

Tribhuvan University

A Semiotic Analysis of Anatomical Motifs in Bapsi Sidhwa's Novels

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master in Philosophy (M. Phil.) in English

By

Ashok Rayamajhi

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

October 2015

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

M.Phil. Programme in English

This thesis entitled “A Semiotic Analysis of Anatomical Motifs in Bapsi Sidhwa’s Novels” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Ashok Rayamajhi has been signed by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Internal Supervisor

External Supervisor

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the help from my supervisor Prof. Ram Chandra Paudel in bringing the thesis in completion. Without his support and proper guidance, this project would be nigh impossible.

Similarly I would like to remember Department Head Prof. Amma Raj Joshi for allowing me to carry on this research and the coordinator of M. Phil program, Mr. Anirudra Thapa for encouraging me to do the research on the topic. My special thanks go to Prof. Abhi Subedi, Prof. Sanjeev Uprety, and Pushpa Raj Acharya for providing me helpful suggestions every time I sought.

My friends, Yam Raj Pandey, Bipin Duwadi and Chandra Mani Chapagain are to be especially remembered for lending me their helping hands in various ways while writing this thesis. I am grateful to all my family members who provided me a conducive environment and helped me from every aspect during my research period. Similarly I would like to give many thanks to Mr. Keshab Adhikari, the proprietor of Everest Photocopy and Computer for his deft fingers at typing and Ram Chandra Adhikari, Proprietor of Student Books, Kirtipur for providing so many useful books and other related materials without anticipating any commercial benefit from me.

Ashok Rayamajhi

October 2015

Abstract

This research project, by looking at the anatomical motifs, fingers and toes used in the Pakistani novelist, Bapsi Siwha's three novels, *Cracking India*, *An American Brat* and *The Pakistani Bride* strives to explore the actual condition of females facing Pakistani society. It talks about how the female characters are suppressed, oppressed and dominated by an over-bearing nature of the males' fingers and toes. There is a stark contrast between the fingers and toes of males and females representing the actual condition of them differently in the Pakistani society. In fact, females' social status, rights, freedom, level of autonomy, their psyche and the state of vulnerability is all reflected in and through these bodily organs. This research tries to explore the role of these motifs in representing the overall state of being of the females in the Pakistani society by applying the semiotics, non-verbal communication coupled with feminist theories.

Contents

Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
I. Sidhwa and Her Three Novels	1
II. Semiotics, Non-verbal Communication and the Motifs	6
III. Female Predicament in Pakistani Society	39
Female Suppression	41
Search of ‘Spoilt’ Women as a Motif	52
‘Touch’ Metaphor and ‘Fallen’ Women	53
A Fragile Female Resistance	55
Nation and Women: A Similarity	58
Females and the Animal Imagery	60
IV. Fingers and Toes: An Array of Different Semiotic Roles	62
Fingers and Toes’ Libidinal Roles	62
Fingers/ Toes, Power and Authority	70
Male’s Fingers and Toes as Possessive Agent	78
Fingers and Toes as Metaphor	80
Lenny’s Psychology and Fingers and Toes	82
Fingers and Toes, Traditional Value and Social Cultural Practices	84
Other Different Roles and Activities	86
Binary Oppositions	87
V. Semiotic Value of the Anatomical Motifs	92
Works Cited	95

I. Sidhwa and Her Three Novels

The Pakistani Novelist, Bapsi Sidhwa in her three novels namely *Cracking India*, *An American Brat* and *The Pakistani Bride* has profusely used the anatomical motifs, fingers and toes for the sake of representing the actual condition of female living in the Pakistani society. By showing various physical states, gestures and activities of fingers and toes used differently by males and females in the particular society, Sidhwa has established a meaningful connection of them with the overbearing nature of males and the miserable condition of female residing there. These anatomical motifs are very important in reinforcing the main theme of the novels- suppression, oppression and domination of females by males in Pakistan.

Basically this research looks at all the female protagonists' situation and tries to analyze their causes of sufferings and different stories of incessant struggle. Lenny and Ayah from *Cracking India*, Feroza from *An American Brat*, and Zaitoon from *The Pakistani Bride* will be properly studied. As to the men, Ice-candy-man, Masseur and Lenny's Cousin from *Cracking India*, a customs inspector, Manek, and David from *An American Brat* and Sakhi from *The Pakistani Bride* will be primarily focused. Besides this, other minor characters and their activities related to fingers and toes will be brought into notice thereby exploring the meaning underneath.

This research assumes that the anatomical motifs like fingers and toes carry the message about the actual condition facing female in Pakistani society. Women's physical state, their social status, psyche, emotional state, state of vulnerability and the level of autonomy enjoyed in the society are all reflected in and by their fingers and toes. The novels carry the context of partition of India and its repercussions in the social life even later. Three protagonists from three novels, namely Ayah, Feroza and

Zaitoon have been the miserable victims by the excessive play of fingers and toes of the males.

In *Cracking India*, Ayah is seen to be victimized by her admirers cum tormentors. She is abducted, made a dancer and later forcefully married. Lenny, a child narrator of 8 years, is capturing all the happenings minutely in that novel. Her observation and interpretation of fingers and toes of the males and their different activities holds significance. In *An American Brat*, a teenager named Feroza embarks on a journey to America where she faces many obnoxious men and feels terrified. No doubt, later when she is about to live her life on her own way, her family members bring her back to Pakistan thereby limiting her choices. Descriptions running about how different males' fingers and toes have played authoritative role there is worth-noticing. And, another novel *The Pakistani Bride* carries the story of Zaitoon who forcefully gets married to a tribal man named Sakhi, but cannot endure maltreatment for long and runs away. The limb movements and their other non-verbal activities are presented vividly in the merciless beatings by the husband, in her being raped by the tribal men, and also in many other cases.

By seeing the different states and actions performed by those fingers and toes, it is clear that they are carrying certain meaning. Therefore, they have become signs, to use the semiotic terms and in fact "It's only through sign systems that we have access to "reality"" (Gee 83). The research aims to enter into the realm of reality by means of those motifs, the signs. The motifs, here in the texts, sometimes come in the form of symbol, sometimes as synecdoche, sometimes as metaphor, sometimes as simile and most of the time even as personification. They are seen playing animate role with different meanings attached to them in a particular context to bring out the reality in an abstract form. As rightly pointed out by David McNeill, "Metaphoric

gestures exhibit images of abstract concepts...on the basis of cultural and linguistic knowledge” (356).

My focus, here, will therefore be to analyze the physical state, activities, and the performance of these insignificant looking small bodily organs but bearing a great significance and meaning. They do things non-verbally and therefore are very important in carrying the characters’ mood, emotion, intention and attitude. In a way, we get a full depiction of the reality of the whole Pakistani society by means of these organs. To use semiotic terms, they ‘produce meanings’ there in the society. In fact, any specific meaning can be driven only in a particular society bearing distinct culture as “most of the meaning that signs bear in cultural settings are connotative... [that] allows members of the culture to interact purposefully and to represent and think about the world in specific ways (Danesi, *Messages* 14). Here, in this research project, to relate the anatomical motifs to the social, cultural aspect of Pakistan and get the deeper meaning related to the condition of female will definitely be an interesting issue.

In the three novels, Bapsi Sidhwa has presented these motifs repeatedly. They recur time and again and sometimes even act as if they were the real living creatures performing the things out of their own volition without the real consciousness of the owner. In fact, “Most nonverbal messages are involuntarily” (Zhou and Zhang 91). Characters appear performing more unconscious non-verbal communication. There, Sidhwa has used many adjectives and related vocabularies to describe those motifs, to narrate the activities performed by them, to describe the gestures, to characterize them, to personify them and to get her message across. Lenny, an 8-year-old narrator from *Cracking India* says, “Very carefully, very quietly, I maneuver my eyes and nose...I intuit the meaning and purpose of things” (28). By looking at the consistent

use of the things in appropriate conditions, it is easier to interpret the meanings of non-verbal communication as rightly done by Lenny.

McNeill opines that, “We become linguistically conscious by mentally simulating social experience” (qtd. in Danesi 103). While going through these novels, this matter becomes even clearer. In fact, Protagonists from the three novels like Lenny, Zaitoon and Feroza over there are being linguistically conscious deriving certain meanings attached to fingers and toes of male and female performing different activities in the society. The writer has tried to present the physical condition as well as inner psyche of her characters by means of these motifs. It looks as if everything is reflected in them. They represent different states of mind, emotion, physicality, and social status. They tell different tales of vulnerability, rights and freedom that male and female are enjoying differently in the society. In fact, by analyzing the shape, size, physical state, level of autonomy enjoyed and different activities performed by these fingers and toes of male and female, it will surely be easier to know the overall Pakistani society, and the real condition of women as being pathetic and miserable one for they are inhumanly suppressed, oppressed and dominated by male there.

Without noticing the semiotic role played by these bodily organs, a proper analysis of the novels would be incomplete. This is the aspect that often remained neglected by the other researchers. But, this research strives to unearth the reality behind these motifs. It will try to trace symbolic, indexical, iconic value and all other metaphorical implication of the motifs which have greater contribution in displaying the characters’ feelings running in their heart and thought in their mind. It will take help of the necessary ideas from the semioticians like Ferdinand de Saussure, C.S. Peirce, Umberto Eco, Marcel Danesi and that of feminist theorists for the relevant feminist vocabularies. Hence, semiotic theory, non-verbal communication coupled

with feminism will help this project here.

The first chapter of this thesis is the introductory part introducing the texts. The second chapter will be briefly talking about Semiotics, non-verbal communication and motifs with the references of anatomical motifs, fingers and toes used in the texts. The third chapter will be talking about overall condition of females and their being maltreated by the males in the Pakistani society. The fourth chapter will present different semiotic roles of fingers and toes. And the last chapter will sum up the whole thesis thereby proving the anatomical motifs to have semiotic value.

II. Semiotics, Non- verbal Communication and Motifs

Semiotics is taken to be the “theory or science and analysis of signs and sign systems” (Wales 354). It is particularly concerned with the process and method of deriving certain meanings or producing them out of certain signs, objects, behaviors, activities or gestures. It is mainly concerned with the non-linguistic signs of communication. Semiotic critic, Jamani in this regards writes:

Semiotics is the study of meanings making through signs and is premised on the notion that signs have a triadic quality... Various philosophers and semioticians (Saussure, Pierce and Eco) refer to the sign, its signified and its signification /meaning by different terms and have represented this relationship as a triad. (193)

Basically credit of introducing Semiotics goes to French linguist Ferdinand De Saussure who used it as ‘semiology’ and Charles Pierce who is taken to be the founder of semiotics in American Tradition. And now it has become a well-established academic discipline. Danesi says, “Semiotics is not just a technique that fictional detectives use to solve mysteries; it is an academic discipline in its own right that studies the most critical of all features of human sapience – the capacity to create and use signs (words, symbols, etc.)” (qtd. in Jovicic 149).

The scope of semiotics has become very vast. Various aspects of non-verbal communication fall under the domain of semiotics. And such factors are also pretty much culture-specific having particular meaning within that domain. It is because of this, Katie Wales writes semiotics to be “The theory or science and analysis of signs and their meanings, specifically those involved with communication between human beings in different societies and cultures” (358).

Non-verbal communication like gestures, facial expression, dress, clothing, fashion, culture and tradition get explored by means of semiotics. Semioticians endeavor to delve into them and get meaning out of that. Getting meaning from any things that represent something else is semiotics. In semiotics, the Semioticians study the “what, how and why of signs”, according to Danesi (qtd. in Sneed). Semiotics tries to trace message carried out by any signs within its socio-cultural rubrics. “The theory purports to explore the generation of signification, any signification... meaning in all its guises and to its full extent. Semiotics thus covers all disciplines and signifying systems as well as social practices and signifying procedures” (Martin and Ringam 2).

No doubt, semiotics studies signs but everything cannot be sign. For anything to be sign it should have “both a discernible (repeatable and predictable) form and if it is constructed in a definable (patterned) way,” says Danesi (*Messages* 14). It studies anything which stands for something else. These can be anything like images, sounds, gestures, relations or any objects around us. Non verbal is “what truly gives the spoken words their total meaning” (Poyatos 129).

Semiotics no doubt first originated in the field of literary criticism but now does not remain limited in that field alone. In fact, it has been used in culture anthropology, media, advertising, myths, architecture, advertisement, film, artifacts, cuisine, rituals and so on. All these “divergent disciplines are often subsumed under the umbrella term Semiotics” (Klarer 28).

Similarly, Motif is an image, symbol, idea, sound or word that gets repeated time and again in a text and helps in forwarding the main themes. According to Wales, Motif is “recurrent theme or idea in the text or group of texts” (261). By means of motifs, the writer tries to pass the message to the readers and it becomes

easier to decipher that. These motifs can appear in any form, such as recurring structures, contrasting imagery and other literary devices.

Basically the focus of this thesis is to look at the motifs semiotically and explore the meanings layered in them. Anatomical motifs like fingers and toes and a few others related to these bodily parts will be brought into notice thereby making them meaningful to support the main themes of the texts. Sidhwa has used these motifs profusely so as to make them prominent thereby giving meanings. No doubt there are other many anatomical motifs like eyes, heads which too are contributing a lot in making the non-verbal communication quite effective. However, here the prime focus will rather be directed towards limbs. Messages transmitted by the different activities and states of Fingers and toes will be explored.

Fingers and toes are quite expressive having communicative value. They are the transmitter of message communicating various things. By means of gesturing, so many things untold are expressed and message is carried out effectively. These bodily parts bear many meanings with the different activities performed. As Harper Collins writes:

Among all species, our human hands are unique — not only what they can accomplish, but also in how they communicate... they can grasp, scratch, poke, punch, feel, sense, evaluate, hold and mold the world around us. Our hands are extremely expressive; they can be sign for, or deaf, help tell a story, or reveal our innermost thoughts. (qtd. in Navarro 1)

Hand gestures are helpful to draw the attention of the listener and make the conversation meaningful. Message can be clearly passed by them. With a careful watching of the hands and fingers movement, feelings and emotion of the speaker can

be noticed. In fact these bodily organs can tell what is running deep in the speaker's mind. Happiness, confusion, hopelessness, and any other emotional state is easily expressed by means of fingers.

Non-verbal aspects are to go with speech to make the conversation work. Many a time, to make the meaning clear, things are to be performed or conveyed by means of gestures. Realizing this very fact Lenny, the 8-year-old narrator from *Cracking India* says, "As long as you tell me and don't start demonstrating...I say warning him with my voice and also a wagging finger" (278). It clearly shows the role of non-verbal communication in making conversation effective. Our hands reveal the matter of heart and mind. Our lack of confidence or our being stressed, our anxiety, nervousness or sense of insecurity everything is reflected in our hand. Hands and fingers movements and their activities can mean a lot. They, in fact, are the vibrant means of the transmitters of our attitude, thoughts and emotions.

The writer has used these body parts frequently. Primarily her focus is on limbs that include: fingers, toes, legs, feet, hands and shoulders. Besides these body parts, she has also used lungs, heart, head and eyes repeatedly. Basically heads and eyes have contribution in non-verbal communication. Eyes have been used repeatedly in a meaningful manner in the text. But this research will primarily look at the limbs motifs rather than the other ones. Here is a list of words and phrases regarding fingers and toes with their various activities performed in the texts:

From *Cracking India*:

Wagging a leathery finger (12)

Crooking a beckoning finger (12)

Limping (19)

Deftly kneading, pummeling, soothing (28)

The big toe's romantic impulse (29)

Clever fingers (29)

Twitching toe (38)

Accusing finger (45)

The gaunt, bitter finger (54)

Like a truncated and cheeky finger (61)

Stern finger (76)

Her stubby finger (78)

His mordant toe (90)

The holyman's entranced toes (108)

The holyman's pious finger (108)

Calloused hand (120)

Chilblained fingers (120)

Diabetics' toes are cut off (123)

Vigorous toe (132)

Supple fingers (132)

Smoothing fingers (134)

Refreshed toes (134)

Wiggle their toes (136)

His agitated fingers (139)

He snaps his fingers (156)

Cautioning finger (163)

Folding her fingers (166)

Move your finger (176)

Don't chop off your fat little fingers (176)

Tapering fingers (185)

Adi tugs my toe so it hurts (197)

Her knobby finger (207)

Bare feet squelching on the path the rain (208)

Trembling fingers (208)

Ali's wizened finger (221)

Colonel Bharucha operated on my leg. (222)

Bunches her fingers round them (231)

His spanked fingers quivering guiltily on his thighs. (244)

I will break your fingers, knuckle by knuckle. (244)

Intrusive toe (253)

His long fingers gouge the earth between his sandals. (261)

"Grandmother's fingers are slightly trembling" (267).

