

Chapter 1

Introduction

Ice-Candy-Man/Cracking India (1988), Bapsi Sidhwa's third and till date the most celebrated and widely quoted novel is one of the most powerful narratives of recent times. In it, Sidhwa relives the trauma of Partition carnage and communal riots through the innocent, and hence objective, impressions of Lenny, an eight-year old, polio-inflicted child. What enriches the thematic pattern of the novel is its narrative design: though filtered through the innocent eyes and mind of a girl-child, there are layers of subtle and sophisticated narrative ploys adopted by the novelist to make the plot more poignant and gripping. Whatever we perceive going through the novel is all the observation and narration of the child narrator. Lenny tells us in the very beginning of the novel: "My world is compressed." This self-imposed and culturally constructed limitation is successfully overcome by Lenny as she naively presents her comments on human relationships and their inscrutability against the backdrop of an unfolding history. With a child's wonder she observes social and demagogic changes, and interesting sidelights, occasionally indulging in judgment making. In course of observation of the events taking place in her surroundings, her naive perception gets slowly invaded with a mature one. This is how she advances towards the world of maturity, losing her state of innocence. The political, social and religious upheavals of the period all contribute to her growing up.

The style of narration employed in the novel appears at first sight to be extremely simple. However, upon scrutiny, this simplicity vanishes. Occasionally, the language used is such that its utterance by a young girl is hardly credible. This is illustrated by the following quotation:

My nose inhales the fragrance of earth and grass-and the other fragrance that distils insights. I intuit the meaning and purpose of things. The secret rhythms of creation and mortality. The essence of truth and beauty. I recall the choking hell of milky vapors and discover that heaven has a dark fragrance. (28)

Passages like this make the reader aware of the presence of the author in the child Lenny, voicing her adult reactions to her childhood situation. Indicating the intrusion of Sidhwa in the narration of the story, Rashmi Gaur remarks, "Lenny narrates the incidents and the characters of the novel to the readers, commenting and ruminating on various issues, also deftly camouflaging the writer's omnipresence" ("Child" 70).

. Bapsi Sidhwa: Life and Works

Bapsi Sidhwa was born in Karachi in undivided India in 1938, to Tehmina and Peshoton Bhandara who belonged to the Parsee community. Soon after Sidhwa was born her family moved to Lahore. She was brought up and educated in Lahore. She contracted polio at two which paralyzed her leg and affected her entire life. Sidhwa was a solitary and lonely child. Her parents were advised by doctors not to send her to school. She spent her time daydreaming and listening to stories told by servants. A governess taught her to read and write and introduced her to *Little Women* which made a great impression. She spent her teen years reading voraciously. She graduated from the Kinnard College for Women, Lahore, in 1956. The very next year she fell in love with Gustad Kermani, a sophisticated Bombay businessman and married him. The marriage, though, did not last long. After living in Bombay for five years she got divorced and went back to Pakistan. She remarried Noshir Sidhwa, a Parsi businessman in Lahore. She spent her time as a housewife and had two daughters and a son.

Sidhwa took special interest in movements for women's rights, she was the secretary of Mother's and Children's House, a shelter for destitute women; President of International Women's Club, Lahore; Chairperson of Social Welfare Committee, Punjab Club; and Pakistan's representative at the Asian Woman's Congress of 1975. In 1991 she received Sitara-I-Imtiaz, the highest Pakistani award in the arts which can be bestowed on a citizen.

Sidhwa is the author of four internationally acclaimed novels. Her works have been translated into French and German and are taught as part of academic curriculum in some American universities. Since moving to the United States in 1983, Sidhwa has received numerous literary awards both in the US and abroad. Her novel *Cracking India* was named a Notable Book of 1991 by the New York Times and won the Literature Prize of the 1991 Frankfurt Book Fair. In 1993, She received an award of US\$ 105,000 from the Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Fund. She was a Bunting Fellow in 1986-87 at Radcliffe College, Harvard. She settled in Houston, USA in 1984 along with her husband and accepted the dual US citizenship. She has taught at a number of American Universities, including Princeton, Rice University, Brandeis, Mt. Holyoke and University of Houston.

Sidhwa's novels present the vivid accounts of the Parsi mind, social behavior, customs and value systems. She has always written in English although she has complete command over Gujarati, Punjabi and Urdu also. Her English though is punctuated with Parsi proverbs and Gujarati and Urdu words. The verbal jugglery which she uses in her novels makes her style postmodernist. Words of common parlance like *atash*, *Gathas*, *burgas*, *goondas*, *Arrey*, *janals*, *yaar* are frequently used in her novels to convey the local ambience. Sidhwa's first novel is *The Crow-Eaters* which was published in 1980. The novel hilariously depicts the lives and fortunes of

the Junglewallas, a Parsi family in British India. The novel was criticized by some critics and members of the Parsi community for presenting an unfair and rather a ribald picture of the community. The novel is humorous and also farcical at times, with occasional serious touches, accurately portraying the society it is set against. The novel ends with the threat of Partition looming large in the background.

The Bride or The Pakistani Bride, as it is titled in India is Sidhwa's second novel which was published in 1983. It is a tragic story of the interaction of two different cultural paradigms– the patriarchal mountainous tribe and the westernized urban plain. It is based on a true story which underscores the suppression of women in the traditional male-dominated society of Pakistan. A girl was taken from the plains to the mountainous regions by an old tribal to marry his nephew. Unable to put up with her harsh life she ran away and survived for fourteen days in the rugged mountains of Karakoram. Her husband and the tribesman ultimately hunted her down and beheaded her. Sidhwa developed this into a novel, giving an optimistic twist to the source episode. Dealing with individual stories, the novel lays bare the violence which the women have to face in a repressive society. The protagonist Zaitoon is pitted against a hostile environment and with sheer will power and grit is able to overcome obstacles strewn in her path.

An American Brat (1994) is Sidhwa's fourth novel. Unlike her other novels, in this novel, the locale is shifted to the United States of America, yet the authorial concentration is still focused on problems related with individual and collective identities of her people. It bears the theme of migration and re-adjustment. The novel narrates the experiences of Feroza Ginwalla, the rebellious daughter of Cyrus and Zareen Ginwalla, who is sent from Gulberg, Lahore to Denver, Colorado for some exposure to a liberal way of life. The young woman journeys through three cultures-

her own community's Parsi culture, her country Pakistan's Islamic culture and the Western culture of the United States of America. Feroza, though shy and traditional, quickly gains independence once she is in America. Her journey towards independence involves several choices, almost all of them forcing her to move away from the rigid, constricting mores of her childhood society. The protagonist partially reflects Sidhwa's appreciation of freedom she was able to find as a woman in America. Like most diasporic writing by authors from the Indian subcontinent, *An American Brat* also takes up the socio-political complexities of contemporary Asian people, weaving history and politics inseparably in its fictional narrative.

Sidhwa's third novel *Ice-Candy-Man* came out in 1991. In the United States of America, Sidhwa's Publishers Milkweed Editions published it under the title of *Cracking India*. Using a child narrator, Sidhwa presents the kaleidoscopically changing socio-political realities of the Indian sub-continent just before the partition. This extremely taut and highly sensitive story takes up the themes of communal tensions, using religion as a way to define individual identity, territorial cravings, political opportunism, power and love, and binds them together in a very readable narrative. It presents the Parsi dilemma of retaining allegiance to political masters, as well as Parsi Pakistani perspective of Partition.

. Literature Review on *Cracking India*

Ice-Candy-Man possesses several layers of connotative and enigmatic interpretations. Critics have vociferously commented on the political, allegorical, social and feminist interpretations of the narrative. Some critics have analyzed the narrative through feminist perspective, some have taken it as a true portrayal of political and social mayhem during the Partition, some others have seen it as a novel of formation, and some critics, rather than emphasizing on the content of the novel,

have focused on the way it gets narrated. Besides, some of the critics have also taken this novel as a postcolonial text.

Rashmi Gaur in her article "Women characters and the Feminist Perspective in *Ice-Candy-Man*" highlights the role of women characters in *Ice-Candy-Man*. She has positioned the women characters far above the male ones on the basis of what their roles are in the novel. She has stressed upon their assertiveness to handle the situations. She says:

Ice-Candy-Man has strong women characters who want to forge their independent identity. In a patriarchal set-up which is essentially discriminatory against women and emphasizes on conditioning them for life-long and willing subjugation to men, the women of *Ice-Candy-Man* are not only conscious of their desires but also eagerly assertive about their independent handling of situations. The male characters, despite the fact that they initiate almost all events of the novel, remain peripheral and apathetic, lacking the will to change and transcend their circumstances. ("Women" 53)

In Gaur's words, the women characters "Privilege their will and strength" keeping intact their feminine qualities of compassion and motherhood ("Women" 53). She further remarks that *Ice-Candy-Man* "can undoubtedly be termed as a feminist novel- the traditional novel eulogizes the heroic qualities of men only, while in feminist narratives women acquire such attributes by their active involvement in and control of situational contexts" ("Women" 53).

