon scruffy wave of Muslim refugees flood Lahore—and the Punjab west of Lahore. Within three months seven million Muslims and five million Hindus and Sikhs are uprooted in the largest and most terrible exchange of population known to history. The Punjab has been divided.

Bare facts present the horror of the greatest communal divide in history. Bapsi Sidhwa aptly shows the inexorable logic of Partition which moves on relentlessly leaving even sane people and friends helpless and ineffective. Jagjeet Singh with a furtive group of Sikhs visited a Muslim village Pir Pindo under cover of darkness to warn them of an impending Akali attack. Pir Pindo is attacked at dawn and swamped by Sikhs. Men, women and children are killed. Similarly Sikh families are attacked inLahore. The neighbours of the Sethis, Mr. and Mrs. Singh leave with their two children and a few belongings. Other goods are left behind with Lenny's parents. Sher Singh the zoo attendant flees from Lahore, due to insecurity, after his brother-in-law is killed. Similarly the student fraternity of King Edward's Medical College is disrupted. Prakash and his family migrate to Delhi and Rahool Singh and his pretty sisters are escorted to a convoy to Amritsar. In Lenny's household the gardener Hari is circumcised and becomes Himat Ali, and Moti becomes David Masih, the politics of compromise and survival. Ayah's lover the Masseur's mutilated dead body is found in a gunnysack. The moneylender Kirpa Ram flees leaving guineas and money behind. Even middle-class families like the Shankers flee in haste. Partition is shown as a series of images and events depicting human loss and agony. The dislocation of settled life is aptly revealed by Lenny's understanding of the demographic change in Lahore. In awe she observes, "Lahore is suddenly emptied of yet another hoary dimension: there are no Brahmins with caste-marks—or Hindus in dhoties with bodhis. Only hordes of Muslim refugees." Lahore is no more-cosmopolitan. Even the Sikhs have fled. The child-narrator senses the difference and pain caused by the huge exchange of populations.

Bapsi Sidhwa also subtly delineates the psychological impact of the horrors of Partition on the lives of people. The communal frenzy has a distorting effect on people—and leads to feelings of suspicion, distrust and susceptibility to rumours. Even the children, Lenny, Adi and their cousin are intrigued and suspicious of any minor deviations from normal behaviour. Mrs. Sethi and Aunt Minnie travel all over Lahorein the car but do not take the children with them. Deprived of long drives, Lenny and her cousin are intrigued at the movements of their mothers. Ayah enhances the sense of mystery when she states that the dicky of the car is full of cans of petrol. The author shows that in a highly surcharged atmosphere, suspicion and distrust become inevitable. The Ayah is also suspicious about the movements of cans of petrol by the two Parsiladies. If she suspects they are distributing petrol to the arsonists she does not state so. The three children are stupefied by this revelation and let their imagination run wild. Finally they come to the same conclusion. "We know who the arsonists are. Our mothers are setting fire to Lahore!—My heart pounds at the damnation that awaits their souls. My knees quake at the horror of their imminent arrest."

Bapsi Sidhwa cleverly parodies the feelings of suspicion and distrust of the children for their mothers. The imaginary fears of Lenny, Adi and their cousin are a source of humour but also a grim reminder of how rumour becomes institutionalized in a highly surcharged atmosphere. The children only fantasize about their mother's dangerous acts but the author shows how rumour preys upon the frenzied minds of men vitiated by communal hatred. On the radio there is news of trouble at Gurdaspur, which the Ice-Candy-Man and his friends at once interpret as "there is uncontrollable butchering going on in Gurdaspur." There are further rumours of a train full of dead bodies coming to Lahore from Gurdaspur. The Ice-Candy-Man returns panting after a frantic cycle ride and adds to the horror, by describing atrocities on women and stating that the dead are all Muslims. The acquaintances of Queen's Garden believe this rumour and harbour

revenge against Sikhs. They now look with hatred on longstanding friend Sher Singh, compelling the latter to flee from Lahore."

In the vitiated communal atmosphere, insanity prevails as ordinary men lose their rationality. Such a degradation is best exemplified in the rage of Ice-Candy-Man who says:

> "I'll tell you to your face—I lose my senses when I think of the mutilated bodies on that train from Gurdaspur . . . that night I went mad, I tell you, I lobbed grenades through the windows of Hindus and Sikhs I'd known all my life! I hated their guts."

Revenge becomes the major motivation for the Ice-Candy-Man and his friends. The role of rumour and the consequent pattern of violence as depicted by Bapsi Sidhwa is compact and realistic.

Sidhwa's novel written at a period of history when communal and ethnic violence threaten disintegration of the subcontinent, is an apt warning of the dangers of communal frenzy. Bapsi Sidhwa shows that during communal strife, sanity, human feelings and past friendships are forgotten. At the Queens Park in Lahore, friends and colleagues had argued endlessly about the impossibility of violence against each other and of fleeing from their homeland. Yet ironically, whilst the elders— Masseur, Butcher, Ice-Candy-Man. Sher Singh and Ayah—gossip about national politics the child-narrator senses the change in the days before Partition:

> "I can't put my finger on it—but there is a subtle change in the Queen's Garden.'"

The admirers of Ayah, in the pursuit of love temporarily sidetrack communal feelings and "Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Parsi are as always, unified around her." The others without such motivations are deliberately sitting with members of their own community, huddled together preserving cultural and religious identities. The Brahmins form their own circle of exclusivity. Burkha-clad Muslim women and children have their own group. The saddest fact as observed by Lenny is that even the children do not mix whilst playing.

Lenny attempts social interaction with a group of Sikh children but Masseur tries to pull her away. Sikh women ask her name and the name of her religion. When the child states that she is a Parsi, the Sikh women express amazement at the discovery of a new religion. It is then that Lenny instinctively realizes the social divide between communities. Rationalizing her feelings she says,

> “That's when I realize what has changed. The Sikhs, only their rowdy little boys running about hair piled in topknots, are keeping mostly to themselves."

The author implies that the events at Queen's Garden are a reflection of a crystallization of feelings at a larger scale inLahore and other cities of India.

Cultural and religious exclusivity leads initially to indifference and later to contempt which becomes the breeding ground for communal violence and bigotry. With a subtle parody, Bapsi Sidhwa conveys the dangers of social exclusivity. The Ice-Candy-Man, in striking attire, enters the Queen's Garden, 'Thumping a five-foot iron trident with bells tied near its base." He is in the guise of a holy man. The author implies that in an atmosphere which encourages religious bigotry, even charlatans emerge as holy and godmen. The difference between appearance and reality is slim. The Ice-Candy-Man's antics provoke amusement but it is a pointer to the duplicity of people in the name of religion.

Ayah's admirers maintain a facade of unity by cracking ribald jokes on community characteristics. However they also become vicious—and prey to communal frenzy in the near future. The Ice-Candy-Man is part of the frenzied mob which abdicates Ayah and keeps her in the brothels. So even the passion of love is powerless against religious bigotry. Later in the novel, the

Ice-Candy-Man attempts to make amends, he marries Ayah, changes her name to Mumtaz, and recites love poetry to her. But even here love is shown as powerless. Ayah has revulsion for her newly acquired Muslim identity. With the help of Lenny's godmother she is taken to a Recovered Women's Camp and then sent to her family in Amritsar. The Ice-Candy-Man, now a "deflated poet, a collapsed pedlar" follows her to Amritsar in vain. Their relationship is serrated forever, one more victim of communal frenzy and Partition. Love does not conquer all, when communal and obscurantist passions are aroused.

With a sprinkling of humour, parody and allegory Bapsi Sidhwa conveys a sinister warning of the dangers of compromising with religious obscurantism and fundamentalism of all categories. Otherwise a certain historical inevitability marks this historical process. Though her novel is about the traumas of Partition, Bapsi Sidhwa reveals that communal riots are contemporaneous and that those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it.

The Narrative Techniques in Ice-Candy-Man

Bapsi Sidhwa, the internationally-acclaimed Pakistani Parsi writer, has secured an enviable position for herself among the literary circles today. She has proved that her minority experience as the member of a tiny Parsi community in Pakistan, far from being a visible trouble-spot on her creative psyche, offers her enough to celebrate her talent. She feels that it has given her a unique sense of 'detached attachment' for her country and its people. Her creative odyssey. which started with *The Crow-Eaters* (1978), has grown from strength to strength in her successive works like *Pakistani Bride* (1983), *Ice-Candy-Man* (1988) and *An American Brat* (1994).

Bapsi Sidhwa's third and till date the most celebrated and widely quoted novel*Ice-Candy-Man/Cracking India* (1988) is one of the most powerful narratives of recent times. The novel captures one of the most decisive moments in the history of India and Pakistan—Partition—in a very compelling way through the eyes of an eight-year old disabled girl, Lenny. As Tariq Rahman comments in a review: "The novel is an imaginative response to the traumatic events of the Partition of India in 1947, and Sidhwa has used surrealistic techniques, to make it an adequate symbol for the effect of external events on human beings." Another very perceptive comment comes from Sliashi Tharoor, a noted columnist and novelist: *"Ice-Candy-Man* is a novel in which heartbreak coexists with slapstick . . . and jokes give way to lines of glowing beauty ("the moonlight settles like a layer of ashes over Lahore"). The author's capacity for bringing an assortment of characters vividly to life is enviable. In reducing the Partition to the perceptions of a polio-ridden child, a girl who tries to wrench out her tongue because it is unable to lie, Bapsi Sidhwa has given us a memorable book, one that confirms her reputation as Pakistan's finest English language novelist."'

Lenny's development from childhood to adolescence coincides with India's struggle for independence from Britain and the partitioning of the country into India andPakistan. The skilfully interwoven plots give each other substantial meaning. Partly be-cause'Lenny comes from a Parsi family, a religious and ethnic minority that remained relatively neutral in post-Partition religious conflicts, she has access to people of all ethnicities and religions, both within Lahoreand in other locales. More significantly, she has access to a wide variety of viewpoints, both pre-and post-Partition, through her Ayah, a beautiful woman whose suitors are ethnically and religiously diverse. From the lap of her beautiful Ayah, or clutching her skirts as Ayah is pursued by her suitors through the fountains, cypresses and marble terraces of the Shalimar Gardens, little Lenny observes the clamorous horrors of Partition. It is 1947. Lenny lives in Lahore, in the bosom of her

extended Parsi family: Mother, Father, Brother Adi, Cousin, Electric-Aunt, Godmother and Slavesister. Working for them, or panting after Ayah, are 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 neighbours— until their ribald, everyday world disintegrates before the violence of religious hatred.

Lenny's passionate love for Ayah, and the loss of innocence that accompanies their changing relationship through the Partition, is an energetic centre to the plot. Lenny's relationships with her mother, her powerful Godmother, and her sexually invasive cousin are also important to the novel. Lenny's polio forms a significant early narrative thread. Other minor but compelling subplots include Lenny's parents' changing relationship, the murder of a British'official, Raima's tragic tale, and the child marriage of Papoo, the much-abused daughter of one of Lenny's family's servants.

Sidhwa's focus in this symbolic novel is not so much on the story as it is on the narrative techniques, for they contribute to the work's total effect. Foremost among them is the first-person present-tense narration. Lenny, is—or was—a child when the events described take place, and the events are seen through her consciousness, the present tense providing immediacy and a certain simultaneity between past and present. By the end of both the novels, the narrator knows much about human treachery, mainly through the impact of external events. Lenny learns of the perverse nature of amorous human passions from her experiences with her cousin, who courts her with a determination comparable only to the Ice-Candy-Maiv s pursuit of Ayah. How religious fanaticism can breed hatred and violence is evident in the killing of the Hindus in Lahore and the Muslims in thePunjab of the Sikhs. The dehumanizing impact of communal riots is reflected in the story of Lenny's friend Ranna, a harrowing account of the human atrocities that can be perpetrated when all civilized restraints are removed through external events or political propaganda.

Bapsi Sidhwa chooses Lenny, a polio-ridden, precocious child as the narrator of the novel because she provides her with a scope for recording the events leading to bloody Partition riots with utmost objectivity, without an air of propaganda. Moreover, she comes from a Parsi family and so is free from any religious or ethnic bias. Like most of the children of her age, she has a truth-infected tongue. In many respects, she resembles her creator who had a bad polio, which affected her normal movement compelling her to stay at home under the care of an Ayah for the most part of her childhood life, busy in delicately nursing her world of idyllic romances. Bapsi was of the same age when the nation was divided into two and had the first hand experience of the Partition-riots. As she recalls: "I was a child then. Yet 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. The glow of fires beneath the press of smoke, which bloodied the horizon in a perpetual sunset, wrenched at my heart. For many of us, the departure of the British and the longed-forIndependence of the subcontinent were overshadowed by the ferocity of partition." The events of Partition had left an indelible mark on the psyche of child Bapsi and kept compelling her to unburden herself from the harrowing experiences of those days. Lenny, in fact, is the per-sonae, voicing the inner urge of the author. Bapsi Sidhwa herself explains why she chose Lenny as the narrator of the novel: "I'm establishing a sort of truthful witness, whom the reader can believe. At the same time, Lenny is growing up—learning, experiencing, and coming to her own conclusions."' Though it sounds cautioning to identify the narrator with the author, the intersections of the two. at various points of the narrative seem to be deliberate and not a mere coincidence, because the novel is as much about personal history as it is about memory and imagination. The author has no secrecy whatsoever regarding her resemblance with the

narrator as she admits in an interview, "the scene where people ride into the house to kidnap Ayah did happen in real life, although I have fictionalized it."