Wagging finger (278)

She wiggles her dusty toes (281)

Form *The Pakistani Bride*:

Sandaled feet of her husband (9)

Herding, dragging the young women away (29)

His fingers were groping (29)

Cradling the girl in his arms (30)

The man was fingering a careful arrangement (45)

Her arms rippled and swayed, controlling the fanning, tapering fingers. (77)

Clothes lie scattered at her small, bejeweled feet. (77)

Touching her dainty fingers (79)

The cunning of their fingers in fashioning embroidery (89)

Fashioning rings round her toes and staining her fingertips with the orange-red paste

(91)

Her supple finger (95)

Snapping his fingers (112)

Carol clinched her fists and blushed (128)

He raised two stiff fingers to illustrate the closeness of their relationship. (135)

Delicate work with her fingers (139)

Kissing his fingers (141)

Stain her finger (145)

His clawed fingers quivered (152)

Talon-like fingers (155)

Digging her fingers (157)

Wrenched at her slender, clinging fingers (158)

Unlaced his fingers and let go (158)

The feel of her soft, vulnerable neck persisted in his fingers. (158)

Protective fingers (161) female

He ran his toe down her calf. (162)

His fingers were rough (162)

His fingers groping (163)

His grubby fingers bit vengefully into her flesh when he told her. (168)

Crumbling the soil with long, knobby fingers, Yunus khan idly patted it level (170)

Bloody fingers (211)

Yellowish fingers curling (213)

Grimy nails that quivered like talons (214)

Her deft fingers (215)

His rough forefingers (220)

Her childish, inquisitive fingers (232)

Groping fingers (234)

Thin black fingers (238)

Clenching his right fist (242)

The girl's thin fingers (245)

From *An American Brat*:

Examined his fingernails curiously (9)

Finger pointed at the door (13)

Tips of his bare toes (13)

His left big toe (28)

Wan approval at the toe (33)

Their slender fingers with painted tips fluttering above her head (48)

Grandmother's small hand and pliant fingers (50)

His spatulate fingers (64)

Stubby, desecrating fingers (64)

The bony toes (70)

Discernible tremor beneath her fingers (92)

She banged on it with her fists (92)

His tapered fingers fluttered nervously and scratched his thighs. (115)

Loosely cupping his slender fingers (116)

Snapped his fingers to catch their waiter's attention (143)

Manek's fingers hovered accusingly (143)

Feroza licking off her fingers (145)

Stop eating with your fingers (145)

Don't become 'ethnic' and eat with your fingers in dorm (148)

She said pensively looking into her Coke and stirring the ice with her finger. (187)

Manicured finger (197)

Manek wedged his toe in the threshold (202)

Wistfully sticking their fingers in the mouths (211)

The gender bias is appalling (237)

She could not put finger on them (239)

Your father and I offered you our finger and you grabbed our whole arm! (240)

Transparent fingers (244)

Feroza raised her hand hesitantly, giving the impression of a timid animal trusting its paw to a stranger. (246)

They ate with their fingers, licking them, smacking their lips in satisfaction. (261)

Her inert finger (265)

With wildly wandering finger (265)

Bunny brushed her flushed cheeks with her fingers. (269)

Pointed a taut finger (275)

Small ball of tissue crumpled in her fist or fluttering in her fingers (286)

Zareen scanned them, her fingers suddenly trembling (288)

Pointing long, rebuking finger (289)

Ominous finger (289)

Snatched her hand (292)

Could chop off your finger (295)

Zareen gave him a fierce look. She pointed a trembling finger at him. "You get out!"

(304)

Her finger touched the tightly folded wad. (304)

His little finger (315)

Basically fingers and toes are active while carrying the meaning from gesture in the texts. They are providing meaning to the communication. Their movement supports speech and at making the things clear. There are so many cases where only verbal communication may not be sufficient to carry the meaning successfully. Feroza in *An American Brat* “unconsciously studied the other’s [Jo] facial expressions and body gestures to determine the more exact meaning of what was said” (148). “She could communicate even without speech, who understood the sensitive nuances of her emotions” (225). In a similar fashion Lenny from *Cracking India* says, “I learn also to detect the subtle exchange of signals and some of the complex rites by which Ayah’s admirers co-exist” (29). At that time, role of non verbal communication becomes prominent. Gestural signs by means of fingers hold greater importance. Non-verbal communication becomes important “when the speaker has difficulty conveying an idea linguistically (Krauss, Chen, and Chawala 20).

They are so meaningful which make the communication quite effective and explicit. So many things that verbal words cannot express, gestures can. “My cousin shows me things,” (29) says Lenny, not only by saying but doing. Then she perceives the matter in her own way. She says then “I learn fast” (29) by being watchful to the every phenomenon occurring nearby. In fact, “the scientists who study these things ...make the observation that human communication is visual communication first and foremost” with their “estimate that our communications are around 90 per cent visual. The speech accounts for the 8-10 percent” (Hewett 5). It is because of it, people are seen more involved in it than in verbal communication.

In these novels also, these organs are playing very important roles in carrying the communication quite effectively. They give meaning when verbal communication goes failure. They are so meaningful in a particular context. So their role can no longer be undermined and underestimated. They are so important in the novels of Bapsi Sidhwa that they act like an active animate being. “His [Masseur’s] fingers work deftly, kneading, pummeling, soothing. They are knowing fingers, very clever” (28).

Bapsi Sidhwa has adorned fingers and toes with different adjectives like ‘clever’, ‘stern’, ‘stubby’, ‘vigorous’, ‘ingenious’, ‘inert’, ‘trembling’ etc. Her attempt seems to get various meanings expressed by means of these fingers and toes. They are playing different roles and have been shown differently bearing different characteristics. Male’s fingers and female’s fingers have been given different treatment with different range of vocabularies indicating different roles there they are to play. The choice of words for characterizing the fingers and toes belonging to different gender is different.

Males’ fingers in *Cracking India* are ruling the roost. They are extra active, appear all in all. Either it be Ice-candy-man or Masseur or Immam Din all are birds of same feathers since they are bent on exercising their fingers and toes. Lenny keeps minutely observing the activity and gestures of these bodily organs. “I keep an eye on Ice-candy-man’s toes” (29). She gets a chance to know about power structures, role relations of different gender and sexual awareness by looking at the flick of fingers and toes. “They [fingers] massage Ayah under her sari” (28). She says her cousin not having enough power to evoke feeling as the Ice-candy-man could do to Ayah by judging the power of fingers. “Cousin certainly does not arouse in me the rapture Masseur aroused in Ayah... I recall the bewildering longings the look on Masseur’s

face stirred in me when he looked at Ayah... And other stirrings..." (230). She even reads the face and tries to get meaning out of particular expression.

She compares and contrasts the caliber of the toes of different admirers of Ayah. She tries to assess the ingenuity, alacrity and vivacity of their toes and showers certain respect on the basis of that. It can be surmised easily that her preference is not inclined towards any docile and inactive fingers and toes. Rather her desire is to see the vibrant activity of the toes and the magical performance they do in their surroundings. She says:

Imam Din must have attempted with some part of his anatomy the seduction Ice-candy man conducts with his toes—with less audacity perhaps, and perhaps with less ingenuity—but, at last, Ayah is appeased—and properly apologized to—and we cycle down our drive with the first faint smudge of dawn diluting the night. (59)

This way, these fingers and toes of male become a medium to make Lenny aware about sexuality. She is familiar to the fact how females want to avoid the excessive play of the male's toe. She is seeing how Ayah is trying to avoid the activity of toes, "the things" which "love to crawl beneath Ayah's sari" (28) and, on the contrary, how her admirers are constantly giving trouble to her. She sees, "Ice-candy man's toes are invisibly busy... Ayah's hand is engaged in an equally heroic struggle" (36). There is not only one person to do that. Rather there is a gang of whole admirers waiting their chance to dart their roving toes towards Ayah's body. No doubt, Ayah's attempting to avert the lascivious conduct but all of them remain pretty much undeterred. It's the society that gives so much confidence, power and authority for a male to conduct that sort of activities but cautions a female not to let her touch by anyone as to be touched means to be laid. The difference that is seen gives a lot of meaning regarding their

rights and range of freedom.

Despite Ayah's persistent dislike of the act, Ice-candy man "ingenuous toe darts beneath Ayah's sari. Ayah gives a start. Angrily smacking his leg and smoothing her sari, she stands up. Duffa ho! Go! She says, "Or I'll get Bajee to V-bomb you into ash!" (38). Such a scolding remains ineffective as he always remains shameless. "You have no sense and no shame!" (38) she says. It is the matter layered in the total social framework. He is just a representative character representing whole lot of men of that particular society. He does not mend his behavior and does the things that Ayah detests time and again. It proves what MacKinnon says, "The sexuality of male supremacy, which fuses the eroticization of dominance and submission with the social construction of male and female. Gender is sexual" (148).

Males are trying to arouse Ayah sexually by means of the toes. These bodily organs are the initiator for that. Lenny observes, "once in a while I preempt the big toe's romantic impulse" (29) of Masseur. These organs are striving to perform masculinity and implicitly to dominate her. The activities performed by these organs are very suggestive. By being fed up and not seeing any chance of Ice-candy-man improve his conduct she Ayah, "You'll never change!" (39).

Not only Ayah but also Lenny is tormented. Her cousin harasses Lenny by doing such things time again. He pokes her at every time he gets chance. Lenny reveals the matter, "Let me. Let me... says Cousin and pokes his hand out every-which-way every chance he gets. I find it fatiguing to maintain my distance from him" (231).

It looks females are striving to maintain distance and jettison proximity of a sort intending to avoid any torment. On the contrary, males tend to come near and near with their active fingers and toes. It seems all other organs have little role to play

and have been talked little about but fingers and toes more. If there is importance of anything then it is undoubtedly of toes and fingers in expressing their sexuality. The whole society's libidinal reality is reflected there. The movement of fingers to toes and their activeness and passiveness is different to different gender. One reason behind the writer's bringing these anatomical reference repeatedly may be to attach the different roles that they play in the Pakistani society. It's society and culture which has given differing freedom to male and female which has role to play in the language they speak as well as the performance of different non-verbal activities. "Language is cut out to match each situation with appropriate categories, and that the number of categories is constrained by cultural and historical factors" (Danesi, "Interconnectedness" 98). It bespeaks the overall condition of the different gender: level of autonomy, freedom, rights enjoyed by male and female differently.

In the society where males enjoy optimum freedom there from the childhood a girl gets different schooling from society. "Already practiced in the conduct they have absorbed from the village women, the girls try not to smile or giggle," says Lenny, "They must have heard their mother and aunts (as I have), say: "*Hasi to phasi!* Laugh (and), get laid!... smiling before men can lead to disgrace" (63). This way, the society restrict female from smiling before men particularly at stranger one. Therefore, 'Smiling' carries certain meaning in the society that is showing favour, being near to men, and giving permission to male to touch their bodies. Such are the things that they are to avoid in order to save themselves from disgrace. Such things are taught to females from their childhood. And they are supposed to follow that 'code of conduct'. But nowhere a son is seen to have been cautioned regarding their conduct. They, instead, are encouraged and are always expected to perform everything in a masculine way. It is the society which permits the activeness of fingers for males but does not

allow such from women. Such a disparity that we find to have been in the society. It is the main reason behind males' excessiveness in terms of using fingers and females' passivity. "It is all an act, merely conformity to social pressures about how males and females are supposed to behave" (Roach 31).

Different female characters in the novel have, in this way or other, been the victim of the male folks. Lenny being fed up with her cousin's lascivious activity says "I run away" (45) from his nearness. And the writer has chosen the medium of these anatomical motifs to show how power structures, social frames and social dynamics are set different for male and female. Sidhwa's attempt rather seems to be concentrated on valorizing non-verbal aspect of communication that she gets the fingers and toes to carry out effectively. In fact "semiotics too evolves within the context of its relation to communication" (Porcar 21). It will be meaningful to connect the actual message the writer wants to communicate and this bodily organs reinforcing that non-verbally with their state, gestures and acts. Characters' mind is reflected in them and what their heart wants too is well communicated by means of these anatomical motifs.

The child narrator, Lenny in the novel *Cracking India* mesmerizes us with her constant watch towards the activity of the toes and fingers. She, instead of looking at the speakers' face standing nearby and observing other gestures by other organs is rather seen to be interested towards only these body parts' activities and tries to interpret that in the particular context. With her "popping eyes (39), she is trying to unearth the reality going beneath the surface. She enters the connotative realm of the happenings. Roland Barthes opines "In actual discourse, it is the connotative dimension of structures that guides the "navigation" of meaning through the discourse

situation” (qtd. in Danesi, “The Interconnectedness” 98). In *cracking India*, Lenny is adopting the same process for knowing the things and making sense out of them.

Her eyes get fixed at the fingers and toes and by describing the different activities performed by them; she in a way makes the readers conscious towards establishing the meanings. Along with her, readers start creating meaning in their mind. Among these novels, it is in *Cracking India* that the writer has deliberately used these motifs comparatively more than she has used in others. And it is Ayah, a central character from *Cracking India* who has been made to suffer more owing to the excessive play of males’ fingers and toes in comparison to others. It appears that Ayah’s admirers are coming near to Ayah just to touch her by their toes and fingers. Men like “Ice-candy-man’s toe twitches.” (131) there and “he [Masseur] traces with a skillful finger Ayah’s parted lips” (128).

Most of the male characters too are seen with her are habituated to get their organs busy at performing their act. These characters let their fingers and toes enjoy physical proximity unhindered. And it looks like a compulsion more than joy of Ayah to endure their highhandedness. She appears helpless before the excessiveness of the toes of males. Sometimes she expresses her anger too. “You have no sense and shame” (38). She has to understand the libidinal mode of language that these organs are conveying. And for enduring this all, she gets different gifts. Along with her, Lenny a mere child of 8 too is trying to trace the meaning out of all the affairs taking place around her. Edward Sapir opines, “every cultural pattern and every single act of social behaviour involves communication in either an explicit or implicit sense” (qtd. in Huhtam 1). By understanding the total scenario of her, Lenny says, “Only I may touch them [breasts], Nor cousin. Nor Imam Din. Not Adi. Not anybody. One. I can’t trust any-one” (231). Lenny is also the receiver of message which is forming

information and that in turn knowledge. She is extra vigilant. She says, “I have many teachers” (29). By constantly repeating these bodily organs, Sidhwa is emphasizing on them, giving extra meaning to these organs. As they are the sexual awakener to Lenny, these are the medium of sexual arousal to Ayah. And for the men they are the medium of tormenting females, molesting them and showing their roving authority. Lenny narrates, “Ice-candy-man’s toe twitches, but its impulse easily checked. I merely glance its way sternly and the twitch ceases” (131).

Similarly Lenny is tormented in her own world by the cousin. “I run away” she says, because “It’s only when you put your hands here and there and everywhere.” (245). It looks that the males by any means want to possess females’ body and control their behavior and activities. The distance that the male wants to keep with female is very short. They stay very near to female and start exercising their fingers and toes.

Whenever there occurs any meeting between Ayah and her admirers, Lenny eyes are instantly switched towards the toes of them. She remains busy studying them. As exactly what Hewett says, “Most human communications are enjoyable ‘chit-chat’, but in all communications we visually ‘read’ each other minutely” (5) Lenny looks obsessed to see their play and is familiar with their role. As she is very inquisitive indeed. She does not let any movement of “supple fingers” (35) and toes go unnoticed; she derives pleasure by seeing their hide and seek game. “Passion that tingles” she says “from my scalp into the very tips of my fingers.” (231). She is experiencing everything through and by fingers whether in her life or that of others. She is surprised how Ayah is being able to galvanize the admirer around her body and how they keep on coming and offering different gifts. “Once in a while I preempt the big toe’s romantic impulse and catching it mid-crawl or mid-strike, twist it. It is a measure to keep the candy bribes coming” (29). Such candy bribes and other gift-

giving also contains semiotic value. According to Vaughan “They may be symbolic, marking places in hierarchies as they circulate from hand to hand. They may be given only to view as status symbols or sexual signifiers which create relations of distancing and desire resulting again in power over the ‘receiver’” (3).

By giving different sorts of gift, her followers are controlling Ayah by their free play of fingers and toes in a way they like. Her admirers are quenching their libidinal thirst by means of their anatomy. The ultimate purpose behind their coming that, Lenny knows, is for seduction. Lenny senses “Imam Din must have attempted with some part of his anatomy the seduction Ice-candy man conducts with his toes” (59). This way, Lenny analyzes the different signs sent from the gestures and activities of the fingers and toes of males going through abduction and hypothesis process as said by Semiotician, Eco in relation to the method of interpreting the sign. When things of similar nature get repeated, she checks, crosschecks and only makes her own view. She even brings established social reference which makes her familiar with social codes which means “the codes that can be used to interpret social communication and interactions” (Jamani 194). She is very inquisitive and gets these codes to draw meaning out of certain things sometimes even asking her family members, relatives and any other persons who possess better knowledge about the sign systems. It is the reason why she says she has many teachers teaching her to know and interpret so many things. It looks she is getting more information from Ayah and her admirers who keep on coming and tend to repeat same things time and again.

It depends on country and culture how we interpret the different signs. Activities performed by the bodily states are also the signs that can show the different levels of people living there. “In the human species bodily states are interpreted in

culture-specific ways” (Danesi, *Messages* 22). After looking at the anatomical performance it is all but clear that males’ fingers have been shown to be quite active. As opposed to this, female’s fingers have been shown to be fragile and weak. Fingers and toes bearing such characteristics are connotative of the actual condition of male and female in the Pakistani society. Lenny confesses her reality, “I have a wayward heart. Weak. Susceptible and fickle” (232). Such a state of vulnerability, their rights, freedom and level of autonomy are all connotatively expressed by means of fingers and toes here. As Danesi, regarding the role of connotation in non-verbal communication, says:

What it attempts to make clear is that systems of representation are not based on literal-denotative, but rather on the subjective paths that connotative circuits entail. Unlike a machine, a human being can construct models of meaning in the very process of making them. Most of these are socially motivated. (“The Interconnectedness” 103)

Males are enjoying higher level of autonomy in society whereas female are restricted from doing so. Male no matter how small he may be at his age rather appears to be exercising his fingers and toes quite authoritatively. Lenny’s “gallant” (229) Cousin pokes her with his fingers time and again that she says, is “fatiguing to maintain my distance from him” (231). Males look quite free and careless in using their bodily organs. Their domain is larger. Such activities are indicative of their having larger say in any state of affairs. All these aspects seen visibly have something to do with social affair. Connotatively it tells the different tales of power circulated in the society. Matter like who is powerful and who is not has been metaphorically expressed by means of these activities.

In the another novel, *An American Brat*, Feroza, the teen age central character, no doubt, is seen to be living most of the time in the novel in America as the novel has covered most of the incidents that happened while she was in America. She was sent there with an intention that after having gone there she would have a liberal and broader mind to view the world. There, she could be away from narrow minded males who would not let her do the things openly in Pakistan. Her mother expresses situation of Pakistan, “Could you imagine Feroza cycling to school now? She’d be a freak! Those *goondas* would make vulgar noises and bump into her, and the *mullahs* would tell her to cover her head” (11).