Likewise, Subhash Chandra also brings to the fore the female protagonists disregarding their male counterparts. According to him, the female protagonists bear the major responsibilities going beyond the gender-imposed constraints, whereas the

male ones indulge in destructive violence and disintegrative action. The latter have nothing to do with the decisive roles in the novel. He writes:

The analysis of *Ice-Candy-Man* reveals that the female characters pulsate with a will and life of their own. While these characters are unselfconscious of the biological essentialism of their sex, they cut loose the constraints imposed by the gender which is a social construct (and can therefore be deconstructed), and which has come into existence through centuries of biased, motivated and calculated orchestration of the aggressive patriarchal postulates. (115)

Talking about the dominance of female characters in the novel, he further puts, "*Ice-Candy-Man*, though ostensibly a hero-oriented novel, subtly but effectively subverts the ingrained elements of patriarchy, privileging female will, choice, strength along with the feminine qualities of compassion and motherhood" (115-116).

The female characters are not only shown as possessing assertive roles in the novel but are also shown as being exploited and tortured upon. How Lenny, the protagonist, feels women's subjugation and suffering is rightly commented by Pallavi in her article "*Ice-Candy-Man: A saga of Female suppression and Marginalization*":

The whole story has been narrated by the female protagonist Lenny who relates the horrors of violence and her personal observations and reactions. The protagonist not only observes but also analyses men's lascivious and degrading attention towards women, voraciousness of male sexual desires, women's plight as they are reduced to the status of sexual objects, and relates the peculiar disadvantages, social and civil, to which they are subjected. (124)

Likewise, Deepika Bahri also sees the novel through a feminist point of view. According to her, *Cracking India*, besides a Partition novel, is a true portrayal of all sorts of violence perpetrated upon women during the Partition and so, it represents many such stories of violence which remained untold in the history. To quote Bahri,

Sidhwa's is not only a novel about cracking India, but it is also a story told from a female perspective about the unique price paid by women in the violence of partition. The story of the abduction, rape, prostitution and recovery of a parsee family's Hindu maid in Pakistan is an attempt to retrieve from silence the many untold stories that have died unspoken on the lips of their hapless protagonists. (218)

Unlike these critics, Kavita Daiya is of the opinion that not only the females but the males were also the target of different sorts of violence: "In *Cracking India*, Sidhwa stresses the materiality of how male as well as female bodies become different kinds of sites for violent sexual, economic, and communal transactions during decolonization – some that have little to do with nationalism" (222).

Some critics have taken this narrative as a photographic representation of the lives of people at a critical point in history. In their view, *Ice-Candy-Man* is free of melodramatic or extravagant quality that can be found in the novels by Rushdie, Tharoor or Khuswant Singh. Vanashree Tripathi in his article "Ambiance of the Backyard and the Dark Corners of History: Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*" writes:

Ice-Candy-Man is a sincere and successful effort to artistically portray the life in the subcontinent at a crucial juncture in history without indulging in hostile parodistic melodrama or extravagant, vociferous pyrotechniques one may find in the recent subcontinental fiction.

While the latest novels by Rushdie, Tharoor or Khuswant Singh appear

to be guided by a selfconscious, subversive ideology, Sidhwa's "truth telling" narration transcribes the destructive impulse of the time with such compassion in an unpretentious idiom that even most anaesthetized or cynical reader feels touched. (116-117)

Many of the critics have focused their study of *Ice-Candy-Man* on the protagonist's awareness of her religious and gender related identities. Rashmi Gaur in her article "The Child Narrator in *Ice-Candy-Man*" mentions:

The innocence of her childhood days is suddenly snatched from her when she witnesses the fissiparous tendencies of the rise, the growing communal hatred and open gestures of arson and violence. Her familiar compressed surroundings suddenly distort into a topsy-turvy world in which values and allegiances shift suddenly. [. . .] She becomes aware of her religious and gender related identities – her consciousness of these multiple layers of existence becomes her initiation into maturity. (74)

Comparing the protagonist, Lenny, with different fictional characters by various writers, Gaur further says:

"Like Rudyard Kipling's Kim or the fourteen-year old narrator in Doris Lessing's story 'The Old chief Mschlanga', Lenny's growing up is marked as much by a loss of political and racial egalitarianism as by her developing sexuality." Lenny is also compared to the personal that Chaucer adopts in his prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, rendering credibility by being almost a part of the reader's consciousness. ("Child"72)

Concentrating upon Lenny's understanding of gender disparity, Pallavi views:

Lenny as a narrator moves from one phase of her life i.e., childhood to adolescence. During this journey, she understands the changes taking place in the society, men's attitude towards women and women's subjection. The whole phase helps her to develop a more mature vision towards life. She gives a closer look at the relationship between men and women which awakens her young mind to develop a vision of her own. (124).

Novy Kapadia, in her article "Communal Frenzy and Partition: Bapsi Sidhwa, Attia Hosain and Amitav Ghosh" terms *Ice-Candy-Man* as a novel of turmoil: "*Ice-Candy-Man* is a novel of upheaval which includes a cast of characters from all communities. There are Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis, so a multiple perspective of Partition emerges as viewed by all the affected communities" (77).

Some critics have also seen *Ice-Candy-Man* from postcolonial perspective. In their terms, *Ice-Candy-Man* is no mere Partition novel; it has great significance as a literary work from postcolonial point of view. They are of the opinion that *Ice-Candy-Man* is a rewritten history of the subcontinent. One of these is Rahul Sapra who, in his article "A postcolonial Appraisal of Sidhwa's Fiction" puts his views as:

Bapsi Sidhwa's fiction deals with both the pre-and post-colonial period of the Indian subcontinent. Her fiction not only brings to life the horror of the partition but also vividly portrays the complexities of life in the subcontinent after Independence. [. . .] she re-writes the history of the subcontinent. In *Ice-Candy-Man*, Lenny, the young narrator, in the process of narrating the story of her family re-writes the history of the

subcontinent, thereby undercutting the British view of history imposed on the subcontinent. (197)

Ice-Candy-Man is appreciated not only for its genuine depiction of Partition upheaval of 1947 India but also for its narrative design. Some critics, rather than focusing on the content of the novel, have emphasized the novelist's strategy of presenting the story i.e., choosing a girl-child narrator to narrate the whole story. How the novel challenges the masculinist master narratives is rightly commented by Ambreen Hai. Cracking India, to quote Hai,

challenges the centrality and exclusivity of Pakistani and Indian masculinist master narratives by impudently locating its narrational perspective in the figure of a female child of a minority community. By refracting national history through a gendered consciousness, Sidhwa shifts historiographic perspective to those not usually regarded as central to that history. (389)

Stressing Sidhwa's stratagem to present a true record of political and social disorder during Partition through an innocent child, Beerendra Pandey observes:

The choice of innocent, naive Lenny as the narrator helps Sidhwa present a fairly credible account of the politics and havoc of the partition. In this regard, Lenny resembles Chaucer's persona in "The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales", persuading the readers with her observation, reporting and judgment by being a part of their consciousness. (4)

Similarly, the novelist's choice of a naive narrator is also commented thus:

The use of a girl-child as a narrator of a story to understand and capture the horrifying details of a turbulent history is unique in itself.

Told in the present tense and first person through an eight year old girl, the novel beautifully captures the human struggle of the Partition days, though simultaneously the device seems to put some constraints on the novelist. (Gaur, "Child" 71)

Spotlighting that Sidhwa is actually telling her childhood experiences through the mouth of a child narrator, Pashupati Jha and Nagendra Kumar say:

. . . that the adult Lenny is actually reliving the past in order to make sense of the events that baffled her when she was too small to comprehend; simultaneously, she restricts herself to the experience and sensory perceptions of the child she was. Thus we are given a double – even dialogic – perspective that layers innocence on experience, introspection on hindsight. (218)

Although many critics have written about the child protagonist Lenny's understanding of social, psychological, religious and gender-related issues, they have not talked about her understanding of the world of politics and sex. The researcher here tries to explore and show the politico-cultural and sexual awareness developed in her. He will concentrate upon Lenny's initiation into an entirely different culture and her understanding of human situations, anxiety, pain, suffering and joy and thus try to prove *Cracking India* as a bildungsroman, i.e. a novel of formation. For this, the researcher will focus upon the protagonist's observation and narration of the events taking place around her during the Partition of Punjab in 1947.

I have planned to carry out this research dividing it into four chapters. In the first chapter, I have first introduced my thesis. Then I have briefly discussed the novelist's life and works, and have presented the critiques of *Cracking India* by

different scholars, i.e. Literature Review on *Cracking India*. In my second chapter, I will discuss the narrative technique and different types of points of view. I will also define the term Bildungsroman that is the key term of this research. The third chapter will consist of a textual analysis. With a conclusion in the fourth chapter, I will complete this research.