In *Ice-Candy Man,* Lenny is the narrative persona. Her narration starts in her fifth year and ends after her eighth birthday. She recalls her first conscious memory of her Ayah thus: "She passes pushing my pram with the unconcern of the Hindu goddess she worships." She also remembers her house on Warris Road in Lahore and how she used to find refuge in her God-mother's "one-and-a-half room abode" and succeeded in getting away from the "gloom" and the "perplexing unrealities" of home. These perplexities include her own polio affliction, which she uses as ah armour against a "pretentious world," her mother's extravagance, her father's dislike of it, her strain to fill up the "infernal silence" during her father's "mute meals" by "offering laughter and lengthier chatter" ("Is that when I learnt to tell tales?"). These perplexities also involve the household staff. It includes her very dear Ayah, an eighteen-year-old dusky beauty, Shantha, Imam Din, the genial-faced cook of the Sethi household, 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 "tentative toes"—and masseur, a sensitive man who loves Ayah and is loved by her, much to the chagrin of Ice-Candy-Man; and last but certainly impressive Ranna, the boy whom Lenny befriends when she visits his village with Imam Din and numerous others. Lenny leads us on, dwelling on interesting facts mingled, as it were, with picturesque language. The main events, besides the end of the Second World War, India's Independence and Partition of the subcontinent into Pakistan and India, revolve around Ayah. She is—not unlikeIndia itself—a symbol of larger-than-life reality, truly "perplexing." Lenny also notices that, "beggars, holy men, hawkers, cart-drivers, cooks, coolies and cyclists" lust after her. Hasn't India been a much-looted country, which finally is forced to make a new beginning? With such emerging connotations, the novel sustains our interest at the personal and political levels.

For Lenny, in a few years' time a whole world, which is also her world, undergoes a sea change marked by "blood dimmed anarchy." Her focus switches from her own "sense of inadequacy and uiiworth" and the "trivia and trappings" of her learning, to the world outside, which she finds is dark and dangerous. With greater perception, she notes the fast, unstoppable and violent changes that leave her and those around her, particularly Ayah, "wounded in the soul."

As observed by lyengar, in a novel "Action, passion, contemplation, feeling, even the unconscious mind find place." In Sidhwa's novel, one finds different shades of human thought, feelings and behaviour truthfully voiced. Every character in the novel lets us glimpse into his inner reserves and we are constantly surprised at the reality of it. Passages describing blood-shed and murder highlight the brute in human beings. After Master Tara Singh's rousing address against the division of Punjab, the mob turns "maniac." Even the police were targeted. And then there is towering inferno in Lahore. Lenny observes:

> The whole world is burning. The air on my face is so hot. I think my flesh and clothes will catch fire. I start screaming: hysterically sobbing—how long does Lahore burn? Weeks? Months?

The working of native psyche is well brought out by an ingenious use of various devices by Sidhwa in this novel. She shows us, with graphic clarity, how little Lenny's mind sees, grasps and ponders over the world around her through her nightmares, witticisms, description of people, their mannerisms and feelings in idioms and metaphors, both homegrown and alien. An enslaved coiintry's total plight is shown in the line

Queen Victoria's statue imposes the English Raj in the park.

Before the conflict, Muslims and Sikhs lived in peaceful harmony. They celebrated and participated in each other's festivals such as Baisakhi and Id. But once the big trouble started "One man's religion is another man's poison." All this scuffle between two countries was caused and furthered when "the Rad-cliff commission deals out Indian cities like a pack of cards." And at the end of a gory day "the moonlight settles like a layer of ashes over Lahore."

Besides idioms which evoke a terrible national tragedy, Bapsi Sidhwa also makes use of devices such as nightmares, jokes involving bathroom humour, poetry by the popular Urdu poet Iqbal, Parsi entrance into India, their customs, prayers, fire temples, and funerals in Towers of Silence, elaborate discussions and debates on national politics by the haves and the have-nots, detailed accounts of villages such as Pir Pindo inhabited by people of different religions, and the bitter change of later times, forced conversions, forced child marriages and many other minute yet grave details, which succeed in bringing to the reader a whole gamut of tragi-comic and tragic incidents. As the narrative progresses, everything is filtered through the consciousness of Lenny. Her interest in things around her is somewhat unnatural as we find her recording each and every-thing like a video camera. There are no restrictions on her movements and she seems to be enjoying all the happenings around. She can attend the Parsi meeting to discuss the future course of action in the wake of Partition conflicts and can also loiter around parks, cheap hotels, and such other places along with her ayah and can have access to the popular opinion. Because of her physical disability and precocious nature, she is loved and cared by all, and even her parents do not keep restrictions on her. She is even allowed to accompany Imam Din in his visits to Pir Pindo, a village in Punjab. This visit provides her with an opportunity to meet Raima, the boy who later becomes a tool in the hands of the novelist to detail the events of inhuman brutality heaped on the Muslims across the border by the Sikhs, thus complementing the account of Partition narrated by Lenny.

The narrative design that Bapsi Sidhwa follows in the novel apparently looks very simple and straightforward, but on a closer look one realizes that its simplicity is merely deceptive. Although the main narrator is Lenny, the voice that emerges from the novel is far from being a monologue. There are moments when it is hard for the readers to believe that a little girl like Lenny can utter the words that have been put into her mouth. Like the one that is quoted here: I am held captive by the brutal smell. It has vaporized into a milky cloud. I float round and round and up and down and fall horrendous distances without landing anywhere, fighting for my life's breath. I am abandoned in that suffocating cloud. I moan and my ghoulish voice turns me into something despicable and eerie and deserving of the terrible punishment. But where am I? How long will the horror last? Days and years with no end in sight.

And again:

My nose inhales the fragrance of earth and grass—and the other fragrance that distils insights. I intuit the meaning and purpose of things. The secret rhythms of creation and mortality. The essence of truth and beauty. I recall the choking hell of milky vapours and discover that heaven has a dark fragrance.

Passages like this make the reader aware of the presence of the author in the child, Lenny voicing her adult reactions to her childhood situation. Of course Sidhwa narrates the novel in the first person putting everything in the mouth of the child protagonist, but one thing is for sure that she does it with a serious purpose. She does not want to sound political and controversial, yet cannot turn herself back from the purpose at hand, i.e., to present the other side of the truth regarding the Partition riots—the Pakistani or in her own right the neutral point of view. It is another thing that at times she sacrifices even the decency and decorum of a literary artist, just

flaunting the emotions of millions of people. Like we find in her observations and comments about Gandhi and Nehru. Lenny reflects on Gandhi:

> He 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.

Gandhijee is certainly ahead of his times. He already knows the advantages of dieting. He has starved his way into the news and made headlines all over the world.

Despite the occasional limitations like the one we have noticed above, this goes without saying that "no other novel catches as this one does India's centuries-old ways of living with religious difference before Partition." Lenny is inquisitive and notices everything: clothes, smells, colour, the patina of skin, sex everywhere, and eyes—olive-oil-coloured, sly eyes, fearful eyes. In writing which is often lyrical, always tender and clever, with a nuance here, a touch there, Sidhwa shows us the seedbed of the Partition massacres—an abused Untouchable, the ritual disemboweling of a goat, a priest shuddering over the hand of a menstruating woman. This laughing, gentle tale, told through the eyes of innocence, is a testament to savage loss, and a brilliant evocation of the prowling roots of religious intolerance.

Thus though Bapsi has been accused by some diehard Indian nationalists of presenting a Pakistani view of history, we must not forget that this is a novel and not a work of social documentation; it limits itself to one child's perspective through which the dissenting, disagreeing voices she hears are refracted; and what Aamer Hussein says, "insofar as a novel can be objective, Bapsi is in the grand tradition of the Progressive writers on both sides of the border, scrupulously fair to all parties concerned, approaching politics with the empathy and compassion of a humanitarian feminist." In fact the point of view Bapsi adopts, is one of the novel's most successful ploys. We believe we are witnessing the events of Partition through the eyes of an innocent child, but strategically placed flash-forward signal, in a subtle manner, that the adult Lenny is actually reliving the past in order to make sense of the events that baffled her when she was too small to comprehend; simultaneously, she restricts herself to the experiences and sensory perceptions of the child she was. Thus we are given a double—even dialogic—perspective that layers innocence on experience, introspection on hindsight.

Ice-Candy-Man: A Reassessment

The Pakistani English novel has its roots in history and in the Pakistani consciousness, for it began as a vehicle of political awakening during the national struggle for Independence and thus, initially, the principal inspiration was not creative but expositoiy. Now that English fiction from sub-continent has come of age, and more than come of age, the possibilities of retrieving experiential moments of history through fictional strategies are innumerable. From vast, comprehensive and exhaustive papers, I am narrowing my focus down to a short, intensive one, more thought-provoking, perhaps, than any write up with an expansive sweep. For the novelist, from sub-continent, writing in English, the theme of India's Partition is imbued with the magical quality of a reflection in a mirror—it is true and yet not true. Every novelist has his own blend of fact and fiction to offer, the guiding factor which is a process of selection and elimination creating its own reality, but usually presenting a coherent version of events. This qualifying factor of "memory's truth," I believe, is a cardinal principle prevailing as a determinant in all fictional art and applies to all creative works.

The road from life to art, from author to creation, can mean turning the past alive by providing a transparent window on reality rather than an indecipherable code. The literary artist proceeds through craft sophistication to an optimum level of fictive reality, a reality that is "true-to-life." Nothing is explained, what is shown must be perceived, apprehended and the reader's pleasure is often in proportion to what is left unsaid, or ambiguously hinted at.

Bapsi Sidhwa, a Parsi domiciled in Pakistan, is a novelist who has an abundance of inventive and narrative energy manifested in her fiction, which warrants the careful critical attention of those interested in new possibilities for imaginative prose which resorts to viable fictional means—largely realistic—for tracing the compelling force of historical events on individual lives and presenting a collage of the lives and experiences of men and women caught in the web of history. It is Sidhwa who gave to the Pakistani novel in English a distinct identity.

Bapsi Sidhwa's novels are notably different from one another in content and form, in subject and treatment. Her first novel. *The Crow-Eaters,* published in 1978, deals with the lives and fortunes of the Parsi Junglewalla family in British India. The narrative adroitly adopts comic and ironic modes directed towards the realization of Zoroastrian values in the lives of the members of the community. The novel is also an exposition of the anglicized Parsi way of life in Pakistan as Dina Merita's *And Some Take a Lover* (1992) is a comment on the upheaval in the world of the community caught in the political welter of the Quit India movement.

Sidhwa's second novel, *The Pakistani Bride* (1983), is very different from her first in that it makes no assertion of the Parsi identity. In fact, it has no Parsi character at all. It is about a young Pakistani girl, a Muslim refugee, who is adopted by a Pathan during the Partition turmoil. The novel testifies to Sid-.hwa's understanding of and insight into the Pakistani ethos, no doubt, but when released it did not really make waves. Next came *Ice-Candy-Man* (1990) which was followed by *The American Brat* in 1994. *The American Brat* dramatizes the conflict of the value systems of the East and the West and this conflict of cultures has its impact not only on the social plane but on the personal life of the protagonist as well.

Coming back to *Ice-Candy-Man,* the response to this novel was absolutely mind blowing. The author in this work showcases the Pars! attitude—the Parsis, here representing a minority community—to the imminent Partition and to the concept of 'Swaraj'. Set in pre-Partition Lahore, in the period which Subhash K. Jha in his review of the work refers to as the period of "The satanic rites of fragmentation in the Indian subcontinent,"' the novel clearly highlights the vulnerability of human relationships that can be torn asunder at the slightest pretext. Also, here again, as in Dina Mehta's novel and in Bapsi Sidhwa's earlier novel,*The Crow-Eaters,* we see the ambivalent attitude of the Parsis towards the British. They find it difficult to choose their loyalties—"Swaraj or the British Raj?" At a special meeting organized at the Temple Hall in Warris road an irresolvable battle-of-words on the political situation ensues. Col. Bharucha's advice to the Parsis is to keep their distance from the slush of the nationalist agitation. Dr. Mody, on the other hand, pleads for commitment to the cause of the freedom struggle for the transparent reason that "our neighbours" will think we are betraying them and siding with the English." And finally, at the instance of Toddywalla, the banker, the Parsis decide to opt for a path of compromise. Here, it may be relevant to point out that Sidhwa's novels voice the views of the particularly affluent, urban, middle-class Parsis.