But even in America, females’ fate looks similar. By this means or that, males are exercising their superiority over her and made her realize that she no longer is confident and fear-free. There, in her world too many males come and perform their acts differently, every time showing their authority. Her difficulties start right from the moment she lands at the airport. She feels to have been humiliated by a customs officer who unnecessarily haggles and puts her in difficulty. The customs officer starts harassing her:

Like a shark attacking in calm waters the customs inspector with the discomfiting accent plunged his hands in the suitcase after the other and rummaged callously among the contents. Odd bits of clothing spilled over the sides: a slippery stack of nylon underwear, a cardigan.
(62)

The customs officer keeps on probing everything suspiciously. His hands actively harass Feroza. “The man fished out and examined small vests, a brassiere” (62). Such an act by the person really makes Feroza sad. “Feroza, who had only heard of seeing “red,” felt a crimson rush of blood blur her vision. Her tears, scorched by her rage,

dried up. In a swift feline gesture, she snatched her mother's nightgown from the Hispanic's stubby, desecrating fingers" (64) and then she can't control her anger and says, "To hell with you and your damn country. I'll go back!" (64)

Stubby fingers of the inspector have authority and are being used wrongly to hurt Feroza's ego. Her gesture is swift feline but he performs masculinity resolutely. His activities are like of that of Shark whereas hers are that of a cat. He hurts her sentiments. Here the novelist has tried to emphasize the authoritative role played by male's fingers, really in an excessive way.

Later Feroza encounters an obnoxious man when she happens to reach a wrong restroom in an unknown place. Description runs like this - "The bony toes, resting in shoddy rubber thongs, protruded from toilet cubicle. The hairy shins disappeared abruptly behind the partly open half-door, giving the legs an eerily disembodied quality" (70).

He chases her. The man moved to block her path, "Howja like it if I rub it against ya?"...His hand brushed her back, but it was as if he touched to frighten rather than stop her" (70). Here the man uses his hand and brushes her back. He is using very vulgar language expressing his desire to rub his penis against her. His intention is touching her to create fear in her heart. She gets frightened and runs away. His hands are active while Feroza's hands are frightened. Her legs are trembling. One tries to attack and another escapes. She feels "a quiver beneath her stalled feet; a barely discernible tremor beneath her fingers that, amplified by her tense, acuity, traveled up her arm and shot down her spine" (92). It's all due to fear. It is the plight of women whether in Pakistan or in America. Feroza seems to be quite minute observer of the fingers, toes, hands and legs activities of both the perpetrator and herself. The writer has brought anatomical references like hands and feet and their

physical state in order to make them represent the mental state of the characters, their level of confidence, anxiety, fear and frustration. It is easier to find the differences lying between male and female by looking at the description made.

No doubt, in Pakistan women were unsafe because of narrow-minded social mores but even in America, a country otherwise highly eulogized for the equality, security and freedom, Feroza does not feel like that. Man's hands are getting more authority and more high-handedness. The man is trying to block her and his hand brushed her back. He is no longer feeling it difficult to do that sort of act. He does it unhindered. Such autonomy on the part of men has become a matter of concern to the women like Feroza. "Terror implanted springs into her feet and made her body buoyant" (92) As a result, females are constantly suffering. Here, Feroza's case is just a tip of iceberg.

Feroza's male family member Manek teaches her eating manner. To have knowledge is to have power. As he had gone to America a few years before than her, he looks familiar with the western culture and tries to teach her the manner to follow in America in somewhat an authoritative way. Manek looked at her until she became aware of his gaze. "You've got to stop eating with your fingers," he said. "It makes them sick" (145). He is indirectly trying to show his authority by getting her to curtail the freedom of her fingers, their role first by showing the cultural matter and by masculinity. "Don't become 'ethnic' and eat with your fingers in the dorm. And don't butt in when someone's talking" (148). He shows his roving authority.

What is a part of culture in one country becomes offensive in another. What is a part of civilization in a culture may appear a sign of savagery or eccentricity in another. Every cultural aspect has semiotic value only in its own context and before the followers of that particular culture but not with others. It is the reason why

Mushtaq in the novel *The Pakistani Bride* “never ate with fingers” (236) in the presence of Carol. In fact Carol is from a different cultural locale, a western country and he feels odd to use his fingers while eating before her. He has a feeling that a thing done with one intention is not taken in the same way by the people from different cultural background. Meaning gets different as we get “a meaning based on what knowledge we have” (Martin and Ringham 118).

In Pakistan, eating with fingers is a tradition, a part of culture but that is not so in America. “They [Pakistani people] ate with their fingers, licking them, smacking their lips in satisfaction” (261) but in America, they basically use spoons. By analyzing the two references from the two novels by Sidhwa, it can be easily surmised how cultural differences matter a lot and meanings of a same thing done are viewed differently in the different cultures. A manner indicative of backwardness, non-civilization in a western county is full of meaning in the eastern countries like Pakistan. Swati Samantaray says about cultural differences, “We must always consider cultural differences while sending or receiving nonverbal messages. A message that has a particular meaning in one society can have a completely different meaning in another society” (288).

Feroza, after going to America is also trying to change herself by adopting the American lifestyle. Some acts are done just to show bearing symbolic value. One among them which would be thought to be bad in Pakistan and basically in Parsee community is to have cigarette by a female that Feroza does in America. Feroza “drew on the cigarette held between the [Jo’s] guitarist’s fingers. Feroza choked on the smoke, coughed to the intense amusement of the company, and thoroughly enjoyed her role as an ingénue” (164).

Here, after having gone to America, she has thought that holding cigarette

between her fingers and having it is a sign of being advanced and using liberty in a full-fledged manner. Mostly in the young generation there is a sort of perception that smoking carries the meaning of being sophisticated and different than others. That act has a metaphorical bearing. It is a symbolic act. “Metaphoric gestures exhibit images of abstract concepts” says McNeill, “In form and manner of execution, metaphoric gestures depict the vehicles of metaphors...The metaphors are independently motivated on the basis of cultural and linguistic knowledge” (356). In American culture, smoking by a female is digestible, a matter of liberty and taken easily but in Pakistan that would not be taken in that way. It is taken to be an act of perversion. Pakistani culture cannot easily accept any girl having cigarette. Therefore, now, she no longer is innocent if looked from Pakistani cultural perspective. In that culture, she has proved herself a bad girl, a total brat.

McNeill is of the opinion that, “Metaphoric gestures are like iconic gestures in that they exhibit a meaning relevant to the concurrent linguistic meaning” (356). So Feroza’s having cigarette and alcohol is a metaphoric gesture. As Feroza had gone to America, she wanted to look like the Americans and to become like that she has to deftly copy their culture and way of living. For that, the starting point could surely be having cigarette. So her act bears semiotic value. Smoking is an easier and in a way less expensive medium of expressing her ‘modern-ness’. It is the sign of her getting more freedom. She tries to have it. So it has a metaphorical intention that is an attempt to encompass the modernity. But she feels remorse somewhere when she sits alone later for having cigarette and performs *Kusti* ritual. It is an indication that her heart is yet unwilling to let her get detached from her own cultural ties. She is in transition. “Holding *Kusti* between her hands as proscribed, said the *Hermazd Khoda-ay* prayer. She whipped the air with its tasseled ends when she came to the part that said, “May

the Evil One be vanquished!” (165). She is carrying culture with her which helps her lessen the trouble that she had gotten by adopting an American culture.

Earlier she had held cigarette with the hand but now her hands are holding *Kusti*. She has a feeling that she did something evil. She cannot muster enough confidence to accept easily the thing done. Her realization is that she committed a mistake by having a thing which is part of another culture. She is upbrought in such a culture where she had been taught that having cigarette is no longer acceptable and would be considered a sin, something against her religion. “Feroza bowed her penitent’s head to beg divine forgiveness for desecrating the holy fire—the symbol of Ahura Mazda—by permitting it such intimate contact with her unclean mouth” (165).

Her religion worships fire. Fire, therefore, holds symbolic value. So she could not eschew that sort of feeling from her heart and as a result she felt contrite from within. She finds meaning there. In fact, “In order to be able to use symbols, human must possess a sense of community, due to the fact that symbols are tools for inter-subjective communication” (Thellefsen et al. 66). It shows that her so-called “phenomenal leap” (164) is not going to go higher. The things ingrained in her subconscious are not going to let her do against the grain that easily.

No doubt, “Feroza thought she had taken a phenomenal leap in perceiving the world from a wider, bolder, and happier angle” (164). But so called phenomenal leap remains short-lived, ephemeral one since metaphorically her feet are enchained by her family members too. She, no doubt, has gone to America but her real string attached is in Pakistan. So she can not enjoy that state of being for a longer period of time as her mother, later, goes to America to fetch her. Her parents have information that she had fallen in love with a white man named David Press. They have a fear that he will disinherit her from her culture. “He would deprive her daughter of her faith, her

heritage, her family, and her community” (289), Zareen feels. When the mother finds her daughter is going to derail herself, go astray and get spoilt, she reaches America to restrict her from going into a wrong direction. In order to protect her Parsis culture and religion she takes a bold decision. In fact, “the Parsis are a close-knit community who has endeavoured to preserve their ethnic culture and tradition despite strong influences from other cultures” (Iyengar 4).

Truth is that Feroza’s choice is neglected. It is limited. “Do you know how selfish you are, thinking only of yourself” (278). She is questioned. Her so-called freer life proves transitory one. In America, she was attempting to exercise her relatively free hands and fingers at different things but they are metaphorically chopped off later.

This remark carries the sense, “A set of expensive knives that could chop off your fingers if you weren’t careful” (294). At the end she has to do what her parents want her to do not what she wants. “Enough is enough! You have to listen to us. It’s time you settled down” (240). Her mother says. She has to live for them. Her view to look at the world gets narrowed down. As we can see in the novel, *The Pakistani Bride* Zaitoon is chased by her husband, here in this novel, however her mother, due the fear of her society goes to America to get her daughter back on the track whom they think is ruining herself. Zaitoon and Feroza both are ruined in the eyes of their respective family members. They have transgressed societal mores set by patriarchy. Their feet are metaphorically chained. It’s their predicament of being females. “Tears springing to her [Feroza’s] eyes” (292) and Zaitoon “cried silently, unseen tears spilling on her knees” (136) are the reflection of the plight of all women of Pakistan.

In the novel, they have been chased after with an aim of bringing them back to home, a place which disciplines the females and let males go unpunished even for

their nefarious activity. Those man can be barbaric to any extent. Seeing all this kind of injustice meted out against women Carol says to Farukh, her husband, “I think I’m finally beginning to realize something...Your civilization is too ancient... too different... and it has ways that can hurt me...really hurt me...I am going home [San Jose]” (228-29). Females get maltreatment and their minor mistake too cannot be tolerated. It means their attempt to go out in the social domain which is largely the terrain of males proves counter-productive. Characters like Zaitoon and Feroza who have slightly rebellious nature, patriarchy could not digest and they are being chased after to have them return home so that they can again be tamed. Even Carol is finding the Pakistani milieu quite suffocating. It bespeaks that Pakistan tightly holds the concept that female are home and male public.

Basically when we go through *Cracking India*, the narrator, Lenny at the beginning of the novel has been shown to be crippled owing to her suffering from polio. Her leg is plastered and Dr. Bharucha is treating her. “He kneels before me. Gently he lifts the plaster cast on my dangling right leg and suddenly looks into my eyes. His eyes are a complex hazel. They are direct as an animal’s. He can read my mind’ (14).She is experiencing the things. She is quite active to receive the information of the things happening nearby. She sees the different activities of the Ayah’s admirers. She looks at the relation between her father and mother and then acquire certain meaning and knowledge about the world. “Semiotic theory is based on the belief that meaning is not inherent in objects, that they do not signify by themselves, but that meaning is constructed by a competent observer-a subject-capable of giving ‘form’ to objects” (Martin and Ringham 181). There are so many non-verbal communications taking place with the help of eyes or fingers and toes and she is noticing them without fail and forming certain ideas and making sense out of

that. Danesi says, “Most of the raw, unorganized sensory information that comes from seeing, hearing, and the other senses is organized into meaningful wholes by signs” (*Messages* 17).

She is making the concept of different things storing the pieces of information gotten from her seeing and doing. She sees the things taking place in her surroundings and thinks over them and comes to the conclusion thereby forming certain level of knowledge. She says, “I have many teachers” (29). She is knowing many things by seeing the things happening nearby. She is very clever to grasp the ideas.

Because of her being polio infected, she looks worried about her future. She cannot go to school regularly. Her physical state can be linked to a heroine of story that her cousin reads. “In which the heroine limped. Her one leg was shorter. She didn’t even “have a pretty face” (229). And here Lenny, even to walk, she has to take the help of others. Ayah is there for her help. Her movement is restricted and cannot go far to view the wider world. Such is her plight. It clearly shows her limitation, confusion, and uncertainty. Polio can be taken as symbol which limits Lenny’s movement. She has not been able to be confident about anything that she does. As a result, she feels that she is “by nature uncompetitive” (18) unable to read with vigor, play with others there and then to think anything resolutely and do accordingly. She looks and feels always leading a pathetic state of being. That makes less confident than her cousin who is very confident and shows and does anything without any hesitation. He even shows his manhood time to time. “You can touch it.” He offers. His expression is disarming, gallant. I touch the fine scar and gingerly hold the genitals he transfers to my palm” (29).

From the example above too it can easily be seen about the differences that lie between male and female even in the children’s world. Cousin is without any shame

showing his sexual organ and is asking her to touch and feel. And she does all what he says. Society permits a male to do but not a female. "Many are now acting according to the dictates of a false gender definition which extrinsicates itself in self-interest, competition, hierarchy and making war" (Vaughan 2).

By bringing minor characters and presenting their world, Sidhwa might be trying to show that even in the children's world too domination over women is going on in its own pace, way and scale. Male children are authoritative and doing the things in that way. "Solemn and authoritative" (229) Cousin makes her touch his penis which she finds it similar to a finger. He shows his private part without any qualm. He remains unashamed. Lenny realizes that "he too has clever fingers" (29). All these activities carry the meaning of male having upper hand and female the lower one. What is happening in the world of Ayah is going to be repeated again in the world of Lenny too. Cousin "carefully places his hands on my breasts." says Lenny and expresses her anger "If you ever do that again, I'll break your fingers, knuckle by knuckle" (244). Males are different but minds are same, attitude same. Meaning of it is that males are free to do anything that they want whether that be right or wrong but females are always barred even from doing the things that they consider right to do. Society turns blind eyes to the bad activities of male while females are constantly watched. Biased society stands as a barrier. So Zareen in *An American Brat* says:

Fifteen years after partition! Can she wear frock? No. Women mustn't show their legs, women shouldn't dress like this, and women shouldn't act like that. Girls mustn't play hockey or sing or dance! If everything corrupts their pious little minds so easily, then the *mullahs* should wear *burqas* and stay within the four walls of their houses. (10)

Society has different attitude towards male and female. It has different set of criterion to check various aspects and activities of males and females. In the Pakistani society as stated in *An American Brat* “Gender bias is appalling” (237).

Right from childhood, boy children are given freedom to do whereas females are always restricted and cannot do the things on their own. She does not have guts to do so. Society is always there ever standing to caution her, to chastise her, and to discipline her. So from the very start, females tend to feel shy and just become reactive but by no means proactive in terms of doing anything. We can take an example of a girl child from *An American Brat* to show how she has been chastised when she shows a soft corner towards Feroza when all were against her and taken Feroza as metaphorically “dead” since in their eyes she had done something wrong that a girl in Pakistan is not generally supposed to do. “Don’t you dare talk like that! One more peep out of you, and I’ll slap your face!” (269).

Such is the condition of female in Pakistani society, girls are not encouraged to put forward what they feel. They are reprimanded and slapped. They are silenced. Female children from the very start of their life are brought up in such an environment. They are restricted from speaking freely what they think right. Their socialization process is restricted. Later being grown up and getting married they are to do like what Lenny’s mother does, “Mother removes his [father’s] sandals, his socks if he is wearing socks, blows tenderly between his toes and with cooing noises caresses his feet” (75). It shows the role of female that she has to play in the family. Who is powerful and who is not is clearly seen from this example. Female children are taught from their childhood to behave in that way. As to male children like the cousin of Lenny mentioned above, the case is different. They can speak, show what they want and no any parents, no society is there to question over them and their

frivolous activity. Their acts always go unchecked and unhindered. That is taken easily and accepted accordingly. However, the female children like Bunny from *An American Brat* has to succumb to her parents' threat. She has to bow her head down. So she has to brush her "flushed cheeks with her fingers and without raising her bowed head" and has to meekly say, "I am sorry." (269). "Brushing flushed cheeks with fingers", "bowing head" and meekness" are part of her culture and sign of submission that she has been taught to be as a female quite contrarily to males who are to be just opposite, unashamed, with always their head held high like the Lenny's "authoritative" and "gallant" (229) cousin always trying "hard to be manful" (245). Zaitoon's "childish, inquisitive fingers" (232), "Slender, clinging fingers" (158) "Carol clinched her fists and blushed" (128). These are the feminine characteristics.

Females are having biased treatment from their birth and are having bitter experience. As a result psychologically too they are not ready to face any challenge boldly. They have been rendered the mere receiver. Within such scenario, they have compelled to harbour an attitude which just makes them escape the circumstances instead of facing and leaving certain mark over there. They are compelled to make compromise in every situation like Lenny making so with her Cousin, she says, "we arrive at a compromise, a finely delineated covenant: I will keep an open mind and let bygones be bygones and Cousin will stop wooing me and wait a couple of years before touching my breasts again" (245).

It clearly displays the difference lying in terms of freedom and autonomy that the male and female are enjoying in the Pakistani society. They have different outlook to view the happening. As they are brought up in such a society, they are instilling various types of stereotypes related to the roles of female and male in their mind. That

is imprinted in their minds. It is because of that males harbor a sense of confidence, victory and optimism whereas females diffidence and always a sense of defeat.

Lenny's activities are restricted and she does not feel free in some contexts to do that. In some respects her own physical deformity doesn't allow her. Her physicality is a symbol in itself. That shows her vulnerability, fragility and state of dependence. It has shaped her behavior and her activity. She has not been able to do any activity resolutely. "I stare at the white plaster forcing my unique foot into the banal mold of a billion other feet and I ponder my uncertain future" (18). And she gets herself "limping gamely on the stub of my heel while the ball of my foot and my toes waggle suspended" (19).