Chapter 2

I. Narrative Technique

Everything we read in a novel comes to us through some sort of telling. We are told what happens in a novel; no matter how successful the novelist is in making a scene seem dramatic, it is never dramatic in the way that a play or film is. We may feel that we 'see' but we see as a result of what we visualize in response to a narrative, not an enactment. Even in those relatively rare cases, where a novelist makes extended use of the present tense – a technique which gives an added sense of immediacy to the narrative, we are still told what is happening rather than witnessing it directly as we can do with a play or a film.

Narrative is a term that has been derived from the French word 'narratif' and refers to spoken or written account of connected sequential events. It requires mainly a teller (narrator), a story and events. The combination of all these elements constitutes a narrative. Narrative is the recounting of past happenings which often seem to have been seen or heard before but those happenings may be remote from the teller and his audience. That is why narrative is retrospective.

Some tellers are present within the narrative and quite intrusive while others are enigmatic and distant. There must be a narrator though he seems to be invisible in the story. He is invisible in the sense that he does not present himself as an actor, though sometimes narrator participates in the action. The narrator narrates the story in a chronological order. There is representation of all the primary and essential information about characters, events and setting without which the narrative would not be well formed. The reader sees the events of a novel to a greater degree through the eyes of the narrator. Therefore, it is obvious that the narrator is an extremely significant element in a novel. The story is the basic unshaped material and comprises

events, characters and setting. In order to discuss and describe a story, we have to adopt the medium of language.

In his book *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction*, Michael J. Toolan gives some typical characteristics of narrative:

. . . narratives often seem to have bits we have seen or heard, or think we have seen or heard before. . . and the kind of things people do in narrative seem to repeat themselves over and over again . . .

Narratives typically seem to have a "trajectory". They are expected to go somewhere with some sort of development, and even a resolution, or conclusion, provided. We expect them to have beginnings, middles and ends.

Narratives have to have a teller and that teller no matter how background or "invisible", is always important. In this respect, despite its special characteristics, narrative is language communication like any other, requiring a speaker and some sort of addressee. (4)

Thus, narrative is a sort of conversation between a teller and audience. It involves the recalling of happenings that may be spatially and temporally distant from the teller and his audience. In any narrative, the role of narrator is very crucial.

Different scholars have defined narrative differently. Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg in the book *The Nature of Narrative* define narrative by giving emphasis on the presence of a story and a story teller: "By narrative we mean all those literary works which are distinguished by two characteristics: the presence of a story and a story teller" (4).

Traugott and Pratt define narrative as "essentially a way of linguistically representing past experiences whether real or imagined" (qtd. in Toolan 6). The

emphasis on representation of past experience is important and one of the reasons for our sense of detachment – the 'cutoffness' of narrative. At this point 'past experience' needs to be interpreted broadly. Even if the narrative is futuristic science fiction or a novel with future reference or a novel in the present tense, the reader encounters and grasps it 'as events that have already happened.'

Michael J. Toolan defines narrative, "as a perceived sequence of non-randomly connected events" (7). M.H. Abrams defines narrative by giving importance to the events, characters and their activities. He says, "A narrative is a story, whether told in prose or verse, involving events, characters, and what the characters say and do" (173). Talking about the basic requirements of narrative, the early formalists (Propp, Thomashevsky, etc.) spoke of 'fabula' and 'sijuzhet' roughly equivalent to the more recent French (Benventiste, Barthes) terms 'histoire' and 'discourse'. These are roughly equivalent to Chatman's English terms 'story' and 'discourse'. It means narrative requires a basic description of the fundamental events of a story in their natural chronological order. For the literary critics, the technique is much more interesting than the story. The story seems to focus on the pre-artistic genre and character pattern of narratives whereas discourse looks at the artistic and individualized working with and around genres, the convention, the story patterns, the distinctive styles, voices or manners of different authors.

The question of who narrates the story or through whose eyes the reader sees it is an important thing for the literary craftsmen, artists and critics. The story writer establishes a certain perspective through which the reader is presented with the characters, dialogue, action, setting, and events which constitute the narrative in a work of fiction. This very perspective can be termed as "Point of View". According to M.H. Abrams, "Point of View signifies the way a story gets told" (231). Authors use

different ways to present a story and even a single work consists of diversity of methods. The various ways of story-telling are briefly discussed here.

Third Person Points of View

In this type of narration, the author makes his narrator tell the story in the third person. The narrator remains outside the story proper. He refers to all the characters in the story either by name or by pronouns - he, she, and they. The narrator can move from one place to another and make a shift from character to character. He has privileged access to character's feelings, motives, attitudes and thoughts. In this case the narrator is said to be omniscient. The omniscient narrator often tells the story about what has already happened. One of the most important features of this device is that the narrator not only informs the readers of the ideas and emotion of his characters but also reveals in varying degrees his own biases whether by direct intervention or by other means. He has also power to criticize and pass judgment on characters as well. He is no other than an interfering narrator. Such type of narrator is called an intrusive narrator. Abrams defines the intrusive narrator as "one who not only reports, but also comments on and evaluates the actions and motives of the characters, and sometimes expresses personal views about human life in general" (232). Many novelists including Henry Fielding, Jane Austen, Dickens, Thomas Hardy and Leo Tolstoy wrote in this fashion. The following extract from *Pride and Prejudice* bears the (intrusive) omniscient point of view:

Lydia was a stout well-grown girl of fifteen, with a fine complexion and good-humoured countenance, a favourite with her mother, whose affection had brought her into public at an early age. She had high animal spirit and a sort of mature-self consequence, which the attention of officers, to whom her uncle's good dinners and her easy manners

recommended her and increased into assurance. She was very equal, therefore, to address Mr. Bingley on the subject of the ball and abruptly recommended him of his promise, adding that it would be the most shameful thing in the world . . . if did not keep it. His answer to this sudden attack was delightful to her mother's ear. (47)

The beginning of the passage appears to have an objective point of view because it reports simply what Lydia looks like. But as we come a little bit down the narrator apparently gives his own judgment on Lydia's being popular. He says that mother's affection brings her popularity. Other remarks which the narrator makes are that Lydia's animal spirits attracted officers and uncle's good dinner and her easy manner gave assurance to her to address Bingley on the subject of the ball. These remarks may be or may not be true. These are only guesses that the narrator makes. The narrator is giving only his judgment. These comments may not correspond to what Lydia is but what the narrator tells us she is. So the narrator here is totally omniscient.

In addition to this, even in the omniscient print of view, the narrator can be a commentator or even a neutral observer. The narrator stands between the reader and the story to clarify a point and to make confident interpretations. The narrator has no access to the inner states of characters involved and reports only what he witnesses and genuinely discovers. The readers can have no inference from the narrator. What the reader has to follow is the process of 'acting himself out'. The reader has to make an effort to get to the meaning. This is an objectified method in which the narrator's voice becomes neutral. The reader is left helpless and has to get to the meaning through action, data, dialogue and specific temporal and spatial framework of the story. This type of omniscient narrator is called unintrusive or impersonal omniscient

narrator. Most of Ernest Hemingway's short stories bear this type of narrator. In Jane Austen's novels also we find this impersonal though omniscient point of view to a large extent. The following excerpt from *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen is a perfect example of this type:

Fanny Price was at this time just ten years old, and though there might be much in her first appearance to captivate, there was at least nothing to disgust her relations. She was small of her age with no flow of complexion, nor any other striking beauty, exceedingly timid, and shy and striking from notice; but her hair though awkward, was not vulgar, her voice was sweet, and when she spoke, her countenance was pretty. Sir Thomas and Lady Betram received her very kindly and Sir Thomas seeking seeing how much she needed encouragement, tried to be all that was conciliating; but he had to work against a most untoward gravity of department-and Lady Betram without taking half so much trouble, or speaking on word where he spoke ten, by the mere aid of good-humored smile, became immediately the less awful character of the two. (12)

The passage describes Fanny Price on her arrival at 'Mansfield Park'. The narrator seems to be standing in the corner of Mansfield Park when Fanny made an appearance before her aunt and uncle. The narrator gives details about Fanny's timidity, shyness and her modest appearance. Everything described can be observed easily or guessed at by an intelligent onlooker. Readers are directly taken into Fanny's mind and have not to depend on what information the narrator pours down.

Now it is clear that the narrator narrates the story either by reporting or passing judgment on the character's thought, feeling, attitude and action. When he

reports or comments, he may not be narrating the event. We are not to base our belief in him. The judgment he makes and the interpretation he infers may not go with the beliefs and values, which the author holds. Such narrator is fallible or unreliable. To say unreliable narrator is to say that the narrator tells something on the surface level but the meaning can be different in its deep level. What he narrates contrasts with what he intends to say in the story. The reader is expected not to believe him in such a case. He needs to introduce correcting factor of his own into the narrative and this makes the narrative ironical. The marriage ceremony of Mr. Knightley and Emma in the final part of the novel *Emma* has this ironic touch:

The wedding was very much like other weddings, where the parties have no taste for finery and parade; and Mrs. Elton from the particulars detailed by her husband thought it all extremely shabby, and very inferior to her own—very little with white satin, very few lace veils; a most pitiful business; Selina would stare when heard of it – But in spite of these deficiencies, the wishes, the hopes, the confidence, the predictions of the small band of true friends who witnessed the ceremony were fully answered in the perfect happiness of the union.