Reams have been written on the Partition—in resentment, in anger, in affliction, in erudition or as a cathartic exercise, or again, even as an attempt to exorcise ghosts, phantoms of the agonizing past that refuse to be ignored. Bapsi Sidhwa's account of the holocaust is a tale with a difference—it is a concatenation of events seen through the insouciant eyes of an eight-year-old Parsi girl Lenny (who could very well have been Bapsi Sidhwa herself), who is baffled and perplexed by the adult world of turnabouts and shifting loyalties as also by changing emotions

and widening gulfs. Caught between the conflicting demands of the major communities of the country, the Parsis in a pathetic minority have no misconceptions regarding the choices they confront. Under their affluence and prosperity won by competence and industry lurks a sense of insecurity when the country is on the verge of a painful partition: "If we are stuck with the Hindus, they'll convert us by the sword. And God help us if we are stuck with the Sikhs!" Finally, under the mature guidance of Col. Bharucha the Parsis of Lahore decide to stay on there and cast their lot with whoever rules Lahore—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. "People now shrink dwindling into symbols" and human beings suddenly turn on one another.

Lenny, polio-stricken in infancy, is cared for by her eighteen year old nubile, voluptuous, buxom, chocolate-brown Ayah, who is mostly spending time with her ward under Victoria's statue in Queen's Park. Interestingly, she is always surrounded by a host of male admirers—the Fallettis Hotel cook, the Government House gardener, the elegant, compactly-muscled Masseur and the "lank and loping" Ice-Candy-Man, later additions to the community of suitors being the Chinaman and the Pathan, Shar-bat Khan. "Ayah's presence," we are told, "galvanizes men to mad sprints in the noonheat" and she brazenly succumbs to the advances of each in turn—and each is conscious of the fact that "a whiff off Ayah carries the dark purity of creation." The group surrounding her "remains unchanged,... as always unified around her." Primarily, however it is the Masseur and the Ice Candy Man who vie for Ayah's attention though it is the former who happens to be more privileged of the two.

The easy familiarity, the bawdy humour and the friendly banter in the narrative soon undergo a change in tone and direction and each one has an acrimonious dig at the other's religion and nation. Every verbal exchange involuntarily slips into talk ofIndia and Pakistan. Attitudes crystallize and the earlier distinction at Queen's Park between "baba-log" with their starchy Ayahs and the n-ative children with their Ayahs in limp cotton sa-ris soon dissolves and now are seen only Muslim women in 'purdah' separated from the Sikh community that breaks away from Hindus.

In Lenny's house, too, the placid harmony amongst servants from different communities disintegrates and each concentrates on surer signs of his own religion. Ayah never forgets to burn joss sticks around the statues of her own gods. The pogramme begins and takes on a vertiginous speed with the perpetrators of the crime never being tracked down. The "we are brothers" theory fails. Gandhi visitsLahore and Lenny, seeing him, is distressed at what she calls "this improbable toss up between a clown and a demon."

Nothing works—the nation is in flames,Lahore is burning, Mazang Chowk is turned to ashes. The Muslim mob comes to Lenny's house to assault the Hindu servants but Ayah is safely hidden at the back of the house. Lenny, with her penchant for truth is, however, soon cajoled into disclosing Ayah's hideout to the Ice-Candy-Man, who, despite promises to protect her, has her dragged out and carried away only, perhaps, to be made an inmate of a brothel . Later it is heard and believed that the police rescue her from the Ice-Candy-Man who had forcibly married her and sends her back to her family inAmritsar. The irresolvable end leaves us guessing as to whether Ayah was accepted into the family at home or did life become for her "the torture of Sisyphus," never ending.

Bapsi Sidhwa, in *Ice-Candy-Man,*experiments with the reality of the times to create a timeless reality of her own universe. History undertaken by the fiction writer and explored as material, refers always to the particular in which there is an attempt to present history as sensory detail, as visual image, as time which reverberates in our time.

Sidhwa, does not, in her novel resort to the immediacy of journalistic methods. Images in the novel do not, like in a journalistic report, follow a conveyor-belt succession. She takes the slant of humour and the obliqueness of satire. The humour is sometimes mistaken for ribaldry but an in-

depth analysis of the novel shows that all the humour, laughter and mirth employed is with a purpose. It is through their ribald humour and rustic wisdom that Ayah's as also Lenny's companions enable the little girl to chronicle the tragedy of the Partition.

The novelist's satire is of a characteristically cruel and unforgiving nature—Lenny's world centres around her relationship with her loving Ayah, and ardent cousin suitor (who transposes Lenny from dolls to condoms) and a Godmother with her companion connotatively referred to as Slave sister. Lenny grows up when she learns on her own the lesson that divides her Hindu Ayah, from her Parsi employers and her Muslim revengers. To put it broadly, the novel is "about the slow awakening of the child heroine both to sexuality and grown up pains and pleasures and to the particular historical disaster that overwhelms her world." T.N. Dhar's conclusion in his book, *History-Fiction Interface in Indian English Novel* that "the novelist deals with history by using narrative modes which are essentially non-mimetic, such as comedy, satire and allegory" is unflinchingly applicable to Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* for in it the non-mimetic mode represents a "reality" that transcends historical space for it is "memory's truth" again as Salim Sinai in*Midnight's Children* calls it and in the end "it creates its own reality." Thus, there is no knowable reality. Only personal observations. It is these personal observations that make Lenny grow up and interpret her perception of the duplicities and deceptions of a savage adult world. Wading through the sea of events and experiences, she soon acquires a heuristic perspective in life which enlarges her consciousness and awareness of things around. Her experiment with truth has ended in misery.

Even though *Ice-Candy-Man* is primarily a novel of the Partition, the Partition as a historical event and not an emotional convulsion, one may, for an observation, turn to R.K. Narayan's emphatic statement that "'a mere story is not the point of fiction; people and emotions are what's important." Emotion in this novel is conspicuous by its absence in the man-woman relationship and it is this very absence that is a comment on the image of woman as portrayed in this work.

Ice-Candy-Man skilfully recreates the ethos of the Partition as a historical event affecting the lives of the characters in the novel but apparently, the novelist, in her bid to crystallize objective reality has markedly ignored the experimental realm of the highly victimized woman—the Ayah of the Parsi family at Lahore—who suffers excruciating pain and agony at the hands of the mob that tears her apart. As if this physical abuse by the mob was not enough, the Ice-Candy-Man clinches her lot by condemning her to prostitution. Though later he tries to make amends by marrying her, the harm has been done. She is, one presumes, left with a lacerated heart and mind but nowhere does the novelist elaborate on her injured psyche. And yet, we may absolve the novelist of this charge for, perhaps, this was not a part of her scheme of things.

The Parsi world in the novel is clearly more about women than men. Characters like Lenny's father, Old Husband and even Manek Mody are relatively insignificant when compared to Godmother and Mother. But it is the men, and especially the Ice-Candy-Man, who perpetrate the suffering of the women. Lenny's father's indulgence in adultery and his lashings endured by her mother are instances that make strong the case against the victimization of women. But none speaks out, and Ayah, too, moves "from speech to silence." Silence in the novel is designed to be more eloquent than speech.

The combination of laughter and ribaldry, wit and wisdom is in the novel an unmistakable pointer to the degree of levity with which a woman is treated. As mentioned earlier, each one of the suitors in the novel makes frivolous advances to Ayah but none treats her as an individual in her own right. She remains throughout a symbol of sex, an "object" to be ogled rather than an individual to be regarded and respected.

There is no attempt on the novelist's part to show her as an approximation to the Indian concept of the female "Shakti." There is no attempt either, as in Jayanta Mahapatra's poem,

"Temple," to plumb the agony and the enigma in the Indian woman, "a riddle on its pedestal' (as Mahapatra refers to her). Apparently, there is no agitation regarding her, anywhere in the novel—there is only raillery and reporting of a dispassionate kind. Deep down, however, there is something very unnerving about the betrayal of the Ice-Candy-Man who, Sidhwa tells us "appears to have grown shades darker, and his face is all dried up and shrivelled-Iooking." The supposedly staid and cool narrative operates at a plaintive decibel mixing illusion and reality, fiction and fact as the flow of events demands. Thus, underlying the thematic historical perspective *of Ice-Candy-Man* is the trauma of reassessing the past in terms of experiential reality underpinning the larger historical reality.

Sidhwa conceives of historical representation not only as a welter of statistical events but as a repertoire of inexhaustible possibilities in terms of happenings as well as human experience, central and peripheral—all merging into an organic totality which forbids a linear interpretation of the past and offers instead an entirety of existence.

Ice-Candy-Man has strong women characters who want to forge their independent identity. Discuss

Ice-Candy-Man has strong women characters who want to forge their independent identity. In a patriarchal set-up which is essentially discriminatory against women and emphasizes on conditioning them for life-long and willing subjugation to men, the women of *Ice-Candy-Man* are not only conscious of their desires, but also eagerly assertive about their independent handling of situations.

The male characters, despite the fact that they initiate almost all events of the novel, remain peripheral and apathetic, lacking the will to change and transcend their circumstances. The women characters "subtly but effectively subvert the ingrained elements of patriarchy, privileging female will, choice, strength along with the feminine qualities of compassion and motherhood." *Ice-Candy-man* can undoubtedly be termed as a feminist novel—the traditional novel eulogizes the heroic qualities of men only, while in feminist narratives women acquire such attributes by their active involvement in and control of situational contexts. Lenny, the narrator in*Ice-Candy-Man* is also the centre of the novel, retaining her independent identity in diverse situations. Her attitude towards her nameless cousin significantly portrays the feminist need for assertive equality. At this point it shall be interesting to note that all women's writing may not be necessarily feminist. A piece of writing which justifies, propagates or perpetuates discrimination against women cannot be termed as feminist. Only that artistic work which sensitizes its readers to the practices of subjugation and opposes them can be treated as being feminist in nature. *Ice-Candy-Man* not only sketches and critically reviews the dehumanizing patriarchal norms engendering a discriminatory social climate, but also portrays the struggle against them, as well as the desire to manifest an assertive self-will on the part of its women characters.

Lenny, the child narrator of the novel, witnesses the barbaric cruelties of the Partition days, including the inhuman commodification of women. Yet what emerges as the dominant note or thematic motif in the novel is not the victimization of women, but their will and sustained effort to fight against it and overcome it. Most of the other Partition novels in English, as well as in other languages, have concentrated largely on the helplessness of women pitched against oppressive male forces. Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan,*Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges*in English, and the short stories of Saadat Hasan Manto and Kishan Chander in Urdu highlight the trauma women had to undergo during the catatonic times of Partition. Even the more

contemporary authors have not been able to escape it. They have talked about the national trauma of Partition using the device of the child narrator and taking the linear time narration. Sidhwa on the other hand treats the theme of Partition with a clever juxtaposition of images and an underlying ironical humour without compromising with the innate independence of women.

Lenny is a handicapped girl representing a miniscule minority. She is also free from the effect of social conditioning most of the sub-continent girls have to undergo. She is a young, curious and vivacious child, eager to know what is happening around her and participating in it vigorously. The socio-religious divide creates in her an awareness of her own identity, but even prior to that she had become conscious of the creation of the gender, the socially accepted role of women and girls, and also of her burgeoning sexuality. She is aware that her "world is compressed." This awareness is intensified when Col. Bharucha prophesies her future, "She'll marry, have children—lead a carefree, happy life. No need to strain her with studies and exams." Lenny observes the gender-based relationship in the society and accepts it as a peripheral part of her experiences, without allowing it to colour her own individuality. She notices how in Col. Bharucha's clinic a woman has to discuss her child's health through her husband. During her visit to Pir Pindo she notices how Khatija and Parveen, the adolescent sisters of Ranna, like the other girls in the village, already wear the responsible expressions of much older women "affecting the mannerisms of their mothers and aunts." They are perplexed by Lenny's cropped hair and short dresses.

These early impressions of Lenny, presented with multiple strains of irony, humour and wit exhibit her awareness of gender stereotypes. She perceives many differences in the personality traits and interests of men and women. However Lenny is neither influenced nor conditioned by her perception of gender based social stereotypes—that she assertively retains her interests is evident in her attitude towards her Ayah, Hamida and her cousin. When godmother arranges a meeting with Ayah, Lenny insists on accompanying her. She feels that Ayah has been wronged and ashamed by her friends and she shares her humiliation. She wants to "comfort and kiss her ugly experiences away." She does not think that sexual exploitation should remain a stigma for any woman, "I don't want her to think she's bad just because she's been kidnapped." She also keeps Hamida's past a secret under the impression that if revealed her mother may sack her. Her sympathy bonds her to all the women characters in the novel.