When all males' toes remain busy in performing different sorts of act, even heinous activity, Lenny's toes just waggle suspended. These are inactive. The writer has tried to emphasize the role of the leg and the passivity and inability that it has brought in her life. In the above extract, 'limping', 'stub of my heel', 'ball of my foot', 'my toes waggle' all bear negative connotations. These are the indicative of her state of utter helplessness. By making Lenny limp, the writer might be trying to show that all the females bear such a condition as they are barred by their society to use their leg freely. They cannot walk free. Their movement is restricted and they are rendered incapacitated.

Her leg can be taken as a symbol used here to show female's condition to be weak and fragile. Lenny's feet are the actual condition representing all females. It bears the meaning of frailty, deformity and weakness. In a real sense, they are all handicapped. Society is playing such a role to make them weaker. There are the male characters like Bharucha who instead of treating female patients with psychological care, are instead busy in inflicting them. He has become cruel while treating Lenny.

He is a patriarchal agent, a representative figure of it. He speaks harshly to his patients. “Lie still” the doctor orders, and “petrified by his tone” (24) Lenny lies still. She gets terrified by seeing him. “His eyes are a complex hazel. They are direct as an animal’s” (14). She has a fear instilled in her heart that the doctor instead of curing her will just give trouble making her even more handicapped. He “saws, hammers and chisels at my cast, and using both hands, tears it apart” (24). She is on the mercy of the doctor, totally helpless. The doctor could soothe her and allay her fear rightly but he chooses not to. Because he is the product of the patriarchal society and can no more be an exception. He looks like a sadist. From the very beginning he appears as a terrifying being in the eyes of Lenny and talks harshly and rebukes her. He exercises his fingers here cruelly. We can see it. At the time when Lenny’s parents are worried about whether it will be possible for Lenny to go to School. “She’s doing fine without school, isn’t she?” says the doctor. “Don’t pressure her... her nerves could be affected. She doesn’t need to become a professor.” He further says that, “She’ll marry—have children—lead a carefree happy life. No need to strain her with studies and exams.” he advises thereby sealing my fate” (25).

III. Female Predicament in Pakistani Society

The main theme of the novels is female's suppression and their not being able to have agency. There "a wife was a symbol of status, the embodiment of a man's honour and the focus of his role as provider. A valuable commodity indeed, and dearly bought" (138). They do not have their say. They are dictated and compelled to do the things in a way that males like and think appropriate. Walking on the path that the men lay is what they are supposed to do. They have such a pathetic situation crushed by violence and misconduct meted out by men. As a result they are not being able to live their life with their head held high.

Sidhwa presents the horrible picture of the victimization of female like most of the writers of Partition literature where women, as said by Jaidka just served as "symbols of the community to be subjugated; their bodies became sites of contested power" (qtd. in Kleist 69). Whether she be an uneducated female character like Zaitoon in *The Pakistani Bride* or the educated western white female Carol, all are under the same grind of patriarchy. They have similar fate, similar destiny and the similar suffering to undergo. They are all subjugated. As all these novels are replete with this theme, this project strives to look at their fingers and toes and try to get the reflection of their situation in those bodily organs.

In fact, it may first appear that such tiny bodily organs may not have that much prominent role to play there but that is not the case here. They have a vital role there to play. After analyzing the shape, size, gestures and many activities performed by these organs, we can surely find the differences lying between the characterization of male and female's fingers to have been done differently by Bapsi Sidhwa deliberately. They have different features. Male's fingers and toes have been shown to be irrepressibly twitching, active, rough and strong. Quite contrarily, female's fingers

have been shown to have been feeble, quivering and trembling. A description from the novel, *An American Brat* runs like this: “Zareen scanned... her fingers suddenly trembling. A terrible fear for her daughter gripped her heart” (288). “Holding the letter in her inert finger” and later “With wildly wandering fingers she dialed” (265).

By doing so, the writer might have tried to show the reality of Pakistani society where the strata of male and female are two poles apart, quite different indeed. Males enjoy higher degree of autonomy whereas female cannot do so in a similar fashion. The way the fingers and toes have been shown, it is crystal clear that male’s fingers being too much possessive are always in the mood of teasing, beating and harassing the females. They are habituated to do the things like that unabatedly. Through the activities of fingers and toes, through their use, males are seen to be trying to overpower the women. Roach writes that “heterosexual men are forced to exert masculine traits, particularly through violence, in order to separate themselves from the supposedly weaker categories of female and homosexual” (31). By performing such activities, females get cowed down. Even the little girl Lenny is scared and reveals the reason behind running away from her Cousin “It’s only when you put your hands here and there and everywhere” (245).

Ice-candy men, Masseur in *Cracking India*, Sakhi in *The Pakistani Bride*, and many male characters in *An American Brat* are using their fingers and toes excessively. These things have emerged here as motifs. These organs are working here as signs having “iconic, indicative, and symbolic characters... blended as equally as possible” exactly as said by Pierce (qtd. in Noth 8). These organs are signs as they possess certain meaning because of their having iconic, symbolic and indicative value. They have communicative value. In the novels, males are consciously trying to dominate females by these organs. They are trying to send a message by involving in

voluntary non-verbal communication. Many a time, they are aware about what their fingers and toes are doing but pretend that they are not. They try to make the things appear to have been done innocently yet involuntarily. It's their politics, male chauvinism indeed. It looks these bodily organs are the only means by which females can be dominated.

Fingers and toes have gotten the status of agents; they are doing the things sometimes even without their own volition, without any conscious control of owners. Males are actors and females the actant. Characters appear helpless to have control over them. It's the society which provides higher degree of autonomy to the fingers of male and it makes female's fingers quite passive and less active. "Commonly observed behavioural traits associated with women and men, then, are not caused by anatomy or chromosomes. Rather, they are culturally learned or acquired" (Mari 2). Here, Society is curtailing female's freedom. They are having "inert fingers" (265). Differentiation is all but clear.

Female Suppression

"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" (226).

Such a view held in and conveyed by Farukh and remembered by Carol in the novel, *The Pakistani Bride* reflects the pathetic condition of woman in the Pakistani society. No doubt, it is the reflection of a man's psyche but it holds truth. When we go through the novels of Sidhwa, many of the female characters that we encounter have faced pathetic situation "with the time-testing ruthless of the culture they are living in (Lone 6). They are being raped, enslaved and even murdered. Their identity and dignity is in utter crisis thanks to the patriarchal mentality. "For the first time Carol

knew the dizzy, humiliating slap of pure terror. The obscene state stripped her of her identity. She was a cow, a female monkey, a gender opposed to that of the man – charmless, faceless, and exploitable” (120). They have undergone immense sufferings, trail and tribulation.

Wife-beating is also so prevalent in Pakistani society, Not only Zaitoon is beaten but Lenny’s mother, an activist has also “bruises on her body” (224). When we try to analyze a few verbs then it will surely be clear about the power structure in a family. Sakhi, the husband of Zaitoon “shook her like a rattle”, “slapped her hard”, “kicked her again”, “flung her from him”, “lifted her inert body” (186). These are the words used to show the activities of a husband. And on the part of a wife, Zaitoon, she “knelt “, ”flinched”, “felt back”, “heard herself screaming” (186). These vocabularies are enough to show how male and female are endowed with different range of power. One is fully powerful and another is utterly powerless.

Ayah, one of the main characters from *Cracking India* is raped. She is compelled to be a dancer. She was forcefully married by Ice-candy-man. Many others women have also borne difficulty. In *The Pakistani Bride*, in the brothel where Qasim goes description of dancers goes like this, “the heady smell of perfume, the chhum-chhum of feminine feet dancing behind closed doors excited him” (62). Men shout “Naach, pagli!—dance, mad woman—and jabbed her with a cane” (65). It shows how men are turning females into dancers and thereby fallen women. Their feet are being used to do ‘chhum-chhum’ in the tune of males’ libidinality. They are berated, downgraded and their essence of existence is downplayed. It is clear that “the patriarchal sexual script grants ownership of sexuality (both his and hers) to the male” (Burkhart and Stanton qtd. in Lloyd 17).

In every war or communal violence, or any other form of violence, females are to pay the heavy price. They are abused. They are raped. By inflicting women the tormenter think that they are insulting their enemy. Woman becomes a matter of dignity and enmity. Hamida in *The Pakistani Bride* expresses “everything for honour, another life lost” (190). It’s the reason why females become the easy target. They are enslaved and has to bear the immense suffering and sometimes even death. As the novel, *Cracking India* is written on the backdrop of India Pakistan partition period, there is a communal violence occurring among Hindu, Muslim, Sikh. There is a bitter strife. And the most vulnerable lot were the females. Ice-candy-man says:

“A train from Gurdaspur has just come in,” he announces panting.

“Everyone 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!” Ice-candy-man’s grip on the handlebars is so tight that his knuckles bulge whitely in the pale light. (159)

When the opponents have to take a revenge, they make the females of that side, their easy target. Most of the time, the warrior are the males. It’s because of their own petty interest that they do fight but it is women who have to undergo a great psychological trepidation. They cannot get out of the trauma of the horrible wars and violence.

All these novels are the reflection of Pakistani society and condition of female over there is truly represented. From the situation drawn in the novel, it becomes crystal clear that Pakistan, no longer, provides a conducive environment for women to live in. There is a harrowing tale of female suffering to tell. Mastaq from *The Pakistani Bride* says, “Oh, women get killed for one reason or other... imagined insults, family honour, infidelity... (223). In this way, female suppression, oppression and domination runs deep at the heart of Sidhwa’s novels. Pathetic condition of them

can be seen to have been poignantly presented in her works. It shows in Pakistan as stated in the novel *An American Brat*, “the gender bias is appalling.” (237). They are working as mere puppet in the hands of men and are being constantly made to realize that they are vulnerable creature and no more the strong and active being.

“It’s my kismet that’s no good... we are *khut-putli* in the hands of fate” (234).

Hamida from the novel, *Cracking India*, says.

In the novel, *Cracking India*, Lenny feels “Boys are supposed to chase girls” (244). From the very childhood, such a notion is instilled in the mind of the girls.

Such a stereotypical image becomes the means of domination for male. As we can see the case of Lenny about how she has been forbidden to do the things that her brother and cousin are being able to. They are seen to be active and strong while she has been suffering from polio and therefore cannot show her being strong owing to that reason. She is worried about her health and future. Her male child friends overpower her and they do the things easily in a way they like. As opposed to this she can no longer enjoy the same status. It’s so simply because of her being a girl. She has understood such things minutely being involved in the biased social affairs. Semiotic critic, Stables writes:

There are, however, principles at play. First, if living is semiotic engagement, and children are just as much alive as adults are then children are just as much semiotic engagers as adults are, albeit they are not as experienced so need (diminishing amounts of) protection from aspects of adult society. (30)

Lenny is a mere child at the age of 8. Despite her being so, she is quite inquisitive and does not seem to let any considerable event of her surrounding go unnoticed and unanswered. She says, “I keep an eye on Ice-candy man’s toes...they travel so

cautiously that both Ayah and I are taken unawares” (29). She has own perspective to view the world. Somewhere she seems to be quite smart whereas somewhere she appears quite ignorant and does not even use her common sense to get the problem solved. But she learns the thing by and by. She sees the world and makes the sense. She is in semiotic engagement and trying to know the world by experiencing it. She is knowing the adult world by her own means. She says, “I learn of human needs, frailties, cruelties and joys. I also learn from her the tyranny magnets exercise over metals” (29).

Ayah’s condition is by no means better. In fact, in the novel if there is any character who has undergone immense suffering, subjugation, trail and tribulation then it is undoubtedly Ayah. She has been presented as a girl who has been able to draw a considerable amount of attention from her male folks. She has many admirers. There are so many males interested towards her. “Masseur, Government House gardener, the wrestler, the butcher, the zoo attendant, Ice-candy- man and the rest of the gang” (162) all show some sort of interest on her.

No doubt, at the beginning of the novel, she appears to have authority over all of them because of her beautiful body. However, that turns out to be a nine days’ wonder. Her being able to galvanize them too turns flimsy. All the admirers belonging to different religions get separated later and involve in the violence. She is also kidnapped and made to suffer by her own admirers. “They drag Ayah out. They drag her by her arms stretched out; and her bare feet” (194). Then her days of suffering unfold one by one. She is made a dancer and compelled to fall under the category of ‘fallen woman’. After her being rescued later, Lenny “scrutinizes her face. Except for a thin smile it is clear of all expression. Yet, in some indefinable way, ominous” (257).

When coming to Lenny's mother, despite her being a woman activist fighting arduously for the welfare of the distressed women, solely for their cause, she has been victim of domination at her own home by her husband. Lenny recalls "Although father has never raised his hands to us, one day I surprise Mother at her bath and see the bruises on her body" (224). Her mother has to appease the husband, bear his misconduct time to time. She has to prove her worth as a good wife and mother at home. But he "goes anyway" to another woman "in the middle of night" (224). He is free but she is restricted. As she is economically dependent on her husband, she has to surrender every time before her husband. She appears behaving like a child in front of him to get the money for daily household expenses. In response, her husband shows his own patriarchal attitude. He is not far from the patriarchal psyche.

She has to struggle hard so as to get money from her husband. He does not give easily. Lenny narrates how her mother gets money from her father: "Mother, breathing heavily, plunges her hands here and there and with a triumphant cry sprints out of the room, her stubby fingers closed on a large wad of notes" (78). It's her predicament to 'plunge' as the husband is not going to give the money himself easily. And the choice of the adjective 'stubby' before fingers too bears special meaning. Her fingers lack quality as that is not vibrant. When Lenny has given so many positive sounding adjectives while describing Ayah's admirers' finger but she chose to use 'Stubby' here. It shows the situation of female and their lack of activeness in their bodily organs. There is passivity of a sort.

By keeping her economically dependent over him, he has gotten authority over her. He vents his anger time to time: "Money Money Money Money! From morning to night. Money Money Money Money! I am fed up" (78). It is a one of the ways how he has domination over his wife. He is a giver and she a taker. It is the society which

created such a power relations. Feminist critic, Okin opines that the “power, prestige, self-esteem, opportunities for self-development, and both physical and economic security, we find socially constructed inequalities between them” (136).

Monetary power has been used here to dominate the female. Lenny’s “strong father” has authority over her mother’s “voluptuous weight” (78). What she is doing is just to use her body to get her monetary demands fulfilled. She does not have any option except doing household chores and making her husband happy by merely being a servile wife. “She goes about her business of picking up Father’s clothes and tidying the beds and getting dressed” (78). Her fingers are to be busy at picking up Father’s clothes and tidying the beds.

Godmother seems to have enjoyed a little more authority in comparison to others. It’s all because of her age. Age factor has played a role in making her a bit authoritative. She helps rescue Ayah from the clutch of Ice-candy-man and rebukes him. But Lenny sees, while scolding him, “Godmother’s fingers are slightly trembling. Not with the tremor of age but with nervous concentration” (267). And she has her own problems too. Lenny imaginatively thinks, “Or to heroics in which I rescue Godmother from the drooling jaws of her cannibalistic brother-in-law who is doctor and visits from way beyond the perimeter of my familiar world” (29). It is the thought of Lenny that she was in difficulty because of her cannibalistic brother-in-law. It’s the impression that came in the mind of Lenny.

Cracking India also contains the sorrow of different ‘fallen women’. When the political situation of the country is volatile many nefarious activities take place. Males involve themselves in fight and communal riots. And the easiest victims are the females. They are very much vulnerable. A group of different religious belief kidnaps the females of another group holding different religious belief. Such a kidnapped

women are made dancers and later turned into prostitutes. Then they get dubbed 'fallen women' and are not welcome back in the society.

Similarly the novel, *The Pakistani Bride* mainly presents the immense suffering undergone by the protagonist, Zaitoon. Her parents get killed in a riot. And later it is Qasim who takes care of her. "She leaned against him trembling, and he, close to his heart felt her wondrously warm and fragile" (30). She is very submissive character. Without any consent of her, she gets married to Sakhi only because Qasim had "given his words" (158) to him. He threatens her by saying, "I've given my word. On it depends my honour. It is dearer to me than life. If you besmirch it, I will kill you with my bare hands" (158) She is reluctant to leave Qasim but "Come now..." said Sakhi, her husband. "His grubby fingers bit vengefully into her flesh when he told her" (168). Then her ordeal begins with the touch of his 'grubby fingers'. The use of adjective 'grubby' is enough to show his personality and all things likely to happen soon. Anyway, Zaitoon enters in the life of Sakhi. First Qasim then her husband have dominated her life. She does not have her say in any state of affair. She cannot have happy conjugal life because of the unruly behavior of her husband, Sakhi. It is her compulsion to "grow immune to the tyrannical animal trainee treatment meted out by Sakhi" (174).

The latter part of story is all about her escaping from Sakhi's home and all the trouble she bore during that period. She even gets raped. "In a line beyond her feet, his [a rapist] arm stretched out, a man lay face down, his thick, yellowish fingers curling where her feet had just displaced the sand" (213). Here, again we get the hints how the man is using his fingers in tormenting a female. Another man's "arm lunged at her ankles, and she recoiled" (213). These are the rapists fingering her. Her plight is such that she escaped the wife-beating husband's fingers just to encounter the rapists'

fingers waiting ahead. It shows Pakistan is no more a congenial place for women to live. They are to suffer much by the hands of male. They cannot oppose them. They are simply rendered voiceless. Like Lenny who is worried about her future which she finds uncertain, Zaitoon does not find any rosy picture. "Suddenly faced by a future unknown and baffling" (140). It's the Pakistani society which has been failure to protect the dignity of woman. They are leading a very pathetic life.

Another female character, Hamida gets beaten by her eccentric son, Sakhi. She is also a victimized character and can never think of going against patriarchal mores. She obeys everything that patriarchy demands for without any question. She tries to dominate Zaitoon who is her daughter-in-law. She forgets sorrow of being victim herself and is bent on afflicting Zaitoon.