(484)

The narrator describes the marriage ceremony of Mr. Knightley and Emma Woodhouse. Our attention in this passage centers on Mrs. Elton who thinks the ceremony 'shabby' and very 'inferior' to her own. Why does she think so? The answer is that she has not been invited to the wedding while 'the true friends are present'. Her response to the wedding has an ironic stroke. We cannot believe Mrs. Elton because what she says contrasts with the reality. The narrator is omniscient but not entirely trustworthy.

In contrast, a reliable narrator is a trustworthy spokesman of the particular reality presented in the world of the novel:

Emma made no answer, and tried to look cheerfully unconcerned, but was really feeling uncomfortable, and wanting him very much to be gone. She did not repent what what she had done; she still thought herself a better judge of such a point of female right and refinement than he could be; but yet she had a sort of habitual respect for his judgment in general, which made her dislike having it so loudly against her, and to have him sitting just opposite to her in angry state, was very disagreeable. (Emma 199)

In this passage, the narrator is found reliable. When Knightley rebukes Emma Woodhouse, the reader realizes that he is in the right.

First Person Points of View

In this mode the narrator speaks as 'I'. The view is restricted to what the first person narrator knows, experiences, infers and finds out. While dealing with the first person points of view, we have to make distinction between the first person narrator-observer and the first person narrator-participant. The first person narrator-observer has no access to the inner states of the character. He, therefore, reports what he has seen or discovered. He may guess but is not allowed to make an entry into the character's mind. On the other hand, the first person narrator-participant is himself involved in the action. The narrator is confined to his own thought, feeling and perception. The telling of the story in the first person supports all the desires and needs of the teller. The teller is involved in the events because he is here now, with us, telling us, making us believe. In the first person narrative, the voice of the speaker

gives the tale verisimilitude but the first person voice also calls upon empathy and we identify with his hopes, fears, emotions and concerns.

The first person narrator attempts to equate the inner reality with external details. The writer's main intention in using the first person narrator is to report his own experience and his view allows the reader to take part in the events of the narrative directly. In such narration the narrator gives clear information.

The following passage/extract from *Yellow Woman* by Leslie Marmon Silko has first person point of view:

And again he was all around me with his skin slippery against mine, and I was afraid because I understood that his strength could hurt me. I lay underneath him and I knew that he could destroy me. But later, while he slept beside me, I touched his face and I had a feeling – the kind of feeling for him that overcame me that morning along the river. I kissed him on the forehead and he reached out for me. (1160-1161)

Second Person Points of View

In this type of narration, the narrator tells the story to someone he calls by the second person pronoun 'you'. The story is addressed entirely or almost entirely to 'you'. This second person may be a character, or the reader of the story. Sometimes it may be the narrator himself or herself. The American novelist Jay McInerney in his *Bright Lights, Big City* (1984) tells the story with 'you' as the narratee:

You are not the kind of guy who would be at a place like this at this time of the morning. But here you are, and cannot say that the terrain is entirely unfamiliar, though the details are fuzzy. You are at a nightclub talking to a girl with a shared head. The club is either Heartbreak or the Lizard Lounge. (qtd in Abrams, 234)

Stream of Consciousness Technique

One of the distinctive features in twentieth century writing is the use of a new method of narration. Writers innovated a new technique of narration so that they could describe the unbroken flow of perceptions, thoughts and feelings of the character in the waking mind without any interference from the author.

The term "Stream of Consciousness" was first coined by William James in his *Principles of Psychology* in 1890. Some critics use the term 'interior monologue' for 'Stream of Consciousness'. It has since been widely used in modern fiction. In the early twentieth century, this technique became a popular mode of narration in which many novels were written. M.H. Abrams defines Stream of Consciousness as "the name applied specifically to a mode of narration that undertakes to reproduce, without a narrators' intervention, the full spectrum and continuous flow of a character's mental process, in which sense perceptions mingle with conscious and half-conscious thoughts, memories, expectations, feelings, and random associations" (299). Consciousness is like a flow and it can not be found in the access of time. The stream is such that it can flow back and forth. The barriers of time are destroyed and unrelated thoughts and ideas come and form a close relationship.

In fiction, Stream of Consciousness is an expression of the unorganized flow of the mind where words, images and ideas take place. The artist in such fictions tries to establish an inner pictorial world by means of imagination and sensation. The writer in such fictions maintains a distance between the world of art and the real world. This very distance gives him/her the chance to present the inner reality of the characters. In this technique the past merges into the present and gets faded into future. This method enables the character to hear himself in his mind's eye while nobody can hear what he is thinking all the time. As the writer presents the inner

reality, he is less concerned with the grammaticality of the sentences and the chronology of events. As far as the time is concerned, there is no fixed line that divides present, past and future rather there is the intermingling of time and space. *Ulysses* by James Joyce, *Pilgrimage* by Dorothy Richardson, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf and *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner have a brilliant use of stream of consciousness.

Talking about *Cracking India*, it has first-person present-tense narration. Lenny, a young child narrator, describes the events in the novel. The narration of the events in present tense has provided immediacy and certain simultaneity between past and present. Sidhwa chooses Lenny, a polio-ridden, precocious child as the narrator of the novel because she provides her with a scope for recording the events leading to bloody Partition riots with utmost objectivity, without an air of propaganda. Moreover, Lenny comes from a Parsi family, unaffected by the then communal riots, and so is free from any religious or ethnic bias. Therefore the narration of the novel is direct and uncomplicated.

II. Definition of Bildungsroman

In the simplest sense of the word, a Bildungsroman is a novel of the development of a young man (or in some cases a young woman). In fact, *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines Bildungsroman as "a novel whose principal subject is the moral, psychological and intellectual development of a usually youthful main character" (185). The Bildungsroman has its roots in Germany. Jerome Buckley notes that the word itself is German, with Bildung having a variety of connotations: "portait", "picture", "shaping" and "formation", all of which give the sense of development or creation (the development of the child can also be seen as the creation of the man) (13-14). Roman simply means 'novel'.

The term Bildungsroman emerged as a description of Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. This was the first Bildungsroman, having been published between 1794 and 1796 (Buckley 9). The word "Lehrjahre" can be translated as "apprenticeship" (Buckley 10). "Apprenticeship" has many connotations, most of which deal with education and work. An apprentice goes to work for an experienced worker and learns and develops his trade and also to a greater extent his identity. Similarly, the Bildungsroman is characterized by the growth, education, and development of a character both in the world and ultimately within himself. The Bildungsroman was especially popular until 1860. However, anti-German sentiment during the world wars contributed to the demise of its influence, along with the emergence of a multitude of modern experiments in novel writing. Nonetheless, James Joyce wrote his Bildungsroman, *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, in 1916, and the genre has continued to be adopted, with distinguishing variations, by writers of many nationalities.

As *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* defines, Bildungsroman "is a class of novel developed in German literature that deals with the formative years of an individual up to his arrival at a man's estate and responsible place in society" (16). Similarly, according to *The Cambridge Encyclopædia*, Bildungsroman "is a novel that deals principally with the formative stages of its hero(ine)'s life-childhood, education, adolescence" (139). Thus, it can be defined as a type of novel where the protagonist is initiated into the world of maturity from his/her state of innocence. This advancement is effected through various social, political, cultural as well as psychological factors. To put it differently, there is the progression of the protagonist from one level of consciousness to the other. The Bildungsroman ends on a positive note though it may be tempered by resignation and nostalgia. If the flamboyant dreams of the hero's

youth are over, so are many foolish mistakes and painful disappointments, and a life of usefulness lies ahead.

The Bildungsroman is subcategorized into very specific types of the genre, most often found in German literature. One is the Entwicklungsroman, which can be defined as "a chronicle of a young man's general growth rather than his specific quest for self-culture" (Buckley 13). In other words, a story recounting a man's life rather than focusing on the inner changes that contribute to his maturity. Another form within German literature is the Erziehungsroman; this form "is primarily concerned with the protagonist's actual educational process" (Buckley 13). Again the concern is not the overall development of the main character, but a specific aspect of that character's life. Finally there is the Künstlerroman. The root Künstler means artist in English. Therefore, this is the development of the artist from childhood until his artistic maturity, focusing on the man as artist rather than the man in general. Dickens' *David Copperfield* and James Joyce's *A portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* are both examples of English Künstlerroman, as the protagonists of both books are writers (Buckley 13).