Very early in the novel the reader notices Lenny's consciousness of her own burgeoning sexuality. Her open background and liberal upbringing make her receptive to her early sexual stirrings. She enjoys the admiring covetous giances Ayah receives from her admirers and displays traditional feminine smugness and coquetry. She vividly portrays Ice-Candy-Man's toes, Avail's furtive glances towards Sharbat Khan and the Masseur's intimacy with Ayah. Her relationship with her cousin, allowing clandestine forages into physical intimacies, shows her mental independence. During their walks to the bazaars and gardens she irreverently points out boys and men to her cousin whom she finds attractive. She sums up her attitude neatly when she says, "Maybe I don't need to attract you. You're already attracted." Cousin angrily complains to godmother, "She loves approximately half of Lahore . . . why can't she love me?"

Despite the pressures of socially constructed gender-roles and expectations the awakening of an individuality which is pulsatingly present in Lenny can be felt in other women characters too. Lenny's mother belongs to the privileged economic strata of the society. She can engage several servants to look after the children and other daily chores. She is kept busy with her social obligations—entertaining guests and partying exhaust her time. Lenny's physical handicap has generated a sense of guilt in her which often surfaces in her conversations. She says to Col. Bharucha, "It's my fault, I neglected her—left her to the care of Ayah." Lenny admires her delicate beauty, but resents her "all-encompassing" motherliness. She is initially possessive about her mother but soon learns to cope with it. Her mother's voluptuous appeal generates a subtle jealousy too in her psyche:

> "The motherliness of Mother....How can I describe it? While it is there it is all-encompassing, voluptuous. Hurt, heartache and fear vanish....The world is wonderful, wondrous—and I perfectly fit in it. But it switches off, this motherliness...."

Mother's motherliness has a universal reach. Like her involuntary female magnetism it cannot be harnessed. "... I resent this largess. As father does her unconscious and indiscriminate sex appeal. It is a prostitution of my concept of childhood rights and parental loyalties. She is my mother—flesh of my flesh—and Adi's. She must love only us!"

Lenny is given ample personal space by her mother. Though decisively controlling and channelizing her children's lives, she allows them to frolic around and view life from their own standpoints. Lenny is permitted to accompany Imam Din twice to a village Pir Pindo, her visits to parks and restaurants with Ayah are also unchecked. She is also able to effortlessly control the entourage of servants and run her household effortlessly. Despite her liberated handling of children and a modern life-style, she is very much a traditional wife, humouring constantly the wishes of her husband. She is almost servile in her attitude towards her husband, coquettishly appeasing him and trying to create an atmosphere of pleasant mirth around him. Lenny sceptically looks on when her mother chatters in saccharinely sweet tones to fill up the "infernal time of Father's mute meals."

Though Lenny is not able to decipher it, her remarks hint at the presence of an inner void in her mother's personality. Most of the women writers have hinted at the presence of an inner hollowness in the lives of women, which is often shielded by the deceptively beautiful screen of their social graces and obligations. For women like Mrs. Sethi, social elegance is not simply a pleasure, it is also a bondage, because herein they are forced to accept their role as female.

The conversation during the party the Sethis organize for the Rogers and the Singhs explicitly suggests that it is a woman's erotic capacities, not her intellectual calibre, which is integrated with the life of society. Her driving sprees along with the Electric-Aunt to smuggle petrol in order to help their stranded Hindu and Sikh friends, and the rehabilitation of Hamida shows her humanitarian understanding of the situation, and also a desire to do something meaningful.

A major part of the novel's discussion is centred on Lenny's Ayah Shanta. She is a Hindu girl of eighteen and everything about her is also eighteen years old. Though she is employed with considerate masters, her condition is that of an unprotected girl whom everybody treats only as a sex object. Looking at Ayah, Lenny also becomes conscious of her sexuality:

> "The covetous glances Ayah draws educate me. Up and down, they look at her. Stub ended twisted beggars and dusty old beggars on crutches drop their poses and stare at her with hard, alert eyes. Holy men, marked in piety, shove aside their pretences to ogle her with lust. Hawkers, cart-drivers, cooks, coolies and cyclists turn their heads as she passes, pushing my pram with the unconcern of the Hindu goddess she worships."

While the sexuality of Lenny's mother lies beneath the veneer of sophistication and unfulfilled longings, Ayah's is transparent and self-serving. She is fully aware of her sexual charm and uses it without any inhibition to fulfill her desires. She has accumulated a good number of admirers who regularly assemble in the Victoria Garden—the Ice-Candy-Man, the Masseur, the Government House gardener, the restaurant owner, the zoo-attendant, and a knife-sharpening Pathan are her regular admirers. Lenny also learns to identify "human needs, frailties, cruelties and joys," looking at these people during her outings:

> I learn also to detect the subtle exchange of signals and some of the complex rites by which Ayah's admirers co-exist. Dusting the grass from their clothes they slip away before dark, leaving the one kick, or the lady, favours. ... I escape into daydreams in which my father turns loquacious and my mother playful.

Ayah uses her charm to obtain easy gains—cheap doilies, cashew nuts, extra serving of food etc. She successfully uses her charm as a strategy of survival and manipulation till the violence of Partition destroys her familiar world. Her portrayal also represents the male exploitation of female sexuality. Ice-Candy-Man manages to kidnap her with the help of some hooligans and forces her into prostitution. Despite her conviction that she is now an impure person, she retains her will to go back to her family and face life anew. Her refusal to admit defeat despite physical and emotional mutilation and her determination to probe into future alternatives imparts a moral courage to her.

Godmother and Slave sister—Rodabai and Mini Aunty—are other major female characters in the novel who are presented with a sense of glee. The one-and-a-half-room abode of her godmother is termed as her haven by Lenny, her "refuge from the perplexing unrealities of my home onWarris Road." She is also a surrogate mother for Lenny in a mutually fulfilling relationship. Her portrayal is presented to us by Lenny in a fascinated manner, as if she is an idolized entity. She is presented as an old lady, plainly attired in Khaddar sarees, covering herself from head to foot, possessing a penchant for sharp wit, accurate repartee and a profound understanding of human psyche.

She makes it her business to know everything about everybody, and tries to help people whenever she can. She donates blood, seeks admission to a boarding school for Ranna, traces the Ayah and manages to send her back to her people. She is a formidable person too and scolds the Ice-Candy-Man for disgracing the Ayah, "Oh? What kind of man? A royal pimp? 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!"

Despite Slavesister's protest she permits Lenny to accompany her to Ayah's place. She is also a sensitive person. When she realizes that Ayah, despite her marriage with Ice-Candy-Man, does not want to live with him, decisively sets about to rescue her. Pier Paolo Piciucco comments that the plot of the novel comes to a head because of the Godmother. Her visit to the Ayah has the trappings of a trial: she sits and acts as a judge. Unlike other female figures of the novel Godmother has transcended her sexuality and emerges as an authoritative presence, able to achieve her desires. She incarnates the ideal of strength in female characters.

Godmother's attitude towards Mini Aunty, whom Sidhwa has very aptly termed as the Slave sister, draws the reader's attention for its incongruous eccentricity. In her dealing with people outside her immediate family circle she displays compassion and understanding, but her attitude towards her husband and her sister is shorn of such sentiments. She fully dominates her household in which her husband is only a peripheral presence. She is insensitive, churlish and cruel to her sister and constantly bosses over her. Her sister does all the household chores, while she only criticizes her nastily:

> If you think you have too much to cope with you can live someplace else.
>
> Don't think I've not been observing your tongue of late! If you're not careful, I'll snip it off. . . . God knows, you've grown older— and fatter—but not up! This child here has more sense than you.

Lenny adores her godmother as she tights her battles for her though it cannot justify the Slave sister's exploitation.

Muccho, the sweepers, and her daughter Papoo are other female characters who can be mentioned here. Muccho takes Papoo as her rival and saddles her with all the household chores, beating and abusing her on slightest pretexts. Ayah and other servants constantly try to save the young child from this abuse but often their efforts are fruitless. Once she had to be admitted to hospital for two weeks as she had concussion as a result of her mother's severe beating. But despite this senseless maltreatment, Papoo cannot be browbeaten into submission. She is strong and high-spirited, but as Sidhwa suggests very early in the story, "There are subtler ways of breaking people."

Muccho arranges her marriage with a middle aged dwarf whose countenance betrays cruelty. Papoo is drugged with opium at the time of ceremony to suppress her revolt. Lenny curiously studies Muccho's face during the wedding ceremony and is startled to find a contented smile on her lips—"smug and vindicated." The sketch of Muccho suggests that women themselves are un-consciously bound by their conditioning and saddle their daughters with a repetitive fate, treating marriage as a panacea of all ills.

The women-characters *of Ice-Candy-Man* draw our attention to the facts of victimization of women and their compulsions to define their lives according to the pre-fixed gender roles. They also expose the patriarchal biases present in the archetypal social perceptions. Lenny, the child protagonist, recognizes these social patterns and exhibits the vivacity to transcend them. She also records the multi-faceted trauma women had faced during the unsettling and devastating days of Partition. The narration of the story by a girl-child ensures that the surrounding world would be seen through a feminine eye. The novel presents women as a "twice oppressed category on stage: firstly, as human beings suffocated by violence and secondly, as women burdened by the bond and impositions of a patriarchal society."

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 toLahore. 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 thousand 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, inLahore. 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 large-scale 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 Liberaturepreis 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-five 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-M.an 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 milien 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 whs continuously chased by her husband and his men. Shewas 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. Lenni'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.

The brutal realities of the Partition depicted in Ice-Candy-Man with a candour, do not overshadow the resilience of spirit exhibited by several characters in the novel. Discuss.

Ice-Candy-Man describes the harrowing tale of Partition days when the lofty ideal of nationalism was suddenly bartered for communal thinking, resulting in unprecedented devastation, political absurdities and deranged social sensibilities. Sid-hwa has sensitively portrayed the political anxiety and social insecurity which was shared by all the divided people during the Partition days.

The days preceding the largest forced migration of population in human history, and the demographic dislocation it entailed, had their own complexities. People who have survived this holocaust, or witnessed it from a distance try to exorcise this past through memories. Imaginative and literary recreation helps people to recover "some of the lost density of life. Perhaps this is the reason that prominent literary figures in India and Pakistan have constantly taken up themes related with Partition and try to. Replicate their memories in all details. Chaman Nahal's *Azadi,* Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan,* Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges,* B. Raj an's *The Dark Dancer,* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* are expressions of different sensitivities about Partition.

However, *Ice-Candy-Man* is different from these works as it presents the turbulent upheaval of Partition from the viewpoint of a handicapped Parsi girl child. Stressing the vulnerability of human lives, and maintaining a fine balance between laughter and despair, Sidhwa presents various nuances and complexities related with a decision of political pragmatism through Lenny, a child narrator and chronicler. Lenny looks at characters belonging to different communities through the prism of her own Parsi sensitivity. Shorn of biases the child's narration also imparts an authentic credibility to the novel. Like most of the other novels, *Ice-Candy-Man* also presents the horrifying details of cruelty, human loss and dislocation, but it does so with a subtle irony, witty banter and parody, forcing the readers to desist from maudlinly sensitive reactions, and to concentrate more on the inscrutability of human behaviour. It also describes a society which has lost its courage, and therefore only crumbles away. It not only presents the barbaric details of atrocities perpetrated by one community over other, but also delineates various manifestations of pettiness and degenerated values which, like termite, had hollowed the inner structural strength of the society.

Ice-Candy-Man narrates a society which has deflated chivalrous attitudes, encourages petty self-serving tendencies and indifferent tolerance of pogroms so long the self stays alive with a whole skin; a society which was given what it deserved—a sanguine and blood-curdling mindset, which made Partition of India a grim reality. The characters and events of the novel suggest that "vanity, hypocrisy and self-deception . . . somehow constitute a truer reality than altruism, self-sacrifice and heroism, even when these are known to have existed. This reinterpretation, Andrew Rutherford argues, of historical and psychological reality by art involves an opposition not only between high and'lower mimetic modes, but between the low mimetic and the ironic, highlighting what he terms as "a disbelief in the psychological probability of the ideal.

Khushwant Singh in his review in *The Tribune* has commented that *Ice-Candy-Man* deserves to be ranked as amongst the most authentic and best on the Partition of India Githa Hariharan also comments in *Economic Times* that Sidhwa has captured "the turmoil of the times, with a brilliant combination of individual growing up pains and the collective anguish of a newly independent but divided country. Seen through the prism of a marginalised minority girl-child, it focuses on the deteriorating communal climate in pre-Partition days. "Lenny's naivete, her privileged position, and her religious background lend her version of Partition a quality that other novels about this tempestuous period in Indo-Pakistani history lack. Protected by her religious background and her parents' status, Lenny is not directly affected by the contumelious situation of Partition days, but she keenly observes and comments on the events happening around her. The tone of a reporter which she adopts for recording the events or commenting on them enhances the poignancy of the emotions which are linguistically underplayed. The hilarious tone of the Parsi's Jaslian prayer, organized to celebrate the British victory in the Second World War is soon replaced first by the acrimonious bickering between Mr. Rogers and Mr. Singh, then by the vague fears and apprehensions unsettling Lenny's group, and later on by the details of murderous mob fury unleashing death and destruction over whoever comes across them. Lenny learns that India is going to be broken, and has many unanswered queries, "Can one break a country? And what happens if they break it where our house is? Or crack it further up on Warris Road? How will I ever get to Godmother's then?"