Carol's condition, despite being a westerner and later getting married to a Pakistani man, is not totally free. However, in comparison to the other Pakistani characters, she has been able to enjoy more freedom. "As an American married to a Pakistani she was allowed much more freedom than a Pakistani wife" (218). She even keeps extra-marital affairs that women in Pakistan can hardly think of. She drinks wine and wears trouser. These are the freedom that she enjoys. But the fact is that after all, she is also a woman and can never be free from the eyes of male. Her husband always suspects her and gives torture and says "a woman has to be careful" (125).

Carol, after having come to Pakistan and facing the situation over there realized the real suffering meted out to females. She found how females' existence was turned into nothing. They did not have any dignity. "For the first time Carol knew the dizzy, humiliating slap of pure terror. The obscene state stripped her of her

identity. She was a cow, a female monkey, a gender opposed to that of the man – charmless, faceless, and exploitable” (120).

She even shows sympathetic attitude towards Zaitoon and finds similarity between and among the women of all countries. All are equally vulnerable. She thinks, “In the instant their eyes met, the green and black of their irises fused in an age-old communion – an understanding they shared of their vulnerabilities as women... This girl had no more control over her destiny than a caged animal... perhaps neither had she... (136). In the novels, animal imagery like here has been used profusely to liken it with the condition of females.

Another novel, *An American Brat* also presents how the condition of females is not good and how they are looked down upon by males. “Yes,” wailed Mala. “He gave her away because she’s girl. I bet he’d have gotten the money if she was a boy” (253). This line spoken by Mala, the mother, tells a volume about the discrimination that is prevalent among the people of a developing country. These people, even if they go to America, always carry their mentality with him. When Dipak, the father of the newly born daughter cannot pay the amount that the hospital in America asks for the delivery of a child, he decides to give the child daughter itself away to the hospital. The above statement from the mouth of the mother tells how her husband has not been able to manage to get her daughter discharge from hospital. She is of the opinion that if the child had been a boy then her husband somehow would have managed the money to get her back. Since the case is different now, he decided to leave. It clearly shows the attitude of her husband towards daughter not being good. He seems rather ready to leave her than thinking alternatives to manage the required amount.

Though the title of the novel may appear that it is going to talk about any brat from America, in fact that’s not the case. There, a Pakistani girl has become brat after

having gone to America. She is a brat in the eyes of her Pakistani parents and society. “You have become an American brat,” (279) says her mother. No doubt, she has been able to enjoy life with much more freedom going to America but it does not mean that she is equally enjoying as men over there are doing. She has to undergo immense suffering in a new place. And her story of suffering starts from the very moment she lands on the Airport where she has been harassed by an American officer. Later too in many different situations, she has to pay the price for being a woman from a third world country. What to talk of the developing countries, even the so-called developed country America too cannot prove itself of being a congenial place for females to live in. Therefore, Feroza has to undergo many difficulties over there:

The dark, impersonal face of the man leering at her in the mirror when she looked up from brushing her teeth, the brutal faces of the men who slyly muttered obscenities in the halls, the dangerous, focused stare of the drug dealer who had loomed whitely out of the recessed doorway on forty-second street. (91)

Later she is called back to Pakistan which she has to do giving in before family pressure. She even has to leave her boyfriend as he is from America and no family member of her seems to agree with her in making him her bridegroom. To follow the path that her parents chart for her is a matter of compulsion. She has to pay the price of being a female here too. She is unable to do according to her own wish. Her choice is not valued and has to nip her love in the bud; it did not get a chance to prosper and be a flower. She has to leave every decision in the hand of her parents. “You will disgrace the family” (279) cautions her mother. Her choices are limited. She is asked later not to be selfish by her mother.

In this way, different female characters in these three novels have same destiny to bear, same sort of suffering to undergo, same sort of discrimination to face. Whether it be the most conservative society of Zaitoon, or average sort of Lenny or the advanced of Feroza, female characters' fate seems a lot same; they have similar story to tell: story of suppression, oppression and domination. All the characters are struggling and trying to emerge up the unjust state of affair but are being unable to do so. They are, as said by Carol, in "an age-old communion – an understanding they shared of their vulnerabilities as women" (136).

Search of the 'Spoilt' Women as a Motif

In *Cracking India*, Ayah is lost and Lenny's family members and Godmother are in search of her. They try to search everywhere and later they even find her. By then she has already been devastated. She was abducted and abused then later being rescued; Lenny feels "justice required to rehabilitate our fallen Ayah" (285).

Similarly, in *The Pakistani Bride*, her chauvinistic husband and other members from society are in search of Zaitoon who escapes from home when violence over her becomes unbearable. By the help of military men in hiding, her husband cannot get her and she is reunited with her father later. Her husband goes back empty handed.

In *An American Brat*, Zareen goes to America to get her daughter back who has been metaphorically lost in the wonder of America. She has been spoilt in the eyes of her family and society. And later she is brought back to Pakistan.

All these three protagonists have another similarity that is their unsuccessful love life. In *The Pakistani Bride*, Zaitoon is forcefully married by her father to a tribal man, Sakhi whom he had previously promised. As a result, Zaitoon cannot have a happy marriage. When atrocity becomes too much, she runs away from that home, gets raped and comes to be with her father again. In *An American Brat*, Feroza cannot

marry own lover, David. Her love is broken off and she is taken back to Pakistan by Zareen as it was time for her to be settled down and she has to listen to her family members. Zareen says, “Enough is enough! You have to listen to us. It’s time you settled down” (240). In this way, unhappy love life can be another motif here.

In *The Pakistani Bride*, Zaitoon rather wanted to be the wife an army man than of Sakhi. But her destiny has written something other. In *An American Brat*, Feroza wanted to be with David. Her mother foiled her plan. And in *Cracking India*, Ayah wanted to be with Masseur than to be the wife of Ice-candy-man. But Ice-candy-man married her forcefully. All these leading characters have become the victim of patriarchy. They have limited choice and can no longer object society. Doing the things in their own is not possible to them. It is because of that they have become the prey. They seem unable to enjoy their lives having the limited autonomy and freedom. Because of that, they do not have any genuine progress and keep remaining the sufferers. They have been failure to get successful love life. It is an Irony of fate.

‘Touch’ Metaphor and ‘Fallen’ Women

Story of ‘fallen women’ is due to the excessive use of fingers and toes of men. Males make them dance. “The girls are the diamonds! The men pay them to dance and sing...and to do things with their bodies. It’s the world’s oldest profession” (252), says Cousin to Lenny. They are not later accepted by their family members and are compelled to lead a hellish life. Characters like Hamida, Ayah have been victim of male aggressiveness and later left in lurch.

“Once kidnapped women are not accepted... some folk feel that away... they can’t stand their women being touched by other men” (227). Here, the word ‘touch’ generally done by fingers bears sexual connotation. In the three novels ‘touch’ has come as a metaphor. In *The Pakistani Bride* Miriam says to Zaitoon, “You are now a

woman. Don't play with boys-and don't allow any man touch you. This is why I wear a burka..." (55). After the first menstruation of Zaitoon, she entered into womanhood. Menstruation is the sign of getting maturity and to be capable to involve oneself into reproduction. It is because of that Miriam, a matured woman is cautioning her not to let her body touch to any man. Such a 'Touch' is supposed to bring downfall and is enough to make her a fallen woman. To protect herself, only option is to wear *burka* in Muslim culture. That is the only way to preserve chastity. *Burka* restricts a female from being gazed by the vulgar eyes of males. They may not get touched by any other men. That has a cultural value and therefore pretty much meaningful.

In a similar fashion, in the novel, *The Pakistani Bride* too there appears the 'touch' metaphor. Farukh says to Carol, his wife: "I am so ashamed of you! Displaying your honky-tonk pedigree! You laugh too loudly. You touch men..." (108). She replies "But they're your friends... And what do you mean, touch men! I only..." Then his reaction is- "Don't you know if you *only* look a man in the eye it means he can have you?" (108).

In this way Farukh, the Pakistani husband of Carol is suspicious of her wife touching other men. His heart is full of jealousy and always behaves like a possessive husband. He says with gesture "You widened your legs like this and..." (111). This way, the phrase 'touch men' bears the meaning of having sexual relations that Farukh cannot think her wife doing with others. And he has another complain over her laughter. His saying 'You laugh too loudly' and '*Hasi to phasi*' like statement expressed in *Cracking India* regarding female conduct clearly displays the negative mind-set developed in the particular society. Both these statements are symbolic manifestation of male chauvinism.

When seen closely it is clear that a man gets a woman in his hand, he cannot bear others and always wants to keep her under control. He does not want anyone to 'touch' her. Similar tendency is seen with Ice-candy-man too, he tries to protect Ayah and even Lenny from being touched by other men and takes the reference of a tailor who according to him in the name of measuring the cloth size touches here and there and make the female own. Perhaps having internalized the same matter said by Ice-candy-man, Lenny later vows to herself, "I am hard to protect them (breasts)... Only I may touch them. Not Cousin. Not Imam Din. Not anybody. I can't trust anyone" (231). In this way 'touch' bears the meaning of nearness, proximity and in a way possibly even physical relation.

Irony is that so many male characters in the novels want to be nearer to girls and women. Mostly by using their fingers and toes males are seen taking imitative to get sexual favours from them. They are bent on touching females and feel them but they are also the ones who are not ready to accept their nearest women if touched by other men. They want their own women to be chaste and pure. In the very society, the case of male is different. Nobody is there to raise question over them and caution them. They can 'touch' as many women as they can. Those who have clever fingers and toes touch many women and all others not having so, do the less.

A Fragile Female Resistance

Most of the time females are seen trying to escape the male domination by this or that means but being unable to do so. In fact society is such, that has given different roles to males and females. They are expected to do the things differently. Males' domination over females as shown by their fingers and toes has made them totally helpless. Males' excessiveness is the cause of females' suffering.

In *Cracking India*, Ayah suffers much. She is abused by her admirers. No doubt she tries her level best to dissuade them but remains unable. Nobody takes her 'threat' seriously. She is one of the most pathetic characters of the novel. She is kidnapped and forcefully married. Later she is rescued but already fallen under the category of 'fallen woman'.

When we enter the world of little girl Lenny, she is made victim by her cousin. He is there to impose his authority. She does not enjoy his intrusion on her body. So she "runs away" because her cousin puts his "hands here and there and everywhere" (245). She finds it easy to take to her heels instead of confronting him and teaching him lesson. She seems to be scolding and asking him not to poke here and there but to no avail. He remains undaunted and unchanged.

It is not the matter of one day or two but the lecherous activity by her cousin gets repeated. It's not possible to run away time and again. Her mild threat doesn't perform any magic. So when Cousin starts deknickering her, she narrates what she did "I grab them up and jab him with my elbows and knees, and turning and twisting, with my toes and heels." (252). And when she finds the situation not improving anymore and cousin not mending his conduct she compromises that "she would not mind for Cousin touching her breast upto now and he will have to wait for a few years more to touch them" (245).

Godmother seems to have enjoyed a little more authority in comparison to others. It's all because of her age. Age factor has played a role in making her a bit authoritative. She rescues Ayah from the clutch of Ice-candy man and rebukes him. "Godmother's fingers are slightly trembling. Not with the tremor of age but with nervous concentration." (267). And she has her own problems too. Lenny thinks, "Or to heroics in which I rescue Godmother from the drooling jaws of her cannibalistic

brother-in-law who is doctor and visits from way beyond the perimeter of my familiar world (29). Lenny imaginatively rescues Godmother from the domination of her cannibal brother-in-law.

In *An American Brat*, Feroza seems helpless before the Customs Inspector using his fingers over Feroza, a man in restroom and the one in elevator all turned to be tormentors. She just escaped and dared not confront them. No matter she briefly lives her life in her own way with her lover David but later her mother comes and the love affairs get broken and she has to do according to the family's choice. She can not raise her voice against anyone resolutely despite her being right in many places.

The Pakistani Bride's protagonist Zaitoon escapes not being able to endure Sakhi. She saw that option more suitable than confronting her pigheaded husband. She lacked guts. In that novel, another character Carol rather seems to have agency by doing the act freely. She keeps extra-marital relations. "Yes, she had avenged Farukh's grotesque jealousy- helped its nightmares come true" (127). She can openly argue with her husband and put her points before him. Sometimes, she even can challenge to her husband "To hell with your madness. Your sadistic, possessive, screwed up love" (111). She wears trousers and even drinks wine. Because of her being grown up in the US, she has that sort of freedom. Cultural aspect and different milieu also determines one's range of rights and freedom. Despite this too she accepts her difficulty of being a female. She has a realization of her condition being no better than that of "a cow, female monkey" (120). All the females are compelled to bear the same destiny. They are all vulnerable.

As a post-colonial feminist writer, Bapsi Sidhwa is presenting the reality of the Pakistani society about how female are compelled to undergo immense suffering. Despite this, her works like that of other postcolonial feminists "do not ignore

women's agency and political actions. Rather it helps draw attention to the dynamic, oppositional nature of domination and resistance and the uneven power relations within which women act" (Asher 43).

Nation and Women: A Similarity

Female body and nation bear resemblance. In fact, a nation is seen as female, a feminized entity. Here in the three novels too we can find many similarities between nation and female. Males are exploiting them both. Males' reckless use of fingers and toes are responsible not only 'tearing' and 'ripping' a female body but also the nation. In fact word like tearing, ripping and dismembering are metaphorical words which apply both in case of female and nation. Such activities are performed by the aggressive, impatient and eccentric fingers and toes of the men.

These are the issues that the writer has tried to bring forward with vigor. Sidhwa seems to be interested to relate female body to the issue of India and Pakistan partition. We can take an example where we can find Ice-candy-man's aggression diverted towards earth, "His head jerks forward and his long fingers gouge the earth between his sandals. And, as if committed against his will to witness the litany of his transgressions; his gaze clings to Godmother's" (261). Ice-candy-man has turned the life of Ayah into hell. He made her a dancer and later forcefully married her.

Yet another example is when Mushtaq and Carol, two characters from *The Pakistani Bride* start having physical relations, his "hand crept under her sweater, kneading her satiny skin. His voice was husky gurgle, Ummm... When Atlas lifted the world, he held it here. His fingers forced the earth into chasms and the rising mountains; the Himalayas, the Hindu Kush and the Karakoram..." (119). Here, his having physical relation with a female is likened with a nation.

Another metaphor can be got when "crumbling the soil with long, knobby

fingers, Yunus Khan idly patted it level” (170). Here the crumbling the soil by finger is breaking the earth, and a nation. The fingers sometimes are used for afflicting nation and sometimes afflicting the females’ bodies.

Insensitive and aggressive nature of men can be seen here and there everywhere in the texts. The hands used in rupturing females are the hands used to break the county. One of the novels is named *cracking India*. Here the word ‘cracking’ is metaphor. In fact how a country can be cracked! Such an act is performed by the insensitive hands of male only. “They’ll dig a canal...,” she [Ayah] ventures. “This side for Hindustan and this side for Pakistan. If they want two countries, that’s what they’ll have to do — crack India with a long, long canal.” Men involved in the communal riots divide the country. They will metaphorically ‘dig’ a long canal thereby breaking the country into two halves.

We can see different males “sharpening their knives.” (161). People are divided into different groups. There are different divisions on the basis of religious views. “People are holding out to him their knives, choppers, draggers, axes, staves and scythes. And in the clamor, nose to the grindstone, Sharbat Khan sharpens one blunt edge after other” (160).

No doubt country needed “deft and sensitive surgeon” (14) but only reckless mob was there to break the country. Violence was rampant during the partition period. “Hysteria mounted when the fertile, hot lands of the Punjab were suddenly ripped into two territories—Hindu and Muslim, India and Pakistan” (14). Country felt what Zaitoon had experienced, “They might easily have fallen on the girl, tearing, ripping, and dismembering her to satisfy their anguish” (79). The word ‘ripping’ has been used for both nation and female. These are the pretty much symbolic acts done by males using their fingers and toes. Tearing, ripping and dismembering are the activities

performed forcefully with much aggressiveness that men do while tearing the country and the female body. The rapist caught her [Zaitoon's] wrists and it seemed her arms would snap" (214). Equal force, it seems, has been applied while breaking the country "Later the earth sealed its clumsy new boundaries in blood" (14). It is tantamount to rape of a female body with blood gushing. Insensitive hands of men "carelessly butchered the country" (14). Both the countries and females are in great sufferings because of the callous fingers of men.

Females and the Animal Imagery

Animal imagery has been used to compare the animal's condition with that of female in Pakistan. There are certain resemblances that we can trace between the fate of an animal and a female. Carol from *The Pakistani Bride* realizes a female having no more good "destiny than a caged animal" (136).

In fact, animals have been shown to have undergone very miserable condition in the texts and so is the case of female there. Here is an example from *The Pakistani Bride* about how a tribal man set upon a leopard, "Then he crouched and with bloody fingers gouged out its eyes. He spat on the leopard's face and pounded the gory mess with a stone. He castrated the animal" (211). The way the man attacks the animal shows his utter aggressiveness and ruthlessness. Such a behavior is also shown towards females. Sakhi feels "I should have killed her [Zaitoon] by the river!" (189).

And we can extract another few lines when Sakhi was ploughing, "he hit the ox again and again, until the flesh gaped open. The beast roared and writhed, desperately trying to stand and get away from its tormentor. (172). This imagery of ox is meant to represent the actual condition of Zaitoon whom Sakhi has got married to. Her situation is same. Sakhi "kicks her again and again and pain stabbed through her" (185). He mercilessly beats her even in a small pretext. "Sakhi's face was bestial with

anger. 'I will kill you, you lying slut!' (185). Later she escapes from the clutch of him. He never let her do the things in a way she liked. He is very much possessive and always wants keep her under his domination. She has to do everything according to his will and can never think of going beyond. "You dirty , black little bitch, waving at those pigs...' gripping her with one hand he waved the other in a lewd caricature of the girl's brief gesture. ' waving at that shit-eating swine. You wanted him to stop and fuck you, didn't you!" (185). It is the scolding that he lashes against her after an accusation of waving her hands towards the group of soldiers who were walking far.