These categories, while strict within German literature, are more free within English literature. According to Buckley in his book *Seasons of Youth*, the Bildungsroman in English literature is "in its broadest sense . . . a convenient synonym for the novel of youth or apprenticeship" (13). Nevertheless, the definition of the Bildungsroman, specifically, the English Bildungsroman, is more involved than a simple etymological examination of the roots of the word or a simple historical reference to Goethe. The English Bildungsromane vary from novel to novel. However, they have many aspects in common, all of which focus to the development of the protagonist.

First of all, the English Bildungsroman is an autobiographical form, which does not mean that Bildungsromane are autobiographies in the literal sense. Buckley quotes author Somerset Maugham speaking about his novel *Of Human Bondage*: "It is not an autobiography, but an autobiographical novel; fact and fiction are inextricably mingled" (24). Naturally, an author does bring something of his own life into his work, especially in a form in which childhood recollections are so important to the development of the protagonist, and the flow of the novel itself. However, as Maugham says, "fact mingles with fiction." An author may incorporate some autobiographical material, since it is easiest to write about what he already knows, but *Great Expectations* is not Dickens' story, it is Pip's; the main character of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is not James Joyce, but Stephen Dedalus; and *Jane Eyre*, which is subtitled "An Autobiography" would clearly be the autobiography of Jane Eyre, not Charlotte Brontë. Ultimately the autobiographical elements contribute to a sense of reality within the Bildungsromane, but the Bildungsromane are novels, and therefore, fictions.

The second common characteristic of the Bildungsroman is the ancestry of the main character. Many of the English Bildungsromane have a protagonist who is "often an orphan or a child who has suffered the loss of a father" (Buckley 19). This sets the scene for a difficult development, marked by a desire in the protagonist to search for his or her own identity, since there is either none to begin with as an orphan, or no familial identity as a fatherless child. Therefore, the child seeks to gain an identity of its own, and the development begins.

Another aspect of the English Bildungsroman is the education of the main character. This education is crucial, in that it is part of the child's maturation and preparation for impending adolescence and adulthood. Often, the education is a

sticking point of the child's home life. He is usually from a small provincial town, and often the education expands the child's mind and "is frustration insofar as it may suggest options not available to him in his present setting" (Buckley 17). These options are important in the development of the protagonist. Part of the development of the child is the desire, as mentioned earlier, to leave home and become "his own man." Both the search for identity and the repression of the small town present motivation for the protagonist to do so.

It can be said that there is difference in the treatment of the plot of the Bildungsromane written by men with those by women. In the male model of the Bildungsroman, the protagonist makes an effort to establish himself in the society whereas in the female Bildungsroman the protagonist's main concern is ideal marriage. Antonia Navarro Tejero gives Elain H. Baruch's view that "while the ultimate aim of a male protagonist in such novels is life within the larger community, the aim of the female protagonist of the Bildungsroman is marriage with a partner of her choice" (47). According to Annis Pratt and Barbara White, "one important difference between the Bildungsroman as written by men and the one written by women is that the female protagonist's initiation is "less a self-determined progression toward maturity than a regression from full participation in adult life." (qtd. in Tejero 47)

Until the nineteen sixties and seventies, most women authors created female protagonists who accepted their role as wife and mother or ended up either mad or committed suicide. But after the feminist movement dawned, a number of Bildungsroman almost similar to the male model appeared. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* is a perfect example of this type, which not only "approximates the male model of the Bildungsroman, but also deviates from the prototypical

Bildungsroman" (Tejero 48). In the novel, Rahel, the narrator, like her male counterparts in the traditional Bildungsroman, goes off to a foreign land, and has a love affair. Moreover, this female protagonist remains childless and brings back memories of the idyllic world of childhood before abuse appeared in her life. Thus, reaching beyond the Bildungsroman marriage plot, she has structured her overall narrative to emphasize the female character's aim to develop as an individual rather than as a wife.

Unlike others Charlotte Goodman observes the Male-Female Double Bildungsroman that describes the development of a pair of protagonists, one male, the other female, which is fundamentally different from the prototypical Bildungsroman. This type of Bildungsroman presents the shared childhood experience of a male and a female protagonist. According to Goodman, "traditionally in this type of Bildungsroman female roles are assigned by a patriarchal society, while their male counterparts are free to journey into the larger world" (qtd. in Tejero 49). However, Roy subverts the genre by reversing the traditional gender roles. Roy proposes, "the female protagonist to be the hero, who gets an education and seeks her fortune abroad, while the male one remains at their father's house doing the domestic chores" (Tejero 49).

Thus, the Bildungsroman exhibits a diversity of types. There are "variations within the genre, and one or more elements may be left out of a particular novel" (Buckley 18). However, the basic principles of education and development, and the journey from childhood to adulthood, from small to large, are present within every Bildungsroman. It is these differences precisely that make each novel its own story. After all, even though every person's story is different, they must all go through stages

of development in order to reach maturity and find their personal niche within the larger world. We can say that the basic formula of the Bildungsroman is universal.

As regards Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*, the girl-child protagonist Lenny observes the events taking place around her and gradually enters the world of maturity losing her state of innocence. It can be argued that *Ice-Candy-Man* is a Bildungsroman in a true sense as it depicts the growth of Lenny, her slow awakening to sexuality, and pains and pleasures of the adult world. The political mayhem going on during the Partition of India and Pakistan in Lahore in 1947 awakens her to the world of politics whereas her Ayah's amorous adventures with the male characters like Masseur and Ice-Candy-Man, and her association with her Cousin pave way for her understanding of the world of sexuality.

Chapter 3

I. Politico-cultural Growth of Lenny

Sidhwa's "Cracking India" presents the trauma of Partition carnage and communal riots during the Partition of India and Pakistan through the innocent perspective of Lenny, an eight-year old child. Lenny is a polio-stricken girl belonging to a miniscule Parsi community. It is the observation and narration of Lenny through which we perceive the entire novel.

Lenny is a young, curious and vivacious child, eager to know what is happening around her and participating in it vigorously. The socio-religious divide creates in her an awareness of her own identity, but even prior to that she had become conscious of the creation of the gender, the socially accepted role of women and girls, and also of her burgeoning sexuality. She is aware that her "world is compressed" (11). This awareness is intensified when Colonel Bharucha prophesies her future, "She'll marry – have children – lead a carefree, happy life. No need to strain her with studies and exams" (25).

Lenny observes the gender-based relationship in the society and accepts it as a peripheral part of her experiences, without allowing it to color her own individuality. She notices how in Col. Bharucha's clinic a woman has to discuss her child's health through her husband:

The father, standing deferentially to one side, bends towards his wife.
She turns her veiled face to him and whispers.

"For a week, doctor sahib", the man says. His head and neck
are wrapped in a muffler and his gaunt face is careworn. (22)

During her visit to Pir Pindo she notices how Khatija and Parveen, the adolescent sisters of Ranna, like the other girls in the village, already wear the responsible expressions of much older women:

Already practiced in the conduct they have absorbed from the village women, the girls try not to smile or giggle. They must have heard their mother and aunts (as I have), say: "*Hasi to phasi!* Laugh (and), get laid!" I'm not sure what it means – and I'm sure they don't either but they know that smiling before men can lead to disgrace. (63)

They are perplexed by Lenny's cropped hair and short dresses. These early impressions of Lenny, presented with multiple strains of irony, humour and wit exhibit for awareness of gender stereotypes. She perceives many differences in the personality traits and interests of men and women.

Besides, Lenny also records how her mother, despite her modern life-style, is very much a traditional wife, almost servile in her desires to please her husband. Lenny also becomes a party to her games of coquettishly creating an atmosphere of pleasant mirth whenever her father is at home. The novel also exposes the extent of gender conditioning through the description of Papoo's, the sweeper's daughter's, marriage to a middle-aged dwarf. Her marriage to such a leering middle-aged dwarf and Muccho's smug satisfaction underscore "grotesque possibilities awaiting Papoo" (199). Lenny is shocked to see such gender biases prevalent during the time.

Lenny from the beginning of the novel becomes an audience to the talk of developing political scenario. When the Parsee community members gather to talk about Independence Movement, Lenny eagerly listens to their conversation:

Colonel Bharucha raises a restraining hand. "No doubt the men in jail are acquiring political glory . . . But this shortcut to fame and fortune is

not for us. It is no longer just a struggle for Home Rule. It is a struggle for power. Who's going to rule once we get Swaraj? Not you" says the Colonel [. . .]. "Hindus, Muslims and even the Sikhs are going to jockey for power and if you jokers jump into the middle you'll be mangled into chutney!" (45)

Colonel Bharucha, who holds a respectful position in the Parsee community, expresses that there is no use getting involved in the struggle for power. Since the Parsees are very few in number, their involvement in the struggle is not going to bear them any fruit; rather they will be in loss. The conversation continues:

"That depends on who's winning, doesn't it?" says Mr. Bankwalla.

"Don't forget, we are to run with the hounds and hunt with the hare."