Ayah ventures that perhaps a canal will be dug to crack India. Though Lenny is baffled by such questions, she simultaneously becomes aware of religious differences. She worriedly remarks, "It is sudden. One day everybody is themselves—and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. People shrink, dwindling into symbols." In a changed world which responds not to individuals but religious identities Lenny feels that the Parsis have been reduced to "irrelevant nomenclatures." Her perception of people also changes and she becomes aware of religious symbols acting in, and moulding the individual lives—the tuft of bodhi hair rising like a tail from

Han's shaven head, Cousin's fresh crop of Sikh jokes, the subtle changes in the Queen's Garden, are presented with increasing regularity. Lenny's parents also acquire a strange black box containing, as we are told later, a gun. Their neighbours leave for safer places. Hari, the gardener, is circumcised and converted to Islam for protection, Moti, the sweeper, opts for Christianity, the masseur is killed grotesquely, the markets burn and living beings are torn asunder.

The insensitivity of the social climate is highlighted and individual deeds of kindness and support eclipse out. The massacre of Pir Pindo narrated in the words of a young boy Ranria presents perhaps the vilest side of adult nature which continuously haunts the reader. Lenny senses the changing situation and is perturbed. Listening to the verbal parrying of Ayah's admirers she closes her eyes in frustration, "I close my eyes. I can't bear to open them they will open on a suddenly changed world. I try to shut out the voices."

The brutal realities of the Partition depicted in *Ice-Candy-Man* with a candour, do not overshadow the resilience of spirit exhibited by several characters in the novel. Rodabai, the God-mother arranges free education for Ranna, Lenny's mother and Electric-Aunt store petrol in order to facilitate the escape of their friends, Hamida is rehabilitated. Dormant possibilities of the re-surgence of human spirit can also be sensed in Ayah as, taking a bold decision, she determines to go back to her family. She rejects the constricting present and decisively wants to face future in all its tentative probabilities. The resilience of women characters saves the novel from being a heart-rending depressing rendition of journalistic reporting.

Ice-Candy-Man also includes several comments on contemporary political figures. Sidhwa has presented the Pakistani perspective regarding these figures and almost all the major contemporary Indian political figures are either caricatured or presented in an unfavourable manner. During her interview with David Montenegro, Sidhwa comments:

> 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 has been written by the British and the 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.

Gandhi's visit to Lahore is presented in such light as makes him "an improbable mixture of a demon and a clown." Lenny recalls how he interminably talks about enema, personal hygiene and sluggish stomachs. Sidhwa portrays him as a politician, changing his stances to suit his needs. During the heated discus-sions among Ayah's admirers the butcher snortingly terms him as "That non-violent violence-monger—your precious Gandhi-jee." In an attempt to soothe him the masseur says, "He's a politician yaar. It's his business to suit his tongue to the moment." Lenny remembers him as a small, dark and shrivelled old man very much like their gardener Hari. Sidhwa also criticizes the British designs, commenting that after obtaining their objective to divide India, they favoured Hindus over Muslims: "they [the British] favour Nehru over Jinnah, Nehru is Kashmiri, they grant him Kashmir. Spurning logic, defying rationale, ignoring the consequences of bequeathing a Muslim state to the Hindus." She further says in derogatory terms. "Nehru wears red carnations in the button holes of his ivory jackets. He bandies words with Lady Mountbatten and is presumed to be her lover. ... He is in the prime of his Brahmin manhood." Similarly the Akalis, led by Master Tara Singh, are termed as "a bloody bunch of murdering fanatics."

Sidhwa has also tried to redefine Jinnah's role in history. She feels that most of the Indian and British writers have dehumanized him, holding him responsible for the Partition. While Nehru has been portrayed as a "sly one," Jinnah is lauded for his intellectual capabilities. The off

duty sepoy remarks during one of the discussions held regularly at Queens Gardens, "Don't underestimate Jinnah. He will stick within his rights, no matter whom Nehru feeds! He's a first-rate lawyer and he knows how to attack the British with their own laws!" Jinnah is portrayed with a sympathy not showed for any other political leader. He is depicted as "austere, driven, pukka-sahib accented, deathly ill, incapable of check kissing", past the prime of his manhood, he is "sallow, whip-thin, sharp-tongued and uncompromising." Sidhwa also quotes Sarojini Naidu to substantiate her portrayal of Jinnah. As the story unfolds, we are introduced not only to Jinnah, the political leader, but also to Jinnah, the lover of an eighteen year old, breathtakingly beautiful Parsi girl, who had braved the censure of her wealthy knighted father to marry a Muslim. Lenny feels sad on learning her premature death, but her sympathies clearly lie with Jinnah:

> But didn't Jinnah too, die of a broken heart? And today, forty years later, in films of Gandhi's and Mountbatten's lives, in books by British and Indian scholars, Jinnah, who for a decade was known as 'Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity', is caricatured, and portrayed as a monster.

The analysis of the political leadership during the Partition days by Sidhwa is subjective and at times seems even prejudiced. Despite it, the final message of the novel is clear and unambiguous. It rejects the two nation theory and suggests that religious, social and cultural differences are artificially created and exploited by unscrupulous people. She also suggests that power should be used for the good of the people and to suppress the evil. In her interview with Julie Rajan, she comments on the main theme of *Ice-Candy-Man:*

I was just attempting to write the story of what religious hatred and violence can do to people and how close evil is to the nature of man. Under normal circumstances people can be quite ordinary and harmless; but once the mob mentality takes over, evil surfaces. Evil is very close to the surface of man.

Ice-Candy-Man is criticized by some critics for misrepresenting historical facts. Sidhwa's description of Gandhiji's visit to Lahore can be quoted as an example. There is no historical record of Gandhi's visit to Lahore during the pre-Partition days. Similarly, the reference to the famous Dandi March by Col. Bharucha dates it in 1944, whereas it had actually taken place in the early months of 1930. The vivid description of the Sikh attack on the Muslim village ofPir Pindo is also historically inaccurate. Such inaccuracies are however fictionally justified as these events are imaginatively used to impart an easy continuity and flow to the narrative and communicate the author's point of view successfully.

The theme of horror accompanying the transfer of population in 1947 has been delineated by several authors in Indo-English fiction. In his essay "The Partition in Indo-English Fiction" Saros Cowasjee has commented on the characteristics of the Partition novels. He says that most of the Partition novels written by Sikh authors portray a romance between a Sikh boy and a Muslim girl, strive for historical accuracy loading their fiction with documentary evidence gleaned from newspapers, government reports and G.D. Khosla's *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of the Events Leading upto and Following the Partition of India*(1949) and suggest that Sikh atrocities against the Muslims had taken place only in retaliation. Cowasjee has based his argument on a study of Raj Gill's *The Rape*(1974), H.S. Gill's *Ashes and Petals* (1978), Kartar Singh Duggal's *Twice Born Twice Dead*1979) and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956). Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges,* selected by E.M. Forster as the best novel of 1964, probes the Gandhian ideology of non-violence in relation to man's hidden capacity for violence. Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* (1975) propagates the theme of human kindness.

Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) has the distinction of being the only novel on Partition by a Muslim woman. It tells us of the effects of Partition not on those who were forced out of their homes, but on the members of a Muslim family who, far from the scene of action,

struggle to keep their family from splitting up and argue over the priorities of different loyalties. Balchandra Rajan's *The Dark Dancer* is saturated with idealism and hope and concentrates on the basic nobility of human nature. In Hindi, Urdu and Bengali too, there are some brilliant novels on this theme—*Jhutha Sach* of Yashpal, *Tamas* of Bhisham Sahani, *Adha Gaon* of Rahi Ma-soom Raza, *and-Epar Ganga, Opar Ganga* by Jyotirmoyee Devi, *The Skeleton* (1987) by Amrita Pritam can be mentioned as examples. *The Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh and *What the Body Remembers* (1999) by Shauna Singh Baldwin are more recent attempts to grapple with the memories of Partition which, as Krishna Sobti has remarked, is difficult to forget but dangerous to remember." Ghosh's novel traces the sources of communal violence. Ghosh effectively uses political allegory to stress the need for a syncretic civilization to avoid a communal holocaust. His novel is against artificial divisions and violence and is an affirmation of unity and enrichment of life.Baldwin traces the oppression of men which the female body remembers with contrasting and constantly shifting viewpoints in her novel.

Ice-Candy-Man stands apart in its rendering of the theme of Partition. Lenny reveals the trauma of Partition through her memories with a sprinkling of humour, parody and allegory, describing how friends and neighbours become helpless and ineffective while faced with the mob frenzy. Sidhwa also describes how political leaders manipulate the ideals and generate feelings of suspicion and distrust in the psyche of the common man. Once communal and obscurantist passions are aroused, the social fabric is torn asunder, leading to wanton and reckless destruction. Sidhwa has also commented on the historical inevitability of social process, suggesting that people who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it. The tragic events combine with the witty freshness characterizing the narrator's attitude of a distanced watcher. The novel poignantly describes the mindless Partition violence and focuses on its socio-historical consequences to women. Moreover, "the craft of describing violent and humorous scenes alternatively and of freely mixing historical tragedy with witty comedy is not the result of a compromise but it rather displays a lively authenticity which very few novels can be credited with." *Ice-Candy-Man* enables the readers to understand the extent of the trauma of Partition and review it in its historical context, and thus suggestively delineates the fruit-lessness of violence in individual and collective lives.

Through Lenny's narrative Sidhwa has raised some gender related issues and the child's voice also generates a tone of authentic documentation of the Partition horrors. Discuss.

Ice-Candy-Man is Sidhwa's most famous and serious novel till now, possessing several layers of connotative and enigmatic interpretations. Critics have vociferously commented on die political, allegorical, social and feminist interpretations of the narrative. The novel was published as *Cracking India* by Sidhwa's American publishers Milkweed Editions in 1991. though there were no textual changes. The changed title suggests a different perspective to the reader about the dominant theme of the novel.

It focuses on the collective political reality of the Partition of Indian sub-continent, while the earlier title *Ice-Candy-Man,* which has been retained for Indian editions, suggests a metonymic or even character-oriented interpretation. *Ice-Candy-Man,* the third novel of Bapsi Sidhwa, is the only novel in which she has used a child narrator. Whatever perspective is suggested initially to the reader by the title, the poignancy of emotional trauma and the sense of entrapment in the current situation is enhanced by the fact that the narrative is presented by a child. Negation of fruition to individual lives gains a suggestive urgency when it is reported by a child.

The figure of a child again simultaneously represents several marginalised identities generating a suggestive ambivalence. Lenny, the eight-year-old narrator of the novel is a polio-stricken girl belonging to a miniscule Parsi community. Lenny narrates the incidents and the characters of the novel to the readers, commenting and ruminating on various issues, also deftly camouflaging the writer's omnipresence. Anita Desai has compared Lenny with Oscar of Gunter Grass's *Tin Drum* The physical disability of both these characters isolates them and gives an obliquity to their perspective which gradually develops into a criticism of the supposedly rational maturity of the adult world, exposing the abnormality of its behavioural norms. Lenny's keen observation presents the traumatic upheavals of a world in which the older values are suddenly crumbling and the new ethos is yet to take a final shape. The simplicity and straightforwardness of Lenny's perception at moments reminds us of Nellie, the child-heroine of Dostoevsky's *The Insulted and the Humiliated,* on account of her sensitive understanding of human emotions and motives. As in Dostoevsky, the monstrosities of the adult world become transparent to the reader in their horrifying details in Sidhwa's novel also when contrasted with Lenny's naive logic.

Several books have been written about the growing up process of boys. Twain's twin novels *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* are perhaps the best examples of this genre in which the young protagonists gradually come to an understanding of themselves and their country. R.K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* is another example in which a boy gradually develops an understanding of the self within a wider sociopolitical context. The use of a girl-child as a narrator of a story to understand and capture the horrifying details of a turbulent history is unique in itself. Told in the present tense and first person through an eight year old girl, the novel beautifully captures the human struggle of the Partition days, though simultaneously the device seems to put some constraints on the novelist. Lenny tells us in the very beginning of the novel: "My world is compressed." This self-imposed and culturally constructed limitation is successfully overcome by Lenny as she naively presents her comments on human relationships and their inscrutability against the backdrop of an unfolding history. With a child's wonder she observes social and demagogic changes, and interesting sidelights, occasionally indulging in judgement making. Her childish innocence enhances the sharpness of the irony and lays bare the devastating cruelty of a patriarchal order. Keeping a balance between despair and laughter, Sidhwa is also able to present the tragic holocaust of Partition without criticism, morbidity or pedantic preaching, with the help of the device of the child narrator. *Ice-Candy-Man* has a beautifully combined gripping Dickensian story with a postmodernist narrative experimentation. "Like Rudyard Kipling's Kim or the fourteen-year old narrator in Doris Lessing's story "The Old Chief Mshlanga," Lenny's growing up is marked as much by a loss of political and racial egalitarianism as by her developing sexuality." Lenny is also compared to the persona that Chaucer adopts in his Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales,* rendering credibility by being almost a part of the reader's consciousness.