In this way, a female in Pakistani society has to undergo immense suffering like an animal. Carol rightly points about her condition as "a cow, a female monkey, a gender opposed to that of the man – charmless, faceless, and exploitable" (120). And all the females bear the same condition.

IV. Fingers and Toes: An Array of Different Semiotic Roles

Fingers and Toes' Libidinal Role

In comparison to two other novels, basically in *Cracking India*, males seem to be too much obsessive regarding the use of fingers and toes. They are using them excessively for the purpose of seduction. Readers see everything happening in the text through the eyes of a child narrator Lenny. Her focus is always on seeing and analyzing the state and activities of those males' fingers and toes. She observes them minutely and analyzes like this:

Imam Din must have attempted with some part of his anatomy the seduction Ice-candy man conducts with his toes- with less audacity perhaps, and perhaps with less ingenuity- but, at last, Ayah is appeased- and properly apologized to-and we cycle down our drive with the first faint smudge of dawn diluting the night. (59)

Lenny is habituated to see the activities played by the toes of Ayah's admirers. "As tongue speakth to the ear, so the gesture to the eye." (2) says Sir Francis Bacon. She has gotten sexual maturity by seeing their performance. She consciously yet minutely looks at the movement of the admirers and even makes comparison of the toes of different males. "Seeing is a matter of comparing our expectations with the message received by our perceptual system" (Huhtamo 2). With such a comparison and contrast she is acquiring knowledge. Those fingers and toes bear libidinal motives. For her, the toes of ice-candy man are more audacious and "ingenuous" (38). All of the suitors are using their toes to seduce Ayah who is 18 years old.

As she has kept every man's fingers and toes' shape, size and the different activities performed in her memory, whenever she gets chance she starts comparing and contrasting them. Another interesting comparison that Lenny makes runs like this:

I turn my head the other way. I observe Mr. pen's fingers. They are long, fat and large. His legs are huge tubes encased in flannels and beneath them, visible through a hole in his socks, plops his mordant toe. I feel sorry for Mrs. Pen. I can't imagine his fingers working the subtle artistry of Masseur's fingers — or his sluggish toe conveying the dashing impulses of Ice-candy-man's toes. (90)

In this extract, it is quite clear that Lenny eyes are always fixed at getting a glimpse of the shape, size and vibrancy of the toes and fingers of the males. As semiotic critics too show their predilection towards binary oppositions to draw a certain meaning. When two contrary items are churned out there emerges meaning. One item is looked in relation to other. Lenny too is doing exactly the same thing. She is analyzing the every aspect of fingers and toes and drawing certain conclusion. That is the way of getting meaning out of non-verbal activities. Danesi says, “all signification (be it denotative or connotative) is a relational and associative process – that is, signs acquire meanings not in isolation but in relation to other signs and to the contexts in which they occur” (qtd. in Jamani 194). In fact, she is a minute observer as can be seen from the above example. She says, “Next evening when ice-candy man comes to our house I notice his toe is more vigorous” (132). Her mind is active to notice the differences lying among the different persons in her circle. According to Gombrich, **RECOGNITION + RECALL + THEIR COMBINATIONS = PERCEPTION.** (qtd. in Huhtamo 2).

She compares, contrasts and rightly relates the things. By doing so, she is trying to interpret the things. She is in a semiotic engagement. “Semiotic theory is based on the belief that meaning is not inherent in objects, that they do not signify by themselves, but that meaning is constructed by a competent observer-a subject-

capable of giving ‘form’ to objects” (Martin and Ringham 118). Lenny, despite her being of 8 is fully competent in order to understand the things taking place nearby. Her ability to grasp the things and deciphering the meanings is because of her minute observation and inquisitiveness.

In that society, it is clear that all the persons are familiar with the different meanings that can be conveyed by the use of fingers and toes. It’s a normal way of getting different meanings out of the activities of human anatomy. She is adding knowledge from this collective social practice. As semiotician Stables says, “After all, it has long been recognized in this literature that mind is not the property of autonomous rational souls but is rather a function, in some sense, of collective social and cultural practice” (23).

In *Cracking India*, Lenny tries to assess the sexual prowess of different men by watching the activeness of their fingers. For her, it looks that the fingers and toes are the signs by analyzing their activity, virility of men can be easily checked. Her choice of words used here to describe the state of fingers denotes that. “We know that words are remembered in terms of their meanings, rather than as strings of letters or phonemes. If gestures convey meanings, we might likewise expect those meanings to be represented in memory” (Krauss, Chen, and Chawala 12).

Her judgment is that Ice-candy-man and Masseur are more virile than Mr. Pen. And she is feeling sorry for Mrs. Pen for she might have not been fully satisfied with pen. Cousin is also not capable enough to evoke much more feeling in her. “Cousin certainly does not arouse in me the rapture Masseur aroused in Ayah... I recall the bewildering longings the look on Masseur’s face stirred in me when he looked at Ayah... And other stirrings...” (230).

Connotative meaning of all her sayings about fingers and toes can be deciphered by analyzing her impression that only the men with active fingers and toes can give full satisfaction to women. She has that sort of feeling instilled into her heart. Perhaps she learnt it after analyzing the fingers and toes of different persons and the vibrancy of them. That may be a long held belief and stereotypes prevalent in that particular society too. She has that type of stereotypical image imprinted into her psyche. She is forming that sort of knowledge looking at the social practice. Semiotician Procar says, “Progressively, the frame, context and relation effects, the effects of discursive strategies confer a pragmatic image upon what could have been perceived until now under the form of some entirely arbitrary and immanent system of signs” (24).

Ice-candy man is always bent on exercising the power of his “irrepressibly twitching toe” (38). Whenever he meets Ayah, his toes start becoming restless, no longer remaining in the control of the owner. Such an act is often repeated. He tries to coax Ayah by stimulating her with the help of his toe. His toe is his best weapon “that darts beneath Ayah’s sari” (38). He seems unable to curb its movement. It is nothing but a sheer eccentricity. Such a freedom, he is using every time goes unchallenged. Sometimes Ayah rebukes him but that does not work yet as Ice-candy man uses his toes to tease Ayah and appease his sexual hunger irrespective of the Ayah’s desire unabatedly. “You’ll never change,” (39) says she. For him, quenching his own thirst is primary and all important. His libido looks stronger thereby turning him into lecherous. In the Pakistani society, to display such a behavior, all men are free. They are controlling female body by the excessive use of libido. David Winter says that “men concerned with power are likely to exploit and abuse women sexually” (388). It is what men, in the particular society are doing to dominate females.

Lenny feels that “the world is athrob with men” (230). There are all the men restless to perform the activity by their fingers and toes. Like Ice-candy man who is very familiar with the “ingenious fingers” (38) any other man can use and make a woman fall in trap. He takes a reference of a tailor, Bhagwandas with whom wife of a man named Padre had eloped. There, he sees the “smoothing fingers” (134) of the tailor responsible in making the woman run away with him as the tailor’s fingers touch here, smooth the cloth there” (133). He cautions Lenny and Ayah to be aware of any “cunning fingers taking liberties” (134). “The tailors”, he says, “are a sly lot. Never trust them Lenny baby with their measuring tapes, needles and threads — a smoothing fingers” (134).

His perception is that female cannot escape the influence of the power of males’ fingers and are likely to fall prey of them. His view is that they possess hypnotic and intoxicating power. By saying so, he is indirectly trying to create fear in the heart of Ayah so that she would be careful about the fingers of the other men as they too may possess that sort of power. When Lenny asks about his wife in village may also be the victim of such fingers as sly men are in village too, he replies, “She won’t. They have no tailors in the village. No masseur either... with their cunning fingers taking liberties” (134) expressed his jealousy and hostility between the admirers.

His indication is that Ayah should not let any other men except him touch her body with their fingers. She has to save herself. His intention is pretty clear that is not to allow any male folk to enjoy the physical proximity with Ayah. He thinks that once men get chance to be near, then there may not be any escape for women. He is cautioning her even bringing the reference of Masseur and displaying his sense of animosity with him. Both are vying and trying to enjoy the excessiveness of their

fingers and toes and get more proximity with Ayah. So it looks she has been a bone of contention between them though there seems to be other issues on front.

Similarly Ayah's another admirer Masseur is also the bird of same feathers as he too is deft in using his fingers. He too is seen exercising his own fingers time and again. "Masseur's skillful fingers generate beneath Ayah's sari" (51). His fingers are busy. They are generator of something. Those bodily organs are the actor. Lenny narrates everything without a miss.

Even cousin is full of amorous feeling. "And looking generously and intently into my eyes, he permits me to feel his belly button. It even feels like a finger" (62). Her impression of his penis is like that of finger. She compares it with finger. The important fact to notice here is the activity of Cousin. He tries "hard to be manful" (245). How he has been unashamed to show his sexual organ before Lenny openly! "Treating me to a view of his uncircumcised penis, he stretches his foreskin back to show me how Hari's circumcised penis must look" (172). He is dauntless. He even asks her to touch and feel his penis. How he has been daring to make her touch his private part! He even lures her to lick her penis saying that it contains honey. "You've got to suck out" (172). What Lenny is doing instead is just to obey whatever cousin says her to. She seems submissive and gullible. She does not object anymore. If in case she rejects then she is forced to do by her "authoritative cousin" (229). Even at that small age, he is full of authority, full of ego, full of anger. He tries to be possessive and shows his full authority:

"feel it" offers cousin.

I like its feel. It is warm and cuddly. As I squeeze the plaint flesh it strengthens and grows in my hand.

“You’ve got to suck out the honey.” Cousin arches his back and maneuvers his penis to my mouth. (172)

Social treatment to these two creatures is different. One is actor, another the observer. One has gotten larger freedom where another not. One is cunning but another gullible. For this to happen, society is biased treatment is responsible. Through these lines, it is clear that he is trying to be possessive and wants Lenny to do everything in a way that he finds to be right by himself. He meddles in her affairs and always wants her to be submissive and docile. He wants to make her do the things in a way he likes. Without any shame, he even asks her to perform fellatio.

If looked at the activity of his fingers, they too appear to have borne similar features as that of Ice-candy man and look no better. “He too has clever fingers” (29), she thinks. He is yet another big tormentor in making. Even at that age, he uses his fingers in deknickering her. She remembers, “Pulling my kicking feet from me, succeeds in deknickering me. And putting his hand there, trembles and trembles” (253). He often makes Lenny touch his penis by her fingers and Lenny is being familiar even with the secret of human anatomy. She is getting awareness with experience by hearing, seeing and organizing that in a meaningful unit. As Danesi says:

Most of the raw, unorganized sensory information that comes from seeing, hearing, and the other senses is organized into meaningful wholes by signs. Our understanding of the world is thus not a direct sensory one. It is mediated by signs and, thus, by the images that they elicit within our mind-space. (*Messages* 17)

Lenny’s method of getting meanings out of any happening is not direct sensory one. Rather she sees things, organize them, compares, contrasts and derive meaning. She

says, “I take time out to educate myself. I watch the trees shed their leaves and sprout new buds... and the predatory kites swoop on pigeons. And the crows, in ungainly clusters, attack the kites...” (89). Imbibing, evaluating and analyzing mostly the non-linguistic elements of communication is what she has been familiar with.

Seen through the eyes of Lenny, In *Cracking India* mostly males’ fingers and toes have been used for seduction. His [Ice-candy man] driven toes are too weary to perform their amazing seduction” (130). Most of the predators are already familiar with the females. The males are seen sometimes trying to get consent from females and want to go forward. They are always turning to get sexual favor. There seems to have some sort of nascent co-operation though willy-nilly from females too. “Ayah shuffles her bare feet and fidgets with her sari. Her eyes are shy, full of messages. “Bring me pistachios”” (86).

When we look at the state of fingers and toes’ activity in *An American Brat*, the males are trying to use them very much forcefully. Most of the males that Feroza gets tormented by are the stranger ones, met for the first time in her life. Either it be a customs inspector in the airport or the man in the restroom or the man in the elevator, all these men do not seek any permission and their attempts more than seduction look like aggression and violation. Their physical proximity is quite undesirable. They are trying to do the things quite arrogantly and without taking her into confidence. They are more dangerous than the men that Lenny and Ayah encounter in *Cracking India*. Mostly the stranger men terrify her. It’s because she takes Manek, her cousin to guard her from outside when she goes to rest room and “made sure there were no suspicious looking legs lurking in the cubicles” (85). The word ‘legs’ is a synecdochic representation of her tormentor that she has not being able to jettison the image of, that she once encountered.

Fingers/Toes, Power and Authority

Male's fingers and toes have been like a tyrant misusing power. They are full of authority. They are the ruler. There is a stereotypical notion that once they touch the female body, females are overpowered; they are cowed down. Impression is like that. It's the reason why not only a single male rather all the males in the texts in one way or the other are exercising the power of their fingers and toes. Nobody's fingers and toes can escape notice of Lenny. She observes every activity of the fingers and toes minutely and tells that in details. She tells how Ayah is seduced by the fingers and toes of the male. "His presence radiates a warmth that is different from the dark heat generated by Masseur's fingers the lightning strikes of Ice-candy-man's toes" (84). These fingers and toes have been the metaphoric representation of social liberty and power. The activities that these organs are performing are carrying meaning of males' freedom to enjoy social life in a carefree manner. Things like that are represented by the fingers and toes which carry semiotic value. Regarding the deciphering of meaning out of anything Danesi, in his essay, "The Interconnectedness principle and the Semiotic Analysis of Discourse" writes:

What it [semiotics] attempts to make clear is that systems of representation are not based on literal-denotative, but rather on the subjective paths that connotative circuits entail. Unlike a machine, a human being can construct models of meaning in the very process of making them. Most of these are socially motivated. (103)

Lenny is constructing meaning by observing the things happening in the society. She is inquisitive and tries to delve into the heart of truth. Until she grasps the proper meaning, she keeps on inquiring and searching. She has realized that male's fingers to be resolute, confident, hard and even callous. They are sadist. They are personified

and represent all the men. Their restlessness, fidgety, aggression and over-confidence is reflected in those organs. As sometimes these organs seems working with their own volition, men pretend of being helpless to control their excessive activity. It is nothing but pure eccentricity. The maximum degree of autonomy that male's fingers and toes are exercising is harmful to women. Once Lenny even tries to control Ice-candy-man's toe which was tormenting Ayah too much. "And, having at the same time to restrain his refreshed toes, I sit on them" (134).

As opposed to this female's fingers and toes are very submissive, docile, often trembling and not having any confidence. These are used in "tidying the beds" (78) "counting" (141) the things and "examining the contents" (161) as done by females in *Cracking India* or "in knitting or embroidery" (57) in *The Pakistani Bride*. Either she be Lenny's mother or Zaitoon from *The Pakistani Bride*, predicament is same. "Zaitoon learned to cook, sew, shop and keep room tidy" (55). These things are taken as customary solely to be done by female alone.

Their fingers are often seen to be lacking confidence not opposing anything. They are helpless and compelled to do so many things against their will like Zaitoon who forcefully gets married to Sakhi. Her father, in order make her agree to marry "wrenched at her slender, clinging fingers and pushed her away" and later even "groped for her and his hand closed round her throat" (158) threatening to kill if she denies. In Pakistani society, it is clear that "men, either they are husbands, fathers, or brothers are the generators of those rules. Words of 'shame', 'honour' and 'social position' have meanings only for women, men are free of such moral and religious bonds" (Alvi 89).

Even Feroza from *An American Brat* is watchful about fingers and toes like Lenny not only had she noticed the "bony toes" (70) of her tormentor but also gets

horrified seeing Mala's "too tiny" baby daughter with "her transparent fingers spread, lizardlike" (244). Such a condition of the fingers and toes carry the strong message regarding female of that society to be fragile. They lack the environment that a male enjoys. They are rendered powerless.

Fingers and toes used by the males in the novel *Cracking India* are mostly for the seduction purpose but In *An American Brat* more than seduction there seems to be power and authority aspect hiding. Males are using their fingers to dominate, overpower, cow down and show the females their superiority in an unchallenged manner.

Feroza, the main character from *An American Brat* too has become victim of the overbearing nature of males' fingers. Those fingers and toes are seen to be trying to harass, afflict, and torment her. She is always trying to get rid of that. But, it looks when she is trying to run far away, they are chasing her from this place to that. At the beginning she is victimized by the hand of customs inspector:

Like a shark attacking in calm waters the customs inspector with the discomfiting accent plunged his hands into the suitcase after the other and rummaged callously among the contents. Odd bits of clothing spilled over the sides: a slippery stack of nylon underwear, a cardigan.

(62)

Here, the way the customs inspector has searched for the items in the suitcase of Feroza is compared with a shark attacking in calm waters. His 'plunging' hands into the suitcase is something done carelessly with a sense of arrogance of having authority. And rummaging callously indicates the real nature of the customs inspector, at the end just to get underwear and cardigan. By all this, Feroza was being furious because those were the things that she never wished to be exposed in this way by a police

publicly. “Meanwhile the customs inspector was holding up a lacy pink nylon nightie he had fished out of the bag. It looked obscene pinched between his spatulate fingers” (64). After fishing out, he pinched nightie between his spatulate fingers. Here again, the officer’s roving fingers and its afflicting Feroza has been emphasized. He keeps on harassing her:

“It’s no use your lying. Here’s the evidence!” The inspector repeatedly stabbed a soggy-looking, tapered finger at the offending garment.

Feroza, who had only heard of seeing “red,” felt a crimson rush of blood blur her vision. Her tears, scorched by her rage, dried up. In a swift feline gesture, she snatched her mother’s nightgown from the Hispanic’s stubby, desecrating fingers and said, “To hell with you and your damn country. I’ll go back!”. (64)

We can find clear distinction between two states of male and female. As we find Officer’s action was shark like attacking in calm waters, there Feroza is compelled to perform ‘feline gesture’. He is a searcher. She is searched. He is using his soggy-looking, tapered finger whereas she is tearful scorched by her anger. Stubby and desecrating fingers of the officer insult her too much. Later she snatched her mother’s nightgown from the hand of officer and vents her own anger. In this example we can clearly see how the officer offended Feroza and how she has been helpless before him. A clear distinction can be seen.