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

"Does it matter where they look or where they leap?" enquires the impatient voice. "If we're stuck with the Hindus they'll swipe our business from under our noses and sell our grandfathers in the bargain: if we're stuck with the Muslims they'll convert us by the sword! And God help us if we're stuck with the Sikhs!" (46)

There is an eruption of comments and suggestions to which Lenny is entirely attentive. Lenny expresses, "The meeting is turning out to be much more lively than I'd anticipated" (46). Slowly and gradually Lenny starts to have interest in the political matters.

Like a wide-eyed child, Lenny comes to know about the statements of various political leaders. The Government House Gardener and Ice-Candy-Man jibe about the

political leaders Nehru, Gandhi, Jinnah and Tara Singh. Their opinions and repartee enable Lenny to grasp the remoteness of political issues from the lives of common people. She concurs with Ayah's statement that the political leaders do not fight for masses, "What's it to us if Jinnah, Nehru and Patel fight? They are not fighting our fight" (84). When the butcher contemptuously slanders Gandhi as "That non-violent violence-monger—your precious Gandhijee" (100), the Masseur tries to placate him, commenting that "He's a politician, yaar" (100). Thus their comments on, and their interpretations of the latest political developments in the subcontinent give Lenny a vivid idea of the crumbling familiar social order.

Lenny also notices the changing nature of jokes and is startled to find that suddenly there are "Hindu, Muslim, Parsee, and Christian jokes" (104). At such moments, Lenny feels the stirrings of vague fears and apprehensions which were the political reality of the then India.

Protected by her religious background and her family status, Lenny is not directly affected by the growing cruelty of these times. She remains on the periphery, watching the events unfold and commenting on them in reporter's tone. Also, she questions on the happenings taking place around her. As there is much disturbing talk that India is going to be broken, Lenny asks her Cousin, "Can one break a country? And what happens if they break it where our house is? Or crack it further up on Warris Road? How will I get to Godmother's then?" (101)

Lenny overhears much about the developing political situation as she sits with Ayah and her followers. And it is because of what she overhears, because of the opinions she has been exposed to, that Lenny suddenly becomes aware of the different religions all around her, and understands that in the Lahore of 1947 people are not simply themselves:

And I become aware of religious differences. It is sudden. One day everybody is themselves – and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. People shrink, dwindling into symbols. Ayah is no longer just my all-encompassing Ayah – she is also a token. A Hindu.

(101)

Lenny is shocked to see the changing attitude of men towards one another, to see the threads of friendship being erased due to religious enmity. She knows that men of different religions can never become friends again. To take revenge is their only motive in life. Lenny concludes, "Now I know surely. One man's religion is another man's poison" (125). Lenny is not ready to accept the prevailing social condition. As a grown up, she analyses the whole situation and draws some conclusions.

As the time passes, the religious/cultural gap even between the neighbors of the same community intensifies. The discussions in the gatherings turn out to be hot. Lenny remarks, "Everybody appears to be quarrelling these days" (137). Lenny observes the quarrelling of her neighbors at the Wrestler's restaurant:

"The British have advised Jinnah to keep clear of you bastards!' says the butcher just as offensively. 'The Angrez call you a bloody nuisance!"

"We don't want to have anything to do with you bastards either," roars the puny Sikh, sounding more and more like the tiger in his name.

"History will repeat itself," says the restaurant-owning wrestler phlegmatically. [. . .] "Once the line of division is drawn in the Punjab, all Muslims to the east of it will have their balls cut off!" (139)

Lenny does not want to hear the people quarrelling. She closes her eyes and tries to shut out the voices: "I try not to inhale, but I must; the charged air about our table distills poisonous insights. Blue envy: green avidity: the gray and black stirrings of predators and the incipient distillation of fear in their prey" (141).

Day by day, the sectarian passion gains further momentum, every segment of the city life comes under the spell of sporadic violence of actions and words. DIG Police Roger is murdered – body found gutted. Muslim, Sikh, Hindu leaders rise for power and autonomy. Master Tara Singh is quoted as saying, "We will see how the Muslim swine get Pakistan! We will fight to the last man" (143). The arrival of Holi festival in 1947 is greeted with ominous ring by Muslims: "So? We'll play Holi-with-their-blood! H-o-o-o-li with their blo-o-o-d!" (144). Violence grows more gruesome. Lenny eyewitnesses when Shalmi, a dwelling of Hindus, flashes in explosions: "I stare at the tamasha, mesmerized by the spectacle. It is like a gigantic fireworks display . . ." (147). Lenny is extremely shocked to see this and remarks, "The whole world is burning. The air on my face is so hot I think my flesh and clothes will catch fire. I start screaming, hysterically sobbing" (147). Thus the growing violence taking place in her surroundings give Lenny a bitter experience of politically and culturally driven world.

Lenny turns eight when India divides into two nations: India and Pakistan. Some cities belong to India and some to Pakistan. "Lahore is dealt to Pakistan, Amritsar to India, Silakot to Pakistan, Pathankot to India" (150). Lenny says, "I'm Pakistani. In a snap. Just like that" (150). After the Partition, people belonging to certain religious/cultural group are supposed to shift from their hometown to other places. Lenny narrates how Mr. Singh talks about Sikh evacuation from Lahore:

"Sethi Sahib, we have just received orders from our leaders . . . We are to leave Lahore forever!"

Father raises surprised, questioning eyebrows and Mr. Singh continues: "I'm meeting them tonight. They have worked out plans for a complete Sikh evacuation. We'll form our own armed escort. I'll take our buffaloes . . . And whatever essentials we can pile into a truck.

Each family is allotted a truck." (156)

Lenny, at this, realizes how political phenomenon affects the entire social pattern. The dislocation of settled life is aptly revealed by Lenny's understanding of the demographic change in Lahore. In awe, she observes, "Lahore is suddenly emptied of yet another hoary dimension: there are no Brahmins with caste-marks – or Hindus in dhoties with bodhis. Only hordes of Muslim refugees" (187). Lahore is no more cosmopolitan. Even the Sikhs have fled. The child narrator senses the difference and pain caused by the huge exchange of populations. When Lenny hears that a truck of butchered Muslims with two gunny-bags full of women's breasts has come from Gurdaspur, she expresses it's intolerable: "What I've heard is unbearable. I don't want to believe it" (159).

Lenny observes when a group of Muslim people swarm into her house in search of Hindus. She listens to the heated conversation between Imam Din and the group:

"Where are the Hindus?" a man shouts.

"There are no Hindus here! You nimak-haram dogs' penises . . .

There are no Hindus here!" [. . .]

"Where is Hari, the Gardener?" someone from the back shouts.

"Hari-the-gardener has become Himmat Ali!" says Imam Din, roaring genially and glancing at the gardener. [. . .]

"Where is the sweeper? Where is Moti?" shouts a hoarse Punjabi voice. It sounds familiar but I can't place it.

"He's here," says Yousaf, putting an arm around Moti. "He's become a believer . . . A Christian. Behold . . . Mister David Masih!"

(191-192)

When asked about Ayah, the Hindu woman, Imam Din lies saying something or the other and he even goes to the extent of swearing: "Allah-ki-kasam, she's gone" (193). But it is Lenny who, being persuaded by Ice-candy-man's assuring words, betrays Ayah: "And dredging from some foul truthful depth in me a fragment of overheard conversation that I had not registered at the time, I say 'On the roof-or in one of the godowns . . .'"(194). Immediately after she reveals the truth she realizes that she has betrayed Ayah: "I know I have betrayed Ayah" (194). She futilely tries to lie: " 'No!' I scream. 'She's gone to Amritsar!'" (194). Lenny describes the group's entry to her house thus:

They move forward from all points. They swarm into our bedrooms, search the servants' quarters, climb to the roofs, break locks and enter our go downs and the small storerooms near the bathrooms.

They drag Ayah out . . . (194)

Lenny now is full of regret. She expresses her sense of guilt: "I am the monkey-man's performing, the trained circus elephant, the snake-man's charmed cobra, an animal with conditioned reflexes that cannot lie . . ." (195). Lenny's sense of repentance can be felt to a greater degree when she punishes her truth-infected tongue:

For three days I stand in front of the bathroom mirror staring at my tongue. I hold the vile, truth-infected thing between my fingers and try to wrench it out [. . .]. I punish it with rigorous scourings from my prickling toothbrush until it is sore and bleeding. I'm so conscious of its unwelcome presence at all times that it swells uncomfortably in my mouth and gags and chokes me.

I throw up. Constantly. (196)

The incidents, happening occurring in the periphery of Lenny's world force her to be slowly detached from her childish innocence. Her observation of the occurrences, her growing curiosity to know the things, her reasoning of the things all mark a growing maturity in her. Like a mature man, she is haunted by various things and can not sleep:

It gets so that I cannot sleep. Adi is asleep within moments, but I lie with my eyes open, staring at the shadows that have begun to haunt my room. The twenty-foot-high ceiling recedes and the pale light that blurs the ventilators creeps in, assuming the angry shapes of swirling phantom babies, of gaping wounds forming deformed crescents – and of Masseur's slender, skillful fingers searching the nightroom for Ayah.