Ice-Candy-Man is often termed as a bildungsroman. The term means a novel which follows the development of the protagonist from childhood or adolescence into adulthood through a troubled quest for identity. Lenny's quest is also autobiographical as there are many palpable commonalities she shares with the author. In her interview with Julie Rajan, Sidhwa admits that her life as a child in Pakistan was very much like Lenny's life in *Ice-Candy-Man* Like Lenny she also had polio and spent a lot of time with servants. She also had a number of operations, and wasn't sent to school. She read voraciously to engage herself. When she was growing up in Lahore it was a city of five million with only 200 Parsis. The Parsis easily adopted the mores of the dominant society which made Sidhwa comfortable—like Lenny—with a whole medley of identities. The persona of a child enables Sidhwa to narrate her impressions freely, ask questions which grown up people avoid, and also to exercise a close watch over the narration itself. Since many details of the novel match the details of Sidhwa's life, it was easier for her to present her

general convictions about individuals and their various relationships through the child narrator, and still control the narrative somehow, retaining thick encrustations of interpretation.

Lenny does not simply "inform" the reader of happenings. She questions happenings, people, motives and emotions in order to grasp their fullest interpretation. The naivete of the child permits her to look at things from unconventional angles. She lacks prejudices—the hatred and biases one learns as one grows up. Her innocence gives her the strength to raise doubts and ask questions which cannot be comfortably answered by any grown-up, and also to reach at conclusions intuitively. "What's a fallen woman," she asks her godmother. She also tells her godmother that her Ayah has "nothing to be ashamed of." Rather it is her friends who have irrevocably shamed her and she cannot be "bad" just because she's been kidnapped. Troubled by the surrounding communal frenzy she sometimes lapses into rhetoric postures also, asking in a grown up voice, "What is God?" Such postures convince us that the narrator's voice is controlled and guided by the author.

Through Lenny's narrative Sidhwa has raised some gender related issues too. Her impressionable young mind receives several images of man-woman relationships which lead her to question status quo. She notices how in Col. Bharucha's clinic a woman has to discuss her child's illness through her husband, as any direct conversation between genders was looked down upon by the society. During visits to Pir Pindo she meets young girls of roughly her age who have already unquestioningly accepted their socially designated gender roles. Ranna's sisters Khatija and Parveen wear the responsible expressions of much older women and affect the mannerisms of their mother and aunts. Being a young child she herself is not influenced by such stereotypes, but her neutral reporting sensitizes the reader to the extent to which they have seeped into the collective social thinking. Ayah's raw sexuality, her manipulation of it for small gains, and ultimately its destruction by force, awaken profound responses in Lenny and she lays bare the gender-based structure of contemporary India. Lenny also records how her mother, despite her modern life-style, is very much a traditional wife, almost servile in her desires to please her husband. Lenny also becomes a party to her games of coquettishly creating an atmosphere of pleasant mirth whenever her father is at home. However, the victimization of girls/women is not limited to man-woman relationship only. The novel also exposes the extent of gender conditioning through the description of Papoos', the Sweeper's daughter's, marriage to a middle-aged dwarf. Her mother Muccho, not only passes on several of her household chores to her, but also maltreats her, sometimes even inflicting serious injuries to her. Her marriage to a leering middle-aged dwarf and Muccho's smug satisfaction underscore "grotesque possibilities awaiting Papoo," which had been perpetrated by her own mother. Lenny's shock at Papoo's marriage is an oblique though profound criticism of the prevalent gender bias. It also suggests that women themselves unconsciously perpetuate victimization of their own daughters, saddling them with a repetitive fate and treating marriage as a panacea of all ills.

The child's voice also generates a tone of authentic documentation of the Partition horrors. The innocence of her childhood days is suddenly snatched from her when she witnesses the fissiparous tendencies on the rise, the growing communal hatred and open gestures of arson and violence. Her familiar compressed surroundings suddenly distort into a topsy-turvy world in which values and allegiances shift suddenly. Lenny listens to the warnings of Sharbat Khan, watches an emaciated person being torn into two pieces by jeeps looks on as the Shalmi market burns, notes Hari's conversion to Islam, his adopting a new name and a new dress code, and listens in snatches to the harrowing experiences of Ranna. She is also a witness to the betrayal of Ice-Candy-Man. These experiences compel her to define her own position in the society, forcing her to recognize and adapt to her own marginality. She becomes aware of her religious and gender related identities—her consciousness of these multiple layers of existence becomes her initiation into maturity.

The narrative technique in *Ice-Candy-Man* also helps us to understand the political irony of the situation. Like a wide-eyed child Lenny comes to know about the statements of various political leaders. The Government House Gardener and Ice-Candy-Man jibe about Nehru, Gandhi, Jinnah and Tara Singh. Their opinions and repartee enable Lenny to grasp the remoteness of political issues from the lives of common people. She concurs with Ayah's statement that the political leaders do not fight for masses, "What's it to us if Jinnah, "Nehru and Patel fight? They are not fighting our fight." When the butcher contemptuously slanders Gandhi as "that non-violent violence monger—your precious Gandhijee," the Masseur tries to placate himur precious Gandhijee," the Masseur tries to placate him, commenting that "he's a politician, yaar." Lenny also notices the changing nature of jokes and is startled to find that suddenly there are "Hindu,. Muslim, Parsee, and Christian jokes." The stirrings of vague fears and apprehensions which Lenny feels at such moments convey the political reality of contemporary India.

Protected by her religious background and her family status, Lenny is not directly affected by the growing cruelty of these times. She remains on the periphery, watching the events unfold and commenting on them in a reporter's tone. Coupled with the innocence of a child's viewpoint, her detached tone enhances the poignancy of the emotions which are linguistically underplayed. Like any other child she is also flabbergasted at many details, "Can one break a country? And what happens if they break it where our house is? Or crack it further upon on Warris Road? How will I ever get to Godmother's then?" The device of the child narrator enables Sidhwa to reveal the trauma of Partition, with a sprinkling of humour and allegory, and without any histrionics.

Thus the device of the child narrator has been very successfully used by Sidhwa in *Ice-Candy-Man*. The use of a girl-child as a narrator in the novel enables her to simultaneously present a critique of several issues from multiple angles. Lenny's narrative voice is not unidirectional, the very ambivalence of her narration enriches the readers' understanding of the presence of multi-layered meanings in the text.

Do you agree with the view that Ice-Candy-Man is a story of partition narrated in a Parsi perception?

Partition is an upheaval which transformed millions of hapless people on either side of the border in the subcontinent into refugees. If Partition is the cataclysm which Freddie predicts towards the end of the narrative in *The Crow-Eaters,* in *Ice-Candy-Man,* Partition becomes the moulding principle, a shaping force in the evolution of consciousness ol Lenny, the Parsi child-protagonist.

If Partition is a traumatic experience to Bhisham Sahni and Amrita Pritain, it is an integral part of Bapsi Sidhwa's consciousness. This narrative, complex as it is, marks a point of departure in Sidhvva's writing. For here, for the first time, she employs a child-narrator like Firdaus Kanga in *Trying to Grow* and Adam Zameenzad in *Gorgeous White Female.* The narrative depicts the growth of Lenny, her slow awakening to sexuality, and pains and pleasures of the adult world and to the cataclysmic event that tears her world apart. The process of Lenny's growth of consciousness against the backdrop of Partition becomes central to the narrative. Thus her progression is from one level of consciousness (Angra Mainyu) to the other (Spenta Mainyu).

According to Bapsi Sidhwa, she wrote *Ice-Candy-Man* from an "objective point of view," but like a Pakistani objective."[1]Sidhwa's treatment of history is typical of a postcolonial novel. Here history is richly humanized where Lenny's evolving consciousness integrates within itself the diachronic moment of her own growth, holistically, and conversely, the disintegration of the

subcontinent. The Parsi attitude", rendered through Lenny, Godmother and other characters like Colonel Bharucha is that of a neutral disinterest. As they are not so much affected by the social, political or even economic consequences, they are near perfect, detached observers. Thus Sidhwa displays a fuller grasp of the 'human' consequences, of history. In the narrative, action is *internalized in the young, though fertile, mind of Lenny*. Lenny thus becomes ah eye-witness to, and a victim of, a topsy-turvy world.

Zoroastrianism enjoins that a Parsi should be loyal to the ruler. The Parsis are celebrated for their unflinching loyalty to the British. Referring to the loyalty of the Parsis to the British, Novy Kapadia observes that all the Parsis wanted from the ruling British authorities was religious autonomy and protection and they were granted both. However, the sense of insecurity in the Parsi community was due to alienation brought about by the rejection of the coloniser and distrust of the nationalists. When objections are raised by some members of the Parsi community at a jashan meeting on the eve of Partition, Colonel Bharucha, the spokesman of the Zoroastrian community in Lahore, observes:

I hope no Lahore Parsee will be stupid enough to court trouble. I strongly advise all of you to stay at the back—and out of trouble.

He argues that it would be very difficult to predict the outcome of Partition. He cautions them:

There may not be one but two—or even three—new nations. And the Parsis might find themselves championing the wrong side if they don't look before they leap.

His word is almost a law for the Parsi community. He resolves that the Parsis of Lahore should cast their lot with whoever rules Lahore. He too, like Freddie in *The Crow-Eaters,* believes that there is no need for the Parsi community to leave Lahore. He tells them:

Let whoever wishes to rule! Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian! We will abide by the rules of their land.

The proclamations of Colonel Bharucha at the community dinner reflect the stance of the majority in the Zoroastrian community in the pre-Partition context. He aptly predicts that Hindus, Muslims and even the Sikhs would jockey for power. He cautions the Parsis of Lahore not to jump into the middle. To Lenny, a child who is caught up in the whirlpool of religious disparities, Colonel Bharucha's proclamation is a revelation. Exiled several centuries ago, the Parsis adopted India as their homeland. Therefore, another migration would be truly unthinkable. They are attached to, and identified themselves with, the Indian soil.

Ayah, an eighteen-year-old Hindu, is at the centre of Lenny's scheme of things. The nexus between Lenny's world of childish pleasures and innocence and the fast-changing ambience is realised in Ice-Candy-Man whose presence is exhilarating for the young child. Ayah's amorous adventures become central to Lenny's perceptions. If the covetous glances of Ayah's admirers including the Masseur and Ice-Candy-Man awaken her to sexuality and passion, the passes of holy men and dusty old beggars give her a glimpse of the adult life. Initially her world is made secure by strong, courageous and loving women like Rodabai and the young Ayah. Sidhwa very clearly establishes in the narrative that Parsi women are quite strong and their strength is revealed in moments of crisis. For Lenny, the process of growing up, of seeking to understand the adult world is largely an attempt to make sense of the senseless events of the Partition.

Colonel Bharucha who blames the British for bringing polio to India, seals the fate of Lenny. He declares:

She'll marry—have children—lead a carefree, happy life. No need to strain her with studies and exams.

Adi, her fair brother, is sent to school whereas she is denied several privileges which other Parsi children enjoy. She is reluctant to become a mere reproductive organism, a destiny designed for her by Colonel Bharucha, a man. Thus Sidhwa seems to disapprove of sexism which is part even of Parsi ethos. Speaking of the women's passive acceptance of the role allotted by the patriarchy, Susie Tharu observes: "As women we often believe our exploited, sexually passive, dependent role is best for us. We are contented, often exalted by its meagre rewards, its promised glitter. Further we have so identified with patriarchy's hostility to anything that challenges the established order we fear and even actively resist critical speech and radical action. Worst of all, we are ourselves so insecure in the system (the time between good and bad, and hence acceptable and totally unhoused, is slippery) that often we are the most vicious in our castigation of those who do not conform." Tharu argues that there is a need for a 'real' consciousness. Women have not only internalized a bourgeois consciousness but also refuse to see themselves as victims. They are locked into a 'culture of silence' which they themselves contribute to the perpetuation of patriarchy that objectifies and destroys her.