And then man in the rest room. Another is by a man in elevator. Later too there come other men who have tried to have power over her by the use of their authoritative hand. Performance of these fingers and toes have been described by the writer at a greater length. Here is an instance how Feroza encountered a stranger in the restroom: “The bony toes, resting in shoddy rubber thongs, protruded from toilet

cubicle. The hairy shins disappeared abruptly behind the partly open half-door, giving the legs an eerily disembodied quality” (70).

Here, Sidhwa is attempting to make bodily organs carry the special meaning. ‘Bony toes’, ‘hairy shins’ and the ‘legs’ are the anatomical references. Her focus is to show the negative aspect of the stranger. Her motive is to show that he no longer is a good man. A man having bony toes, hairy shins and giving legs disembodied quality creates grotesque imagery in the mind of the readers. His whole personality is reflected by them. The message and the tone that the description carries is no longer a positive one.

Fear of a stalker stalking makes her cripple with the terror. “The faintest suggestion of her stalled feet; a barely discernible tremor beneath her fingers that, amplified by her tense acuity. Traveled up her arm and shot down her spine” (92). These lines clearly present the fear of Feroza that she had encountered when she had sensed that she was being stalked by a stranger. Her fear is represented by her feet, fingers and arm. In the previous description of the men in the restroom the man was presented as having bony toes, hairy shin and disembodied legs but here when the description of Feroza comes we can find a great change in the vocabularies. The previous vocabularies were fear-provoking whereas the present vocabularies are saturated with fear. It can be seen here. Her ‘stalled feet’, frightened fingers and the fear passing towards her spine through her arm shows her psychological state.

The dichotomy between male and female bodily organs’ reaction makes the gender difference a lot clear. “Even when individual men try not to embrace such a gender definition it is validated in the society at large as the male and indeed as the human identity” (Vaughan 2). There are certain stereotypes which are so deep-seated it is hard to eschew. Such a tendency always creates binary opposites. That divides

male and female and gives different characteristics. In the example above too represents the two states of mind and two states of being, one fearful and another feared one. It presents how unsafe females are even in the country like America.

Things are getting changed but have yet not been favorable for females as desired:

As soon as the man left, Feroza crept into bed and covered herself from head to toe with the blanket shook with trembling of her body. Manek stroked the material where her legs were. "It's all right: You're safe now... You're safe. Don't worry." When Feroza awoke some hours later, her body was racked with pain. Her throat was raw and parched from shouting. Her arms, her shoulders, her fingers, her calves hurt.

(94)

The above description too is loaded with anatomical references. All these bodily parts carry pain. Her arms, shoulders, fingers, calves are hurt. It means her movement is restricted now. She cannot move easily. This is the symbolic state of a victim, the female. Weakness, frailty are the part of them. Wherever they may be but ultimately they are to bear the same fate. As Carol in *The Pakistani Bride* rightly says (females all over the world are vulnerable). Sidhwa here too by means of hands and legs has tried to express the state of fear. They are communicating non-verbally and carrying the message across. Females cannot turn back and give answer to the tormentors. They have nothing to do except a means of escaping from them. They lack psychological strength, courage and easily get cowed down. They are bearing such a plight. Society has taught them to behave accordingly. Otherwise they are made to suffer.

In the novel, *An American Brat*, Feroza's mother, "Zareen's sleep became restless. Her dreams were crowded with the presence of outraged kin pointing long,

rebuking fingers. As if prodded by an ominous finger, she bolted upright in bed one night, her pulse pounding” (289).

The example above is enough to tell how Feroza’s mother Zareen is worried about her daughter. As she sensed that her daughter has gone astray, she cannot sleep well. Pointing ‘long and rebuking fingers’, her relatives come on her dream. Society is there with such fingers. The imagery of fingers presented here is obviously negative one. “Finally the sign itself becomes a source of knowledge about the world, once it enters the world of culture and distributed for general usage” (Danesi, *Messages* 18). Zareen knows the consequences of such fingers, the signs and its meaning. So, her attempt is to protect herself from being pointed by such fingers. She has that motive. Fingers here have been used to accuse, pinpoint mistake, basically raising fingers connotes that.

She feels prodded by an ominous finger. Here, in this sentence, it appears that she wants to save herself from such fingers. It means, in that society, whenever something immoral happens in somebody’s life or family, kith and kin start raising fingers. To describe the nature of fingers, the writer has used that sort of adjectives. It clearly shows that those fingers express the extremely painful state of mind. Otherwise how could Zareen see dream about that and would notice and remember after awakening. To save herself and her family members from pointing fingers is to lead a respectful life in Pakistan. Similarly Lenny from *Cracking India* sees dream of fingers and toes of soldier and even that of different animals. These organs are acting so many things to terrify Lenny. She too fears those terrifying fingers and toes that represent society with males enjoying supreme authority.

In fact, it was Zareen who first had thought of sending Feroza to America as she started pointing her fingers on the clothing (sleeveless sari-blouse) of her mother

so that she would be away from “narrow-minded attitude” (12) and have wider, broader and liberal view to look at the world but after a few years of her staying there, she is fully converted into an “American brat” (279), according to her mother. That was a worrying matter for her parents in Pakistan. As she had fallen in love with David, they had not liked her doing so. In order to take her back from the clutch of America and to stop her kith and kin from pointing the fingers towards them, she embarks on a journey. When Feroza shows her reluctance to return to Pakistan without finishing her graduate, Zareen is not ready to let her do her “graduate saduate” (240) She says, “Your father and I offered you our finger and you grabbed our whole arm!” (240) here again comes the reference of finger. ‘Finger’ and ‘arm’ can be taken as synecdoche. It is a proverbial statement which means somebody wanted to show favor thinking that the recipient would take a little portion out of it as signified by finger but the person intends to take the larger portion as signified by hand. Meaning here is that they had sent her to America for a few months but it has already been 3 years since she came to America but is reluctant to return. That was not a matter of worry for them but she ruined herself and got spoilt in the eyes of her mother, so she has expressed such type of resentment: “You have to listen to us” (240) and makes her do so.

She has “inert finger” (265) while catching photo of David sent by Feroza. It clearly shows one characteristic of female’s fingers; they cannot be bold and confident and perform the things in that way. Again when she goes to America and is in the mission to break the love affairs between Feroza and David off. Zareen gave him a fierce look. She pointed a trembling finger at him. “You get out” (304).

No doubt, she dares to say that sort of thing before David as that was a do-or-die situation. She has a mission to ‘rescue’ her daughter. Her finger was yet again

trembling. If she has to say that sort of matter then why trembling? It clearly shows that she lacks confidence and courage to say that though she might have said that in the fit of anger. Trembling finger connotes her state of mind not having any strong resolution. She truly lacks guts.

In all the three novels nowhere it has been mentioned about the females using their toes resolutely. These are inactive. Females do not dare to use them to express their desire by means of toes since they are regulated by social norms and values. As a result, these organs are not being used by them in a way men are doing. Society no longer digests and enjoys such activity done by women and therefore restricts such an act by all means.

In Pakistan only males are thought to have authority to do everything that they want. But females are to be just reactive. Only males are seen to have used their fingers and toes excessively. It is clear that moving toes is having authority. Only those who enjoy freedom, authority, those who do not feel ashamed and who are very confident, can use their toes. In Pakistani society, males are seen to have possessed the maximum level of freedom and the rights. It is because of that from minor boys to the matured men, all are expressing their sexual desire, their willingness to overpower females, and get authority by means of the exercise of their toes.

Male's Fingers/ Toes as Possessive Agent

Males are trying to possess women by using fingers. In *Cracking India*, Ayah by Ice-candy-man, Lenny by Cousin, and in *The Pakistani Bride*. Farukh's attitude towards Carol, Sakhi's attitude towards Zaitoon and his own mother is quite possessive.

It is seen females striving to maintain certain physical distance. Males are seen trying to be as near as possible to coax girls and better exercise their fingers and toes.

In a prominent book, *The Hidden Dimension*, Edward T Hall has presented the matter about physical distances between people in face-to-face interaction which can tell the degrees of formality and familiarity. There are four particular ranges:

Intimate Distance: up to 18 inches;

Personal Distance: 18 inches to 4 feet;

Social Distance: 4 to 12 feet;

Public Distance: 12 to 25 feet. (114)

Looking at the relations of most of the male and female characters, it is seen that males are trying to be too much intimate. Their main intention is to seduce and get undue benefit out of it. And once they become very nearer they tend to show their nature of being too much possessive. It's the reason why Carol gets angry with Farukh who always suspect if she 'touched' any men. She scolds, "hell with your madness. Your sadistic, possessive, screwed up love..." (111). Talking about Ayah, Masseur becomes "so assuredly possessive" and says to Ayah "You don't need to go anywhere... No one will touch a hair on your head" (168). Similarly Ice-candy-man wants to make Ayah fully own. For that he is exercising his own fingers and toes but cautions her not to get involved with anyone. He later abducts her and makes his wife forcefully. Cousin is also authoritative exercising his own fingers in cupping Lenny breast, deknickering her and making her touch his phallus but dictating her where to go and not to. He gets furious when she says that she went to Hira Mandi, a notorious place to meet the 'dancer' Ayah. According to him that is the bad place for any girl to be in.

Once Lenny Cousin asks her to insert her finger into the AC current. It is his sheer eccentricity and to do that as ordered by him is Lenny's naivety. Her nature of accepting everything without question has sometimes made her fall in difficulty.

“Although I’m cautious with cousin, wary of surprises, the gullibility that made me climb a stool to insert my finger into the AC current remains” (252). Most because of females’ gullibility and their not having power of questioning has made them land in difficulty. At the end it is the society which is responsible in making so. As they are barred from speaking, laughing and experiencing the thing on their own, they are likely to remain gullible. And its ultimate benefit will be to the men who will always get chance to be possessive in the pretext of females’ ignorance, gullibility and unintelligibility.

Fingers/ Toes as Metaphor

Bapsi Sidhwa has used fingers and toes with metaphorical implication. When we look at them and all the activities perform by them, it is easier to find how these organs are used to mean something different. Not only physical state but also the acts performed by them are quite metaphorical.

The fingers and toes have sometimes been used as symbols, sometimes simile, sometimes metaphor, and many a time even being personified. As a whole, these organs by any means are representing the whole patriarchy, authority, domination, male chauvinism and repressive society. They have come as tormentor, aggressor, possessor, and sexual transgressor. These organs have also come in the form of metonymy and synecdoche too.

If looked minutely ‘Breaking’ metaphor can appear as an another motif. Lenny says, “Countries can be broken, people slaughtered and cities burned—that I burst into tears. I feel will never stop crying” (229). Words like ‘ripping’, ‘tearing’, ‘cracking’ used profusely in the novels can be categorized under the same metaphor ‘breaking’. And India was in volatile situation and newly formed nation, Pakistan was not also in a peaceful state. “Hysteria mounted when the fertile hot lands of Punjab

were suddenly ripped into two territories” (14). Both the nations had people belonging to different religions. “The earth... was carelessly butchered” (14). The word ‘butchered’ is also metaphor which connotes the state of painful separation. It is because of that there were communal riots taking place. People were in utter despair. They were not only physically but also psychologically tormented. Women were kidnapped, raped and butchered. Lenny’s frustration, seeing all the bad happenings around her can be best assessed by these lines:

A crimson fury blinds me. I want to dive into the bestial creature
clawing entrails, plucking eyes, tearing limbs, gouging hearts,
smashing brains, but the creature has too many stony hearts too many
sightless eyes, deaf ears, mindless brains and tones of entwined
entrails. (144)

‘clawing entrails’, ‘plucking eyes’, ‘tearing limbs’, ‘gouging hearts’, ‘smashing brains’ all these terms are related to ‘breaking’ and the things done by hands. Males are using their fingers over females but females like Lenny as in example above seems to be expressing their paroxysm over animal that too unsuccessfully. In fact Lenny cannot kill the animal because of its having “stony hears’, ‘sightless eyes’, ‘deaf ears’, ‘mindless brain’ and ‘tones of entwined entrails’. All these anatomical aspects of the animal create fear in the heart of Lenny. The animal can be the symbol of all the Ayah’s admirers who later kidnapped Ayah and all other people involving themselves in violence. Those males appear that “they must have a lot of wood to chop. A lot of meat to cut. A lot of grass to mow.” They are grinding their weapons and being involved in riot. All these activities do not carry denotative meaning but quite metaphorical one meaning all these men are going to involve in riot and butchering the country.

Lenny's Psychology and Fingers/Toes

In Pierce's words: "Consider what effects, which conceivably might have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object" (34).

Exactly as said by pierce above, Lenny always brings the concept of the fingers and toes in her mind. These bodily organs of every admirer of Ayah have been imprinted into her mind. When she sees cousin's penis she compares it with finger. She has not been able to avoid the image of different fingers and happens to compare them instantly. She has a set conception regarding the fingers and toes of Ice-candy man, Masseur, Mr. Pen and many others. She is fast in doing so.

Lenny remains engrossed with the thought of the performance of fingers and toes of different men. Perhaps it is because of the admirers of Ayah who have their fingers and toes played deliberately, she has an impression in the mind that males are well-versed in using fingers and toes and they possess full authority too. She finds power lurking in these bodily organs. She makes sense of the adult world. Pierce opines "human beings make sense of the world through processes of induction, deduction and abduction" (Pierce 23). Lenny is also doing the same thing. She is adopting all these three methods for having knowledge about the outer world. She notices that artistry, ingenuity, suppleness to be the basic characteristics of male fingers whereas numbness, quivering, trembling are that of female. She has imprinted such stereotypes by watching the activities of these limbs. Wherever she goes, she little cares about other things. Her stare may not reach to see other many happenings but do not miss the play of fingers and toes, "I notice his [Ice-Candy man's] toes more vigorous" (132) later she says, "I observe Mr. Pen's fingers" (90). She is a minute observer of them. She looks at Masseur's fingers, "They are knowing fingers very

clever, they massage Ayah under her sari” (28). She seems deriving some sort of pleasure by seeing the varied performance of them. She compares cousin’s penis to a finger. “He [cousin] permits me to feel his belly button. It even feels like finger” (62).

She even compares power of men on the basis of fingers and toes that they possess. It clearly shows that she has made these organs a measuring rod to gauge the physical as well as sexual prowess of men. Her inclination is towards the men having active and vibrant fingers and toes.

For her, fingers and toes bear sexual overtones. They are the vehicle through which a sexual desire and its fervidity is brought to the fore. She sees, “Masseur’s consummate arm circles Ayah” (128). Men’s sexuality, therefore, depends on their toes. She has perceived the matter in that way. She remember what Masseur says “Lenny baby, don’t go far.” She feels that “his voice is gravelly with desire and it makes something happen in my stomach, as when Sharbat Khan, radiant with love, ogles Ayah” (128). She herself gets excited to get herself in such a situation. From such affairs, she has formed a level of knowledge about the adult world. Her final impression concerning males’ fingers and toes is that their excessive use has but brought suffering in females’ lives:

If those grown men pay to do what my comparatively small Cousin tried to do, then Ayah is in trouble. I think of 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 strangers’ hands hoisting her chocolate body into the cart. (253)

She is a minute observer of fingers and toes. When she goes to see Masseur after his death, at that time too she recalls the past and starts describing about his fingers, “I knew he was dead. But there was too much vigor about him still...and his tapering

fingers with their white crescents and trimmed nails appeared plaint and ready to assert their consummate skill” (186). It clearly shows that her mind is always engrossed to get the vision of fingers and toes. Instead of describing any other bodily parts, she is familiar in presenting the condition of fingers and therefore keeps on doing.

Fingers and Toes, Traditional Value and Social Cultural Practices

In the novel, *An American Brat*, a boy felt his right eyelid infected, then a matured woman named Khutlibai has a remedy for that. They have a belief that the rounding of his left big toe with black thread can solve the problem. It’s a traditional healing practice there:

“That too,” Khutlibai agreed, “but the only sure cure I know is to tie a black thread on the opposite toe. Which eye is the sty in?” She drew the boy to her. “It’s in the right eye.” Turning to the Ayah, She instructed, “Tie black thread-ordinary sewing thread will do- round his left big toe”. (28)

Another example is from Lenny’s world about how it is necessary to perform something symbolically to make a child sleep fearlessly. “Mother rushes to my side and bends over me. In the faint glow from the night-light I see her hand sweep my body as she symbolically catches mischievous spirits and banishes them with a loud snap of her fingers” (225). It’s a cultural matter. Culture is full of signs bearing meanings. “Every cultural entity becomes a semiotic sign” (Sherzer 79).

Lenny uses her fingers to count persons and things. Such a habit she inherited from her mother and she in turn undoubtedly did from her culture. Lenny says, “I count again, using my fingers like my mother does” (141).

Another example is drawn from act of Khutlibai who is seen “licking the tips of thumb and forefinger to separate the crisp fifty-rupee notes” (34). It’s also a tradition to do the thing in that way while counting money and separating them with saliva in fingers is prevalent in the Pakistani society and is basically done by females.

Doctor Mody, who is the family friend of Lenny, farts “coaxing” Mini Aunty to pull his index finger and says by doing so he can “exorcise the demon” (247). He does that without any shame. Perhaps it is the belief prevalent in the society that when the thing done like that, they really can exorcise the demon. And again Lenny tries catching his finger. As he cannot fart, “Nothing happens”, Lenny feels “disappointed” (248).