And when I do fall asleep the slogans of the mobs reverberate in my dreams, pierced by women's wails and shrieks – and I awaken screaming for Ayah. (224 - 225)

After Ayah is abducted Lenny finds Hamida as her new ayah. Hamida actually is from a camp for fallen women which only Lenny knows. One night at the time of sleep, in their conversation, Lenny says that she had seen Hamida in jail. Hamida replies, "It isn't a jail, Lenny baby . . . It's a camp for fallen women" (226). Lenny asks

several questions to Hamida: "What are fallen women?", "Are you a fallen woman?" (226). Hamida slaps her forehead and makes a strangling nasal noise. She fears that her secrecy may be disclosed. Lenny becomes sympathetic to Hamida:

I get out of bed and press her face into my chest. I rock her, and
Hamida's tears soak right through my flannel nightgown.

I won't mention her fall ever again. I can't bear to hurt her. I'd
rather bite my tongue than cause pain to her grief-wounded eye. (227)

Lenny herself learns a great lesson from her previous truth-telling act which she does not want to repeat at any cost.

Lenny asks the same question to Godmother which she had asked to Hamida, "What's a fallen woman?" (227). Their conversation goes on, Hamida being the focus. In this connection, Godmother says that Hamida was kidnapped by the Sikhs and "once that happens, sometimes, the husband – or his family – won't take her back" (227). Lenny puts a question in surprise: "Why? It isn't her fault she was kidnapped!" (227). When Godmother answers men can't stand their women being touched by other men, Lenny remarks, "It's monstrously unfair" (227). These questions raised by Lenny clearly hint that Lenny is not a child anymore and she is growing in her the reasoning power like a mature man.

Lenny asks several such questions and Godmother goes on replying. After knowing the Hamida's story of being kidnapped, Lenny feels that it's not danger for an unmarried girl like her to be kidnapped: "And I'm not married either! It does not matter if I'm kidnapped" (228). Godmother replies, ". . . who'll marry you then? It'll be hard enough finding someone for you as it is" (228). Lenny is optimistic in her mother's saying that her husband will search the world with a candle to find her. But when Godmother says, "Poor fellow . . . He won't know you the way we do, will he?"

Your husband will clutch his head in his hands and weep!", Lenny is upset finding only her Cousin as a last resort (228). Lenny replies her Cousin's question: "What is the matter with you?" (228) thus:

I'm feeling despondent. When something upsets me this much I find it impossible to talk. It used not to be so. I wonder: am I growing up? At least I've stopped babbling all my thoughts. [. . .] I feel so sorry for myself – and for Cousin – and for all the senile, lame and hurt people and fallen women – and the condition of the world – in which countries can be broken, people slaughtered and cities burned – that I burst into tears. I feel I will never stop crying. (228 - 229)

These are the practical and philosophical expressions Lenny makes, which undoubtedly indicate that Lenny is proceeding in the world of maturity.

After Ayah is abducted, she is taken to Hira Mandi by Ice-candy-man. She is forced to live the life of a prostitute there. When Ice-candy-man comes to visit Godmother and Lenny's family, there goes a long heated discussion between Ice-candy-man and Godmother regarding Ayah. Godmother furiously scolds him for lifting the Ayah, for allowing her to be raped by butchers and drunks, for compelling her to behave like a performing monkey before other men: "Is that why you had her lifted off – let hundreds of eyes probe her – so that you could marry her? You would have your own mother carried off if it suited you! You are a shameless badmash! *Nimakharam!* Faithless!" (260). She further scolds, "Can't you bring yourself to say you played the drums when she danced? Counted money while drunks, peddlers, sahibs, and cutthroats used her like a sewer?" (262). Lenny listens to all this with much curiosity. She is very much attentive to the words and phrases used by Godmother to Ice-candy-man. The more Lenny listens to Godmother's judgmental

sentences, the more she understands about the righteousness. She knows the extremity of human desire and gratification:

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

To the pitiless face of love. (264)

In this way, the innocence of her childhood days is snatched from her as she witnesses the fissiparous tendencies on the rise, the growing communal hatred, the open gestures of arson and violence. Her familiar compressed surroundings change into a topsy-turvy world where values and allegiances shift suddenly. The arguments of the people like Godmother open her eyes to the world of justice. Thus Lenny, along with the development of the plot, attains political and cultural maturity in her.

. Lenny's Growth into the World of Sexuality

Sidhwa has very artistically juxtaposed the sexual growth of Lenny with her political maturity. Very early in the novel we notice Lenny's consciousness of her burgeoning sexuality. Ayah serves as a main source to Lenny for her growth to the world of sexuality. Ayah functions as the center of fascination for the child narrator at first because she is a beautiful object desired by men of all religious and class backgrounds, and as the instrument through which Lenny acquires a vicarious knowledge from a safe distance. Lenny keeps eye to each of the activities Ayah

performs with the men folk. How Ayah serves as the center of attraction to the men who pass by her is presented by Lenny thus:

The covetous glances Ayah draws educate me. Up and down, they look at her. Stab-handed twisted beggars and dusty old beggars on crutches drop their poses and stare at her with hard, alert eyes. Holy men, masked in piety, shove aside their pretenses to ogle her with lust. Hawkers, cart-drivers, cooks, coolies and cyclists turn their heads as she passes, pushing my pram with the unconcern of the Hindu goddess she worships. (12)

Lenny enjoys the game of secret sensuality which Ayah and her admirers play. She becomes a silent partner in these games, covering up for their outings, and maintaining a canny silence about their doings. Lenny closely watches Ayah's escapades with the Masseur, the Fallettis Hotel cook, the Government House Gardener, the Ice-candy-man and records their attempts to be physically close to Ayah. She surreptitiously watches the scenes of physical intimacy and learns of "human needs, frailties, cruelties and joys" (29).

Lenny amply learns the things related to sex from her cousin. Lenny says, "I have many teachers. My Cousin shows me things" (29). When Cousin offers to see and touch a stitched scar and to hold his genitals, Lenny does so: "I touch the fine scar and gingerly hold the genitals he transfers to my palm" (29). This slowly grows her interest towards opposite sex.

One day Ice-candy-man treats Ayah and Lenny to a meal at a restaurant in Mozang Chungi. As they go on with their meals, Lenny happens to notice Ice-candy-man and Ayah busy in some secret physical exchanges:

Halfway through the meal I sense a familiar tension and a small flurry of movement. Ice-candy-man's toes are invisibly busy. I glance up just as a supplicating smile on his face dissolves into a painful grimace: and I know Ayah's hand is engaged in an equally heroic struggle. (36)

Sharbat Khan, who sharpens the old and blunt knives, scissors, is one of Ayah's admirers and a frequent visitor to Lenny's house. His presence "radiates a warmth" in Ayah, and "She shifts from foot to foot, smiling, ducking and twisting spherically" (84). Once, parking his cycle against a tree as usual, Sharbat Khan starts to talk with Ayah on different topics. As they go on, their conversation narrows down to flirtatious one. This causes a sort of jealousy in Lenny:

Something happens within me. Though outwardly I remain as thin as ever, I can feel my stomach muscles retract to create a warm hollow. "Take me for a ride – take me for a ride," I beg and Sharbat Khan, tearing away his eyes from Ayah, places me on the cycle shaft. He gives me a turn round the backyard [. . .]. He smells of tobacco, burnt whetstone and sweat. He brings me back and offers Ayah a ride. (86)

In this way Lenny demands service not only from Ayah's lover, but also from Ayah herself, desiring Ayah to redirect her lover's attentions to Lenny herself.

Lenny turns eight when India is divided. She is very much excited to celebrate her eighth birthday. She receives wishes and gifts from her kith and kin. She is delighted the most from the treatment of her Cousin: "The only one who properly countenances my birthday is Cousin" (152). Lenny narrates what goes between her and Cousin after Cousin wishes "Happy birthday! Happy birthday!" to her (153) thus:

. . . he cautiously holds me by my shoulders and puckers his mouth. I read the intent in his eyes and, being theatrically inclined myself, I

close my eyes and readily bunch my lips. I feel Cousin's wet, puckered mouth on my bunched-up lips. I know I'm supposed to feel a thrill, so, I muster up a little thrill. (153)

Lenny's readiness to be kissed clues the growing sexual interest developed in her. The act of kissing continues for long. "The muscles of my mouth begin to ache" (153).

Lenny feels Cousin's jaws tremble. She expresses, "Kissing, I'm convinced, is overrated. Trust Cousin to enlighten me" (153). Their kissing is disturbed when "Ayah suddenly slaps Cousin hard on his back" and scolds them, "Oye! What is this badmashi? Shame on you!" (153). At this, Lenny remarks, "I think she is repaying me for minding Ice-candy-man's toes" (153).