Sidhwa's treatment of history is typical of a postcolonial novelist. Her fictional (and imaginative) rendering of historical figures and incidents is singular. Despite her admiration for Gandhi, she holds him, though partially, responsible for Partition. Gandhi was deified whereas Jinnah was caricatured in Indian films and biased accounts of the British and Indian historians. Sidhwa wrote *Ice-Candy-Man* since she felt that enough had not been written about Partition, although several novels including *Train to Pakistan, A Bend in the Ganges* and*Tamas* deal with Partition horrors. Her thesis is that most of these accounts, however moving, show a strong pro-Hindu bias. Thus Sidhwa sets out to 'dismantle' the 'Imperial purpose' in *Ice-Candy-Man*.

Lenny's response to Gandhi is naive. He, a mythical figure, for her at least, emerges as a multi-dimensional reality. His presence is overwhelming:

> My brain, heart and stomach melt. The pure shaft of humour, compassion, tolerance and understanding he directs at me fuses me to everything that is feminine, funny, gentle, loving. He is a man who loves women,. And lame children. And the untouchable sweeper— so he will love the untouchable sweeper's constipated girl-child best. I know'just where to look for such a child. He touches my face, and in a burst of shyness, I lower my eyes. This is the first time I have lowered my eyes before a man.

Lenny truly comprehends the concealed nature of "ice" lurking deep beneath the hypnotic and 'dynamic' femininity of Gandhi's 'non-violent exterior' only after the communal frenzy starts. Sidhwa's description of Gandhi is a mixture of awe and irreverence. Her eulogy on Jinnah, on the other hand, is typical of a Pakistani, making it a moral obligation for her to defend him. When her mother tells her that Jinnah's wife, a Parsi, died heartbroken, Lenny reminisces:

> But didn't Jinnah too die of a broken heart? And today, forty five years later, in the films of Gandhi's and Mountbatten's lives, in books by British and Indian scholars, Jinnah who for a decade was known as 'Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity', is caricatured, and portrayed as a monster.

This passage gives a clear indication of Sidhwa's anguish at the biased work of the British and Indian scholars. Taking a passage from Sarojini Naidu's tribute to Jinnah, Bapsi Sidhwa reinforces her argument:

> the calm hauteur of his accustomed reserve masks, for those who know him, a naive and eager humanity, an intuition quick and tender as a woman's, a humour gay and wishing as a child's preeminently rational and practical, discreet and dispassionate in his estimate and acceptance of life, the obvious sanity and serenity of his worldly

> wisdom effectually disguise a shy and splendid idealism which is of the very essence of the man.

This is Sidhwa's glowing tribute to, and an assessment of, Jin-nah, who, in her view, was discriminated against by the wily statesmen during Partition. She, however, rises above petty nationalism and presents the Partition horrors, not in the "red light of emotion" but in the "white light of truth." Her humanism permeates the narrative at all levels as she demonstrates, in effective fictional terms, how the religious disparities were deliberately exploited on the eve of Partition. Thus *Ice-Candy-Man,* like Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan,* is the story of what happened to the poor when the politicians so heartlessly played around with their lives. They suffered the most. Bapsi Sidhwa, being a Parsi, did not suffer much during Partition. The fight was chiefly between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, people who were to gain by it and who were going to be empowered by it. It was their 'battle' and as a Parsi, her emotions were not aligned one way or the other. Lenny, at least to some extent, takes after Bapsi Sidhwa and most of the incidents did take place in her own life though she only fictionalised them.

Lenny who is incapable of lying, realises that to become corrupt or mimick others is no easy job. What she aims at is something which is natural to others but her efforts are an exercise in futility. She remains in an Edenic state whereas Adi and Cousin plunge into life with great gusto. One day Godmother catches her easily when.she steals three jars. Her face and voice give her away. The resultant awareness brings only fresh pain:

> Adi can swear himself red in the face and look lovable—Rosy can curse steadily for five minutes, going all the way from 'Ullu Kay Pathay' to asshole; from Punjabi swear words to American, and still look cute. It's okay if Cousin swears—but if I curse or lie, I am told it does not suit the shape of my mouth or my personality or something.

Her inability to accomplish what others do with effortless ease plunges her into fresh agony. Godmother comforts her:

Some people, can get away with it and some can't. . . . I'm afraid a life of crime is not for you. Not because you aren't sharp but because you are not suited to it.

Godmother's remark is like 'life-sentence' to Lenny. Even her mother encourages her to speak the truth. When Lenny breaks a plate, she showers her daughter with the radiance of her approval:

> I love you. You spoke the truth. What's a broken plate? Break a hundred plates.

Lenny's realization at this juncture of life is significant:

> The path to virtue is strewn with broken people and shattered China.

This truth, which is born of Lenny's tender experience acquires the magnitude of a cosmic truth in the narrative. Ironically enough, it is Lenny's probity which brings about the ultimate catastrophe—the abduction of Ayah by an irate Muslim mob led by Ice-Candy-Man, an occurrence from Sidhwa's childhood, though it was effectively dramatized in the novel.

The Hindu Ayah who sustains Lenny's life has a multi-religious throng of admirers but she does not discriminate. The Queen's Park becomes the locale where discussions throw light on the topic of the times—communal frenzy. As Partition becomes imminent, the admirers of Ayah become conscious of their communal identities. Communal loyalties too, which remain hitherto dormant, become sharper. Ayah too is slowly transformed into a 'token', an orthodox Hindu, whereas Imam Din, a fair and imaginative arbitrator, and Yousuf turn into religious zealots and take Friday afternoons off for the Jumha prayers. The initial optimism of Imam Din is superseded by anxiety and apprehension as his faith in the 'Sikh brothers' erodes slowly. However, he remains

calm in the face of all calamities. Lenny's realization that he is 'not at ease with cruelty' indicates the effect of turbulent times on her tender psyche.

The widening disparities are filtered through Lenny's consciousness. She observes:

> One day everybody is themselves—and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. People shrink, dwindling into symbols. Ayah is no longer just my all encompassing Ayah—she is also a token—a Hindu.

Sidhwa resorts to subversion in *Ice-Candy-Man* to offer the perspective of the marginalized. She comes close to Mistry who employs popular gossip and newspaper account to question the 'official' version of the infamous Nagarwala case. She introduces conversations among ordinary people in the novel. Her minor characters such as Masseur, the Government House gardener and Sher Singh perform, like Hardy's rustic characters, the role of a commentator and interpreter. They analyse and draw their own inferences which sometimes reflect the stand taken by the respective communal groups to which they belong. For instance, the discussions on politics in Queen's Park give ample scope for them to voice their feelings. At the same time, they curse the politicians in whose hands their destiny lies. The butcher's comment on Gandhi is typical of a Muslim in the pre-Partition context:

> That non-violent violence monger—your precious Gandhijee— first declares the Sikhs fanatics! Now suddenly he says: "Oh dear, the poor Sikhs cannot live with the Muslims if there is a Pakistan!" What does he think we are—some kind of beast? Aren't they living with us now?

The Masseur's reply is equally sarcastic:

> He's a politician, yaar. It's his business to suit his tongue to the moment.

Thus their comments on, and their interpretations of, the latest political developments in the subcontinent give Lenny a vivid idea of the crumbling familiar social order. Her realization that one man's religion is another man's poison is charged with profound significance. She closes her eyes and tries to shut out the voices. She remarks:

> I try not to inhale, but I must; the charged air about our table distils poisonous insights. Blue envy: green avidity: the grey and black stirrings of predators and the incipient distillation of fear in their prey.

Lenny begins to play violent games, a gesture which she borrows from the adult world. One day Adi and she pull the legs of a doll and when the doll splits, she breaks down. In fury, Adi asks:

> "Why were you so cruel if you couldn't stand it?" he asks at last, infuriated by the pointless brutality.

In Kapadia's view, Lenny's innocent act has symbolic significance. He observes: "It shows how even a young girl is powerless to stem the tide of surging violence within, thereby implying that grown-up fanatics enmeshed in communal frenzy are similarly trapped into brutal violence."

Though Parsis were not victims of Partition, their agony was no less intense. Sidhwa highlights the quandary of the Pars! community on the eve of Partition. Forced to make a choice, (to opt for Hindu India or Muslim Pakistan), they were reduced to 'irrelevant nomenclatures'. They were mere detached observers of a bloody event which broke India into two. Her innocent query is typical of a child:

> India is going to be broken. Can one break a country?

This strikes the keynote in the narrative. Sidhwa seeks to re-examine the role of the British in 'cracking' the country. She attempts to expose the 'illegitimate' part played by the British in the political process.

The birth of Pakistan leads to an identity-crisis in Lenny. She observes bitterly:

> I am a Pakistani. In a snap. Just like that.

She takes another birth, though a symbolic one, as a Pakistani. *Ice-Candy-Man* is Pakistani in setting and sensibility. The perspective of Sidhwa is quite evidently Pakistani. According to her, Partition was a 'mistake', a tragedy which could have been averted. However, in the novel, she argues how Partition favoured India over Pakistan:

> The Hindus are being favoured 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. Spurning logic, defying rationale, ignoring the consequence of bequeathing a Muslim state to the Hindus. . . . They grant Nehru Gurdaspur and Pathankot without which Kashmir cannot be secured.

Thus Sidhwa rejects the British and pro-Hindu Indian versions of history. She subverts the popular myth about Partition which was nursed and cherished by people on either side of the border in the subcontinent. *Ice-Candy-Man* is a typical postcolonial text which achieves the objective of dismantling notions of essence and authenticity. The experience which Sidhwa depicts in the narrative is 'real' which, hitherto has been regarded as 'inauthentic' and 'marginal'.

It is Lenny who unwittingly surrenders Ayah to the rioters led by Ice-Candy-Man. Even Imam Din's desperate lie fails to save her. Lenny's sense of guilt is acute:

> I am the monkey-man's performing monkey, the trained circus elephant, the snake-man's charmed cobra, an animal with conditioned reflexes that cannot lie.

In disgust, she scours her 'truth-infected tongue' and even tries to wench it out. Sidhwa's narrative mode, like Narayan's, is ironic. Lenny's mother and Godmother set her firmly on the path of truth and it is her truthfulness that spells doom for Ayah.

The subsequent confrontation between Godmother and Ice-Candy-Man opens Lenny's eyes to the wisdom of righteous indignation over compassion, to the demands of gratification to the unscrupulous nature of desire and to 'the pitiless face of love'. Ice-Candy-Man who ravished the voluptuous Ayah however, repents and marries her. Even her name is changed to Mumtaz. Thus Sidhwa shows how patriarchy deliberately deprived women of liberty ultimately resulting in a crisis of identity. But Ayah rejects the new identity which her marriage offers. Lenny feels the pain of Ayah since it is she who perpetrates it, though in innocence:

> They have shamed her. Not those men in the carts—they were strangers—but Sharbat Khan and Ice-Candy-Man and Imam Din and Cousin's cook and the butcher and other men she counted among her friends and admirers. I'm not very clear how—despite Cousin's illuminating tutorials—but I'm certain of her humiliation.

Thus Sidhwa effectively establishes how Partition affected the two nations in general, and women in particular. Urvashi Butalia raises a pertinent question about the predicament of women during Partition:

> Why was it that we heard so little about them? How had they experienced the anguish of the division, the euphoria of the newly-forming nations? My assumptions were simple: firstly, that these questions had remained unasked because of the patriarchal underpinnings of history as a discipline. I also believed (and this view

> has been considerably qualified since) that in times of communal strife and violence, women remain essentially non-violent, and are at the receiving end of violence as victims, and that they are left with the task of rebuilding the community.

The task of building the community as pointed out by Urvashi Butalia is precisely what the strong women in the narrative— Rodabai and Lenny's mother—accomplish. When Rodabai confronts Ayah, now the wife of Ice-Candy-Man, she tries to comfort the hapless victim:

> It can't be undone. But it can be forgiven . . . worse things are forgiven. Life goes on and the business of living buries the debris of our pasts. Hurt, happiness ... all fade impartially to make way for fresh joy and new sorrow. That is the way of life.

But the traumatic experience leaves Ayah spiritually dead. She replies:

> I am past that. I am not alive.

Her fractured self seeks relief in Indiawhere her roots exist. Lenny's realisation that Ice-Candy-Man is a 'deflated poet' and a 'collapsed pedlar' is symptomatic of her 'arrival.' She perceives the change which comes over Ice-Candy-Man: and while Ayah is haunted by her past, Ice-Candy-Man is haunted by his future: and his macabre future already appears to be stamped on Iris face.

The eventual rehabilitation of Ayah which is chiefly the work of Godmother, the Good Samaritan as she is, and the repentance of Ice-Candy-Man give Lenny a glimpse of the power of love and the pain of separation.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak contends that the word 'subaltern' is packed with meaning. According to her, everything that has limited or no access to cultural imperialism is subaltern. She vehemently protests against the lack of cultural space for the subaltern. To work for the subaltern, she argues, is to bring it into speech. Ayah in *Ice-Candy-Man* truly represents the 'subaltern' since she is denied some cultural space by Ice-Candy-Man, who in turn, is a victim of imperialism. Her humiliation is a concrete illustration of the subaltern's lack of access to the cultural imperialism.