And another matter of tradition in Pakistan regarding limbs is not to expose too many legs. “Women mustn’t show their legs” (10) and even males are not supposed to do that much. But a picture of David, Feroza’s lover sent to Pakistan creates uproar. Zareen, the mother of Feroza feels “That Feroza should have chosen to send this photograph of a man with his legs bared almost to the balls was significant. Surely she must be aware of the assault on their parental sensibility” (205). In America it was easily acceptable to wear the dress like that but not in Pakistan. It’s because of that Feroza once had said to Jo, her American friend “ it’s not decent to show legs in Pakistan” (151) Feroza recalls “the Panjabi movie...heroine had tantalizingly lifted her sari to mid-calf and after a coy look, let it fall; the entire audience had burst into chorus of whistles and catcalls” (152). Generally in Pakistan females are supposed to be “wrapped from neck to toe” (152) as done by Feroza in her early days in America. That is the tradition there. In America that sort of exposing is thought to be okay but in Pakistan beyond social mores.

There is a tradition to follow while in marriage ceremony. Fingers and toes are particularly decorated at that time. When the protagonist of the novel, *The Pakistani Bride* is made ready to marry then “the henna platters were ceremoniously placed before the bride Zaitoon drew intricate floral designs on the soles of Nusrat’s feet and the palms of her hands, fashioning rings round her toes and staining fingertips with the orange-red paste” (91). Such an act obviously holds religious significance and culturally importance.

In this way, fingers and toes have their own cultural values and there are certain tradition attached to them. It means that certain meanings are drawn out of them.

Other Different Roles and Activities

In the Pakistani society, males and females have different domain to exercise their fingers and toes. Men are using fingers mostly in the activities which require strength whereas females are doing things with much passivity. We can categorize the different activities performed by males and females fingers in the texts differently. Activities performed by males’ fingers are like digging, chopping, cutting, tugging, cupping, pinching, poking, kicking, thrusting, jerking, snatching, dragging, hitting, kidnapping, stabbing, slaughtering, squeezing , gouging, tearing, ripping, dismembering, fanning, fishing out and prodding. These are the acts that require power to perform that Pakistani society has allowed males to do. They are more violent in nature. Similarly the activities performed by females’ fingers are like grasping, clinging, wiping, inserting, probing, crumple, fluttering, faltering, knitting, rubbing, stirring, holding, mowing, spraying, pinching and tidying.

In this way if properly analyzed all the activities needing fingers’ use, it is crystal clear that males’ fingers are used in breaking different things and creating

trouble to female and nation while females' fingers have been used in the activities needing less force, confidence and activeness. It is the society which has prescribed separate roles to male and female. It is the reason why in the Pakistani society, females are lagging behind in every aspect and are compelled to play a subordinate role bearing suppression, oppression and repression. They are compelled to think themselves weak and such a stereotypical images get reinforced by such activities. By looking at all the female characters of the three novels, it is clearly seen that their use of fingers lacks vibrancy, artistry and authority that males' fingers possess. It plays the role to continue the stereotypes and imprint the role of male and female in the psyche of all people living in the society. As a result, females right from their childhood start thinking themselves weak, servile and passive while the males just the opposite.

Binary Oppositions

To decipher the meaning in a clear-cut manner, semioticians bring the method of binary opposition. By doing so, one item is compared and contrasted with another item thereby churning out the meaning from that. Danesi is of the opinion that "this approach assumes that meaning is something that cannot be determined in the absolute, but only in relation to other signs" (*Messages* 16). The three novels also contain many binary oppositions among different male and female characters. To get a deeper meaning of the texts, it's very essential for us to look at the differences lying among them. Here goes the list-

Difference between male's fingers and female's finger:

Within this isotopy the following oppositions can be discerned:

Male

Female

callous fingers

chilblained fingers

strong/ confident fingers	trembling/ quivering fingers
cutting/ Slaughtering	knitting
cracking things	making things
spanking	touching
kicking	kicked
rough	smooth
snatching/grabing	groping/receiving/rummaging/ gripping
butchering/ shedding blood	daubing
rough	supple
disfiguring a female body	disfiguring a doll

Separate binary oppositions between and among individual male and female characters can be shown as follows:

Cousin Vs. Lenny from *Cracking India*

Cousin	Lenny
strong	polio- infected
confident	diffident
school going	drop out
unashamed	shy
proactive	reactive
dauntless	demure

Ice-candy-man Vs. Ayah from *Cracking India*

Ice-candy-man	Ayah
aggressive	submissive
crazy	Passive
gift-giver	gift-receiver
tormenter	tormented

abductor	abducted
----------	----------

sexual predator	victim
-----------------	--------

possessive	possessed
------------	-----------

Lenny's Father Vs. mother from *Cracking India*

Father	Mother
--------	--------

office	kitchen
--------	---------

bread winner	cooking
--------------	---------

strong	weak
--------	------

mature	childish/ childlike
--------	---------------------

economically independent	economically dependent
--------------------------	------------------------

beater	beaten
--------	--------

philanderer	chaste
-------------	--------

Sakhi Vs. Zaitoon from *The Pakistani Bride*

Sakhi	Zaitoon
-------	---------

husband	wife
---------	------

tormentor	tormented
-----------	-----------

aggressive	calm and composed
------------	-------------------

searcher	escapee
----------	---------

angry	shy
-------	-----

beater	beaten
--------	--------

possessive	docile
------------	--------

Feroza Vs. Different males from *An American Brat*

Feroza	other males (Customs officer, man in elevator and others)
--------	---

fearful	fear- provoking/ fearless
---------	---------------------------

victim	harasser
chased	chaser
confused	confident
searched	searcher

In this way, there are many stereotypical images prevalent in the Pakistani society regarding the roles of males and females. In Pakistan, both male and female have such images imprinted in their minds and are carrying their activities in a similar fashion. If any female characters like Feroza even slightly tries to go against this and do a bit different, she is punished by her family and society. There are so many cases of 'Fallen Women' too. Really, females are very vulnerable there.

As opposed to the feminine quality, Masculinity seems to be eulogized. Concept like males are strong and females are weak is in everyone's psyche. Females' being fragile has been seen and shown there. Lenny says by "holding Hari's calloused hand with my chilblained fingers, I walk on chilblained toes to Mrs. Pen's" (120). She is taking help of his finger even while crossing a road too. She has an established mindset to believe the contrary aspects lying between them.

At home, Lenny gets hints of the differences lying between her father and mother. "My wiry Father is strong, but Mother has the advantage of her voluptuous weight" (78). Her concept is that father is robust but mother has just her body. 'Voluptuous weight' is a metonymy for representing the mother's alluring body. Similarly Lenny valorizes the strong fingers and toes and sees sexual prowess in them. Her liking is tilted with the men having strong fingers and toes. Before them, females are powerless like Ayah who goes "beyond speech and her will given over to a maestro's [Masseur] virtuosity" (128).

In *The Pakistani Bride*, Zaitoon gets mesmerized by seeing the body of Sikh. “She saw masculinity in each line and feature in the width of his broad shoulders and wrists” (163). Such features are stereotypical images shown to prove the long-held belief that males are robust and such a person only can be sexually potent. Differences lie between male physicality and that of females. “She [Zaiton] traced the delicate work with her fingers and the smooth cloth beneath the gold felt wondrous. She draped the chaddar over her head and shoulders” (139). It clearly shows how a female has to act the things. They are to cover everything from head to toe. That shows their submissiveness.

Even in *An American Brat* male physicality is presented in the same manner. “Feroza liked the way his [David’s] head sat upon his shoulders, the width and strength of his neck which was like reined-in-stallion’s” (246). Males enjoy such a body and get their bodily parts compared with that of powerful stallion but females’ bodies are rather presented in such a way which proves their being weak ones. Their fingers are compared with talon of birds. Every bodily parts appear fragile. Her [Feroza’s] throat was raw and parched from shouting. Her arms, her shoulders, her fingers, her calves hurt” (94). Her limbs are shown to be quite frail ones. It shows her utter vulnerability.

In this way, there are so many cases to show the dichotomy between the physicality of males and females. Stereotypical images are scattered here and there throughout the texts. Society is playing part in the continuity of such images. It is the reason why females are being suppressed, oppressed and dominated. Their suppression and suffering are validated by society. It looks the society and the primarily the males there are less concerned regarding the discontinuation of such tendency.

V. Semiotic Value of the Anatomical Motifs

Through her three novels *Cracking India*, *The Pakistani Bride* and *An American Brat*, Bapsi Sidhwa presents anatomical motifs, fingers and toes bearing greater significance in terms of carrying the main theme of the novels i.e. female suppression. By means of these motifs, the novelist has tried to display how females' real state of being is reflected by means of their fingers and toes. Sidhwa has adorned these bodily organs with various adjectives and many a time even with the vocabularies of anthropomorphization to characterize them and to differentiate the actual condition of male and female prevalent in the Pakistani society.

The anatomical motifs have become signs and symbols thereby carrying particular meaning in the particular cultural arena. The state of these organs and the different activities that they are performing have been analyzed with the connotative meaning that they are carrying. When looked at them properly, there can be seen a clear distinction between male and female fingers and toes lying. When we see everything through Lenny's eyes in *Cracking India* and by following the third person omniscient narrators of the other two novels, we come to know the real state of these bodily organs. There have been frequent use of them to mean something in the context.

These bodily organs have played greater role in forwarding the social, cultural aspect of Pakistan. How females are treated is seen by looking minutely at the performance of fingers and toes of male. How the female folk in Pakistan are constantly harassed, how they have been victimized and are restricted to use their own fingers and toes freely have been brilliantly presented. In *Cracking India*, Ayah's sense of dignity, confidence and in a way sense of being is brutally crushed. Lenny "can't trust anyone" (231). She has lost her trust on any men by seeing all the

happenings nearby and many times even herself being victim by her Cousin. In *An American Brat*, Feroza runs here and there to save herself from men “leering at her” (91) with “stubby desecrating fingers” (64) always ready to attack her. Similarly in *The Pakistani Bride*, the newly-wed Zaitoon decides to “run away” not being able to bear her husband’s tyrannical animal trainee treatment (174). She does not see any other options to protect herself from Sakhi’s ruthless hands except escaping as “in flight lay her only hope of survival” (186).

As already said, these motifs have metaphorical bearing. By assessing the real meaning underneath, readers can have access to the real psyche of the characters. It is by no means difficult to find the differences lying between male and female in terms of rights and freedom being used by them differently. The freedom that Ice-candy-man is enjoying cannot be compared with that of Ayah. The state of Cousin is no match to Lenny. Feroza’s heart contains fear and time and again she feels “tremor beneath her fingers” (92). Zaitoon is compelled to bear “Ultimate humiliation” and feels that “There is no viler insult a woman could inflict on a man” (186). It shows the real predicament of females. Females are quite fragile and vulnerable. They are quite unable to move their fingers and toes in a way males are doing. They bear shivering, trembling and inert fingers. As opposed to this, males possess quite astute fingers that they use to overpower women and prove themselves more powerful performing different activities resolutely.

Sidhwa has deliberately made the state of fingers like that. Her intention is to serve the reality of society. In fact it is the particular society which has certain role in giving autonomy to the activities of fingers and toes. Males’ fingers are mostly used in splitting, cracking, dismembering, kicking, hurting and raping female body. But nowhere in the three novels, it is seen a female being active in using her fingers that

could display her sense of sexuality, power and authority. They have subdued their expression with their passivity all thanks to the society. Females are always dictated to do so. Whereas males are seen always taking sexual initiation, exercising power and authority by means of their fingers and toes. They have been tyrants, tormentors and predators there and are bent on being so. Females cannot do anything except endure males' tyrannical fingers and toes or just escape elsewhere not being able to tolerate anymore.

In this way, by these three novels, Bapsi Sidhwa has been able to sketch the true picture about how females in Pakistan are compelled to undergo immense sufferings, trail and tribulation because of their not having enough rights, freedom and the degree of autonomy to enjoy in comparison to males. Females are inhumanly suppressed, oppressed and dominated by the males and all these matters have been mirrored in their fingers and toes with a range of activities performed by them. through these anatomical motifs in the three novels, Bapsi Sidhwa is able to give a clear cut message that females in Pakistan are fragile, weak and utterly vulnerable.

Works Cited

- Alvi, Dildar Sofia, et al. "Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Bride*: An Alternative Viewpoint in Pakistani Literature." *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business* 3.10 (2012): 87-92.
- Anderson, Bøgh Peter. "Dynamic Semiotics." *Semiotics* 39.1/4 (2002): 161-210.
- Asher, Kiran. "Texts in Context: Afro- Colombian Women's Acitivism in the Pacific Lowlands of Colombia." *Feminist Review* 78 (2004): 38-55.
- Bacon, F. *The advancement of learning*. New York: Modern Library, 2001.
- Chandler, Daniel. *Semiotics for Beginners*. 6 Dec.2000. Web. 15 Sep. 2015.
<<http://visualmemory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/S4B/>>
- Danesi, Marcel. "Semiotics of Media and Culture." Ed. Paul Cobley. *The Routledge Companion to Semiotics*. Routledge (2010): 135-49.
- . "Edusemiotics." Forward. Ed. Inna Semetsky. *Semiotics Education Experience*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers (2010): vi-xi.
- . "The Interconnectedness Principle and the Semiotic Analysis Discourse." University of Toronto, *Applied Semiotics/ Sèmiotique appliquée* 3.6/7 (1999): 97-104.
- . *Messages, Signs, and Meanings*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2004.
- Eco, Umberto. *Semiotics and the philosophy of language*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.
- Gardiner, Judith Kegan. "Men, Masculinities, and Feminist Theory." *Kimmel* (2004): 35-41.
- Gee, James Paul. *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*. London: Rutledge, 1999.
- Hall, T. Edward. *The Hidden Dimension*. New York: Anchor Books, 1990.

- Huhtamo, Erkki. "Visual Communication and Semiotics." *Visual Communication*. Vol. 103 (2003).
- Iyengar, Ghanshyam G.A. "A Meeting of Streams: Bapsi Sidhwa as a Folk Historian and Myth Maker." *The Criterion: An International Journal in English* II.IV (2011): 1-6.
- Jamani, Jaipal Kamini. "A Semiotics Discourse Analysis Framework: Understanding Meaning Making in Science Education Contexts". Ed. Steven Hamel. In: *Semiotics Theory and Applications*. New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2000.191-208.
- Jovicic, Jelena . Rev. of *The Quest of Meaning* by Marcel Danesi. "The Quest for Meaning: A Guide to Semiotic Theory and Practice." *University of Toronto Quaterly*. 78.1 (2009): 149.
- Klarer, Mario. *An Introduction to Literary Studies*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Kleist, M. Jacquelynn. "More than Victims: Versions of Feminine Power in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India*." *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies* 3.2 (2011): 69-81.
- Krauss, Chen and Purnima Chawala. "Nonverbal Behaviour and Nonverbal Communication: What Do Conversational Hand Gestures Tell Us?" *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. Vol. 28 (1996): 389-450.
- Lloyd A., Sally. "The Darkside of Courtship: Violence and Sexual Exploitation." *Family Relations* 40.1 (2000):14-20.
- Lone, Hussain Iflikhar. " Parsis Moving Beyond Custom and Tradition: BAPSI SIDHWA's- A voice to voiceless." *ABHINAV* 1.6 (2010): 6-11.
- MacKinnon, Catharine. *Feminism unmodified*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987.

- Martin, Bronwen and Ringham Felizitas. *Dictionary of Semiotics*. London: Cassell Wellington House, 2000.
- McNeill, David. "So You Think Gestures Are Non-verbal?" *Psychological Review* 92.3 (1985): 350-71.
- Michalski, Joseph H. "Explaining Intimate Partner Violence: The Sociological Limitations of Victimization Studies." *Sociological Forum* 20.4 (2005): 613-40.
- Mikkola, Mari, "Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender." Ed. Edward N. Zalta. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 21 Nov. 2012. Web. 14 Sep. 2015. <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2012/entries/feminism-gender/>>.
- Okin, Susan Moller. *Justice, Gender and Family*. New York: Basic Books, 1989.
- Porcar, Codruta. "A Semiotic Approach to Communication." *Journal for Communication and Culture* 1.1 (2011): 20-29.
- Poyatos, Fernando. "Language and Nonverbal Systems in the Structure of Face-to Face Interaction." *Language Communication* 3.2 (1983):129-140.
- Samantaray, Swati. "The Use of Chromatics in Toni Morrison's Novels." *Language in India* 13.12 (2013): 286-95.
- Schroth, Mackenzie. "The Semiotics of Sexual Identity: Myth vs. History." *Honors Projects in English and Cultural Studies*. Vol. 3 (2011): 1-57.
- Semetsky, Inna, ed. "Moral Stumbling: When Ethics Recapitulates Ontology." *Semiotics Education Experience*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2010. 53-70.
- Sherzer, Dina. "A Theory of Semiotics by Umberto Eco; Coup d'oeil sur le développement de la sèmitique by Roman Jakobson." *Language in Society* 6 .1 (1977):78-82.
- Sidhwa, Bapsi. *An American Brat*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1994.

- . *Cracking India*. Washington: Milkweed Editions, 1991.
- . *The Pakistani Bride*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1990.
- Sneed, Mark. "Rev. of *The Quest for Meaning* by Marcel Danesi, "*The Quest for Meaning: A guide to Semiotic Theory and Practice.*" *The Bible and Critical Theory*.4.1 (2008):171-72.
- Solomonick, Abraham. "Establishing Semiotics as a Science." *Journal for Cartography*. Vol. 1 (2008): 1-2.
- Thellefsen, Torkild, et al. "A semiotic Note on Branding." *Cybernetics and Human Knowing*. 14. 4 (2005): 59-69.
- Vaughan, Genevieve. "Feminist Semiotics for Social Change: the Mother or the Market." *Mimesis*. 2004.
- Wales, Katie. "Semiotics." *A Dictionary of Stylistics*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001. 354-55.
- Wang, Haiyan. "Nonverbal Communication and the Effect on Interpersonal Communication." *Asian Social Science*. Qingdao University of Science and Technology (2009): 155-58.
- Winter, David G. "Power, Sex, and Violence: A Psychological Reconstruction of the 20th Century and an Intellectual Agenda for Political Psychology." *Political Psychology* 21.2 (2000): 383-404.
- Zhou, Hui and Tingqin Zhang. "Body Language in Business Negotiation." *International Journal of Business and Management* 3.2 (2008): 90-96.