One day, Cousin stretches the foreskin of his penis back and displays to Lenny so as to show how Hari's circumcised penis looks like. Interested to Cousin's act, Lenny remarks, "The penis is longer and thicker and gracefully arched – and it seems to be breathing" (172). When Cousin offers to "feel it", Lenny readily accepts: "I like its feel. It is warm and cuddly. As I squeeze the pliant flesh it strengthens and grows in my hand" (172). Persuaded by her cousin, Lenny even goes to the extent of licking the tip of his penis. She pays equal interest when "Cousin pumps and pumps his penis and it becomes all red" (173). This kind of interest cultivating in her draws Lenny away from her childhood innocence.

Lenny's conversation with Cousin regarding love and marriage is to be noted, where Lenny's expressions resemble to that of a grown up person's. When Cousin asks whom Lenny finds more attractive than him, she replies:

The world is athrob with men. As long as they have some pleasing attribute – height, width or beauty of face – no man is too old to attract me. Or too young. Tongawallahs, knife-sharpeners, shopkeepers,

policemen, schoolboys, Father's friends, all exert their compelling pull on my runway fantasies in which I am recurringly spirited away to remote. (231)

Lenny is fully aware of the physical changes appeared in her. She shows her possessiveness towards them:

Two little bumps have erupted beneath my nipples. Flesh of my flesh, exclusively mine. And I am hard put to protect them. I guard them with a possessive passion beside which my passion for possessing Rosy's little glass jars pales. Only I may touch them. Not Cousin. Not Imam Din. Not Adi. Not Anybody. I can't trust anyone.

Not even mother . . . (231)

Lenny says she has grown confidence in her: "As the mounds beneath my nipples grow, my confidence grows" (231). She examines her chest in the mirror and "plays with them as with cuddly toys" (231). Being self-assured that she will be an attractive lady, she expresses, "What with my limp and my burgeoning breasts – and the projected girth and wiggle of my future bottom – I feel assured that I will be quite attractive when I'm grown up" (231-232).

Lenny's feeling of love towards Cousin intensifies when she cannot meet him as he is busy preparing for his exams. She says, "The more aloof Cousin becomes, the more I think about him. I find my daydreams, for the first time, occupied by his stubby person and adenoidal voice" (241). It's very difficult for Lenny to remain untouched with Cousin. In one way or the other, she manages to be close to him:

. . . I chase Cousin. I hang around Electric-aunt's house and around Cousin – when he tolerates my presence. I fetch him glasses of water and bunches of grapes and sharpen his pencils and copy out his

homework and follow him wherever he goes. If he goes into the bathroom I wait patiently outside the door . . . (242)

In this way, from a child, Lenny grows into a loving girl. Her being together with Ayah and her observation of Ayah's secret physical exchanges with different male folks compel her to be aware of sexuality. Equally responsible to this awareness is her association with her cousin, her lover, who trickily exposes his sexual organs to her and forcefully touches her secret organs and whom she has several conversations on love and marriage with.

Thus, Lenny journeys towards maturity as she observes and narrates the incidents and the characters of the novel. It appears that her narration of the things is very simple and clear-cut, but on a closer look one comprehends that its simplicity is merely illusory. Although the main narrator is Lenny, the voice that emerges from the novel is far from being a monologue. At times, readers are puzzled whether the voices that come out of Lenny are actually her voices. When taken to hospital for her treatment, Lenny expresses:

I am held captive by the brutal smell. It has vaporized into a milky cloud. I float round and round and up and down and fall horrendous distances without landing anywhere, fighting for my life's breath. I am abandoned in that suffocating cloud. I moan and my ghoulish voice turns me into something despicable and eerie and deserving of the terrible punishment. But where am I? How long will the horror last?

Days and years with no end in sight . . . (15-16)

Similarly, when Ice-candy-man's toes crawl under Ayah's sari in one of the late evenings, Lenny very carefully and quietly maneuvers her eyes and nose:

My nose inhales the fragrance of earth and grass – and the other fragrance that distills insights. I intuit the meaning and purpose of things. The secret rhythms of creation and mortality. The essence of truth and beauty. I recall the choking hell of milky vapors and discover that heaven has a dark fragrance. (28)

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

He is small, dark, shriveled, old. He looks just like Hari, our gardener, except he has a disgruntled, disgusted and irritable look, and no one'd dare pull off his dhoti! He wears only the loincloth and his black and thin torso is naked.

Gandhijee is certainly ahead of his times. He already knows the advantages of dieting. He has starved his way into the news and made headlines all over the world. (94)

Lenny does not simply inform the reader of happenings. She questions happenings, people, motives and emotions in order to grasp their fullest interpretation. Her innocence gives her the strength to raise doubts and ask questions which can not

be comfortably answered by any grown-up, and also to reach at conclusions intuitively. "What's a fallen woman," she asks her godmother (227). She remarks when Godmother says Ayah, after being kidnapped, is ashamed to face them: "I don't want her to think she's bad just because she's been kidnapped" (226). Troubled by the surrounding communal frenzy she sometimes lapses into rhetoric postures also, asking in a grown up voice: "What is God?" (102). Such postures convince us that the narrator's voice is controlled and guided by the author.

In this way, Sidhwa's child-narrator narrates the incidents and the characters of the novel to the readers, comments and ruminates on various issues, deftly camouflaging the writer's presence. The persona of a child enables Sidhwa to narrate her impressions freely, ask questions which grown up people avoid, and also to exercise a close watch over the narration itself. Since many details of the novel match the details of Sidhwa's life, it was easier for her to present her general convictions about individuals and their various relationships through the child narrator, and still control the narrative somehow.

Thus, *Cracking India* is a novel of formation where the child-protagonist Lenny enters into the world of maturity as she observes and narrates the events unfolding around her. The apparently naive story-telling is greatly marked with the author's views of the Partition of Punjab in 1947.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Cracking India projects the violent and chaotic days of the Partition of Punjab in 1947. Through the character of Lenny, a precocious Parsi girl, an eight year-old child, Sidhwa has given graphic details of the political changes occurring in the country, as well as its effect on the citizens of India. The narrative encapsulates with compelling sensitivity and empathy the protagonist girl child Lenny's initiation in the adult world marked by a highly diverse and disparate cultural climate. The episodic structure of the novel describes within the framework of the larger theme of Lenny's growth and attainment of some understanding of human situations, the personal, political ideological pursuits, anxiety, pain, stupidity, suffering, joy possessing the epoch before and immediately after the Partition of India in Lahore.

From the beginning of the novel, Lenny, though a young child, is inquisitive towards the events and happenings taking place in her surrounds. Lenny is the attendant to several social and political gatherings where the people of her community express varied views regarding the ensuing Partition. She notices how the friendship between the Sikhs and Muslims of her locality slowly changes into enmity and how it intensifies as the Partition nears in Lahore. She is eyewitness to the burnings of the cities like Shalmi and massacre of the people. The abduction of Ayah and the harrowing story of Ranna, a Muslim boy, cause a great shock to Lenny. The fate of Ayah after Ice-candy-man's betrayal, her new ayah Hamida's fear of rejection by her family and the sweeper's daughter Papoo's marriage to a middle-aged man awaken a profound responses in Lenny and she lays bare the gender-based structure of the then society. Godmother's treatment to Ice-candy-man and her role to rescue Ayah from

Hira Mandi open Lenny's eyes to the world of justice. This is how Lenny gains politico-cultural maturity in her.

Likewise, Lenny is equally probing to know the things of sexuality. Her open background and liberal upbringing make her receptive to her early sexual stirrings. Her observation of Ayah's romantic escapades with the people like the Ice-candy-man, the Masseur, the Fallettis Hotel cook and the Government House gardener, and their attempts to be physically close to Ayah arouse in her a sexual consciousness. She watches the scenes of physical intimacy between Ayah and her admirers and learns of human needs. Besides, her relationship with her Cousin is also an important factor to her sexual awareness. Lenny and Cousin, her lover, have several conversations on love and marriage, and they also engage in some sort of physical closeness. Moreover, the physical changes appearing in her as she grows make her feel that she is advancing towards sexual maturity.

In this way, *Cracking India* presents its protagonist's development from childhood to adulthood, and thus it can be truly described as a bildungsroman. A young child-narrator Lenny embarks into the world of experience and politics. Her political maturity is linked with her growing sexual maturity. Lenny attains this maturity through her observation and narration of the incidents and the characters of the novel. Her narration appears very simple but if we closely watch it, we can sense the author's presence in it. Going through the novel we believe we are witnessing the events of Partition through the eyes of an innocent child. However, strategically placed flash-forwards signal, in a subtle manner, that the adult Sidhwa is actually reliving the past in order to make sense of the events that baffled her when she was too small to comprehend; simultaneously, she restricts herself to the experiences and sensory perceptions of the child she was.

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