Referring to allusion in the postcolonial literatures, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffinwrite: "Allusion can perform the same function of registering the cultural distance in the postcolonial text, according to the extent to which the text itself provides the necessary context for the allusion."

Thus in Bapsi Sidhwa's fiction in general, and in *Ice-Candy-Man* in particular, there are several intertextual references which not only enable her to register 'cultural distance' but also introduce the exotic to the western reader. This is one of the salient features of postcolonial fiction. *Ice-Candy-Man,* like Anita De-sai's *In Custody,* provides the necessary context too for the allusion,

The Urdu couplets of Iqbal and Ghalib cited in the text are an evidence of Bapsi Sidhwa's passion for Urdu poetry. Ice-Candy-Man's anguish of separation is described in IqbaFs words:

> My passion has brought me to your street—
> Where can I now find the strength to take me back?

While 'appropriating' the language of the coloniser, Sidhwa. at the same time, maintains 'Otherness' which gives a distinct identity to the text. Thus she challenges some of the assumptions which hitherto ordered 'reality'. Ice-Candy-Man's newborn wisdom is a mystery to the young mind of Lenny. She realises the power of love only when he too disappears across the newly-created border into India.

Raima's nightmarish experience at Pir Pindo is closely modelled on a personal experience of Raima Khan, a friend of Bapsi Sidhwa. His survival in the carnage is a miracle, yet he takes a comic-ironic view of his own predicament:

> It's funny. ... As long as I had to look out for myself, I was all right. As soon as I felt safe, I fainted.

His endurance teaches Lenny the importance of being whole. His 'instinct for survival' and his ready ability to forgive a past which could not be controlled are in sharp contrast to her frivolous ways of life.

Discussing the treatment of Partition and its effects in fiction, Susie Tharu observes: "By representing the Partition in 'Universalisf terms as outrageous, and its effects as a metaphysical disorder that can.be restored to an equilibrium only by the artist who is imaged as a magician-healer, these texts inaugurate a narrative and a subjectivity that translates history and politics into a failure of humanity.

She argues that the trauma and suffering of people during Partition is largely due to degeneration of politics leading to subhuman acts. The tragedy of Ayah and the trauma of Ranna are the result of what Tharu calls 'failure of humanity'. Lenny at one juncture cries out:

> I feel so sorry for myself—and for Cousin—and for all the senile, lame and hurt people and fallen women—and the condition of the world—in which countries can be broken, people slaughtered and cities burned—that I burst into tears.

Lenny's 'education' is a growth of consciousness, a phenomenon which is hastened by events and situations at once tragic and brutal.

When a novelist attempts to develop a philosophical conception of history, the point of view as a literary strategy assumes great significance. Bapsi Sidhwa avoids the pitfall of employing omniscient narration in*Ice-Candy-Man*. This work marks a new phase in her writing in the use of narrative voice. She is true to history, by and large, though there are a few aberrations in providing historical signposts. Ralph Crane argues that Lenny's unreliable narration proves to be reliable in its own way, since it causes us to question the British and Indian versions of the truth that have hitherto been accepted. Sidhwa, in fact, employs two narrative voices for rendering the account of Partition. The first is that of Lenny, a child and the other is that of authorial omniscient narrative voice. Lenny's rendering is through her dreams and nightmares. It is more subjective, though not involved or enlightened about its consequences. The other is an implied adult narration trying to objectify what is child's narration, however precocious she may be. Sidhwa's success lies in an excellently maintained restraint and impartial, disinterested, near-factual description. She maintains balance so that the voice remains childlike but sophisticated enough to involve the adult reader. There is no authorial comment, yet Sidhwa's narrative brings out the full fury of Partition horrors, through electrifying scenes and dramatic use of language.

Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* invites comparison with Firdaus Kanga's *Trying to Grow* and Adam Zameenzad's *Gorgeous White Female*. All the three protagonists are children endowed with fertile imagination. They are precocious whose sharp perceptions are out of proportion to their age. If Sidhwa's Lenny tries to interpret the actions and events connected with Partition, though she is too young to accomplish it, Lahyayani, Zameenzad's eleven-year-old protagonist, the offspring of a Bengali babu and an English woman, attempts to live an intense life. His aspiration to be reborn stands in glaring contrast to the struggle of Kanga's Brit whose passage to adulthood is necessitated by his Osteogenesis imperfecta. Interestingly enough, however co-incidental it may seem, Lenny is a victim of polio whereas Brit is an invalid by birth. Lahyayani, on the other hand, transcends the barriers of race, gender and age in order to achieve his objective

of rebirth. Zameenzad, like Sidhwa, is an expatriate writer exploring the themes of rootlessness (which is the result of his mixed origin), colour and sexuality through the volatile mind of his child-protagonist. Childhood is the 'country' which all the three protagonists—Lenny, Brit and Lahyayani—try to leave behind in their journey to adulthood. If Brit succeeds in establishing nexus with the adult word, Lenny and Lahyayani, despite their intense struggle, fail to acquire an identity of their own. Lenny's predicament is qualitatively different from that of Brit in that she is a girl. Brit's identity which he achieves after a heroic struggle within himself is Kanga's triumph as well. The singular achievement of Sidhwa and Kanga is that they provide a true look into the depths of childhood memory which Zameenzad fails to achieve in his *Gorgeous White Female*.

Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* was retitled *Cracking India*. Born in Pakistan, and teaching in U.S.A., Sidhwa has a 'dual literary heritage'. If Ghalib and Iqbal fascinated her, writers like Eugene O'Neill, influenced her writing to a considerable extent. An early reference in the text links Sidhwa's title to O'Neill's play, *The Ice-Man Cometh:*

> Ice-Candy-Man is selling his popsicles to the other groups lounging on the grass. My mouth waters. I have confidence in Ayah's chocolate chemistry . . . lank and loping the Ice-Candy-Man cometh.

Thus by referring to the influence of American writers like O'Neill, Sidhwa reflects on the influence of America on Pakistani history. Commenting on the change of title, Sidhwa remarks:

> This novel was published as *Ice-Candy-Man* in Germany and in Britain. But here the publishers wanted to change the title. My publisher said that the, American readership will not relate to *Ice-Candy-Man,* because apparently Ice and Candy are euphemisms for drugs here. So they felt it would be better to give a title based on what the narrator says in the novel about the Partition. I feel that not enough has been written about the Partition. "The new title is suggestive, no doubt, but as Robert Ross aptly points out, it diminishes the centrality of Ice-Candy-Man aid blurs his symbolic role. Ice-Candy-Man, in Sidhva's view, stands for wily politicians whose work it was to 'crack' the once unified country. He symbolizes evil for which stand the statesmen of the times, leaders who were responsible for the unmitigated suffering of ordinary people on either side of the border. Through Lenny, Sidhwa demonstrates how absurd it is to break a country! The new title thus suggests the notion of quest, of discovery.

In *Ice-Candy-Man,* allegory is the structural principle controlling the narrative. Some Indian scholars regard this work as a moral allegory. According to Nilufer Bharucha, the Hindu Ayah is symbolic of the Indian earth whereas Shirin Kudchedkar observes that Ayah represents the innocent, natural sexuality of women who becomes the prey of debauched male desire. Sidhwa herself admitted in an interview:

> Ayah, for instance, is not symbolic of anything, but on reflection, I felt that she could be representing India in a way. These are people who desire her so much, and each one of them, when he has a chance, ravishes her.

Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man,* foregrounds the Partition, its horror and consequences. Though Sidhwa was not aware of the allegorical reference, at least when she was writing, perceptive readers pick up the resonances. Thus in the ultimate analysis, Ayah and Ice-Candy-Man emerge as personifications of ideas—the former standing,for Mother Earth and the latter for Evil.

Thus *Ice-Candy-Man* is a novel of education in which Lenny's growth of consciousness takes place against the backdrop of Partition. Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* is racy and down-to-earth whereas Balachandra Rajan's *The Dark Dancer* employs myth as a structural parallel.

The Hindu-Muslim riots are viewed as a re-enactment of the fratricidal battle of Kurukshetra. It is an allegory since the allegorical reference is sustained and unbroken. Manohar Malgonkar's, *A Bend in the Ganges* projects the value of love which transcends violence and non-violence and brings about freedom and fulfilment to individuals. Bhish am Salmi's *Tamas* is a grim reminder of the human tragedy suggesting that those who forget history are condemned to repeat it. For all these Indian novelists and Sidhwa, Partition is not a mere historical event but an all-pervasive emotional experience.

The worldview which serves as the controlling point of the narrative here is characteristically Zoroastrian. In Lenny's consciousness, there is a gradual and purposeful shift from scepticism to faith. It is a tale of 'arrival,' a true bildungsroman in which Lenny learns to view the world from a heuristic perspective. Her enlarged consciousness results from her experiment with truth of which Ayah is the victim. Lenny's passage from a state of bliss to the adult world of pains and pleasures constitutes the core of the narrative. The progression of her mind is thus a positive movement in which she reaches the plenitude of her being.

In *Ice-Candy-Man,* Sidhwa presents a diachronic world where the life of Lenny and her growth at all levels is in a parallel time order. In other words, there is the history of Lenny and there exists the chronology of subcontinental Partition tale. As historical time is linear and colonial which is nothing but a record of depravity, cultural, economic, political and emotional, each postcolonial novelist creates his own 'space' of authenticity and belongingness by his 'English'. By doing so, he is 'replacing' the text in the postcolonial context. New 'spaces' are sought to be created for redefining the native sense of history. Thus in Sidhwa's fiction too, there is this tug between history and the hapless protagonist in such a history. He/She is an 'insider' in history, yet without his/her own autonomy of self. Hence he/she seeks to break out of this 'history' and creates his/her own world with temporal autonomy through his own 'English'.

Bapsi Sidhwa and the National Spirit of Pakistan

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 in-directly, 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 thePunjab, 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 Pakistanand 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-Candy-Man 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-Candy-Man 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.

Sense of the City – Lahore in Bapsi Sidhwa

Introduction

Bapsi Sidhwa is the author of four novels, including Ice Candy Man (Cracking India inUS edition), which was named a New York Times Notable Book in 1991. In the same year, she received the Sitara-i-Imtiaz, Pakistan's highest national honour in the arts. Born in Karachi and raised in Lahore, she now lives in Houston, Texas.

I've spent most of my time in the city of Lahore, a city of about eight million people. It forms the geographical location of most of my work, most of my writing. For her, Lahore is an intensely romantic city. Its ambience lends itself to romance and it arouses an intensity of feeling which craves expression. Lahore also forms the location of many of the writers' works - they are known as the "pavement pounders" who wandered the streets of Lahore, including Kipling. And these writers would frequent the tea houses and coffee houses and huddle in each different place with a different set of admirers.

They would write of their relationships which were formed in the tea houses and of their adventures within the city of Lahore.

Landscape of Lahore

Perhaps the most famous in the West is Rudyard Kipling who was an insomniac, and he walked through the old city, which forms the heart of Lahore, and which really took place during the Moghul times. And he narrates his adventures there - most famously in Kim. And the Zam-Zammah, which he talks about - the little British urchin boy sort of climbs onto the gun, the Zam-Zammah. And the gorgeous Badshahi Mosque, the fort, the Shalimar Gardens, all made by the Moghul emperors, are themes that inspire writers and they are locations that writers use. Of course one of the themes which comes out most frequently and which was started off by the famous short story writer, Manto, involved the tragedies that happened during the partition of India into India and Pakistan when huge migrations took place. Naturally the writer is automatically drawn to the dramatic, and these provided very dramatic moments.

Diversity of Lahore

Lahore, as a very gracious, ancient city, has an ambience which just lends itself to writers. More than just describe the city with great affection and love, they also talk about the people that a city like that and an atmosphere like that creates. Lahore as a city inspires the arts in all their forms. Some of the most famous singers have come fromLahore and just the general population seems to be bursting with artistic energy, so that the little motor-scooter rickshaws, the lorries, the trucks, all of them are splashed with decorations and colour. It is a city that inspires painting, song, writing, and of course the literature incorporates all these aspects of the city. There are so many musharas which go on in Lahore, which are sort of poetic evenings dedicated to various poets, reciting their poetry. These are a very popular form of evening entertainment. Poetry is not distanced from the writer as it is perhaps in the West where poetry is confined to colleges, almost, and schools. InLahore it is woven within the fabric of each person's life. In the course of an ordinary conversation people will suddenly recite a couplet from a ghazal or a couplet from a Punjabi poem about legendary romantic characters. But they all lend themselves to a mysticism, an undercurrent of mysticism, and conversations with God. Allama Iqbal, the most famous poet of the Indian subcontinent, in fact, was inspired to write "shikwa", which is the complaint to God, because of the ambience of Lahore. Just to exist in Lahore is a sort of inspiration. I think each city has its own spirit, andLahore's spirit is, I think, a creative energy. So it will continue to inspire writers, and people born in Lahore will be writers, just naturally.