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A Study of Bapsi Sidhwa's Ice Candy Man

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Abstract: Bapsi Sidhwa's book, Ice-Candy-Man, through the eyes of a young narrator from the Parsi diaspora in colonial Lahore, Pakistan, who is a kid of the diaspora, According to Bapsi Sidhwa's account, the high concept of nationalism was traded for communal thinking during Partition, resulting in tremendous damage as well as political absurdity and a deterioration of social sensitivities. On top of criticising both the British and Indian histories of the subcontinent, Bapsi Sidhwa has also given an alternative history based on Pakistan's predominant viewpoint. One aspect that will be looked at is how fundamentalism stoked by communal animosity leads to the inevitable logic of partition. The apocalyptic catastrophe is presented via the lens of Parsi sensibility in this book.

Keywords: Bapsi Sidhwa, Ice Candy Man

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INTRODUCTION

The title "Woman Writer" is sometimes referred to as a "consolation reward" for women in the industry. It's true that this was the case at one time. The word "consolation" is now being phased out of the sentence. Women have made an enormous contribution to literature. With a viewpoint fundamentally distinct from that of the male, women's labour serves as a complement and a supplement to that of the male. The cycle of life is made up of two equal halves: male and female.

Emotions and sentiments are the first and most important prerequisites for everyone who wants to write. Both sexes experience this at some point in their lives. Women, on the other hand, are more susceptible to psychic vibrations due to their inherent delicacy and sensitivity. However, despite this fact, the production of female artists has been sparse until lately.

Having raw materials isn't enough, either. In addition, the capacity to articulate one is an important piece of equipment for shaping the raw material. Even if one has the capacity to express one's thoughts and sentiments in a sophisticated manner, one may not be able to do so if they are not allowed by an affluent society. Feminine sensibility, which has the ability to compete with male creativity, has been smothered by these forces. Women's creative abilities have been stifled by society's socioeconomic institutions and cultural norms. In addition, her traditional position as the primary supporter of home peace in a male-dominated culture has left her with little time for her inherent artistic sensitivities to fully blossom. In other words, women in prior ages "were denied an opportunity to acquire the required technological instruments that may have helped them concretize their sentiments".

As a result, the society's attitude toward women and their position in society has improved greatly in the previous 30 years or more. The majority of women's experiences and impressions of the world are

influenced by their gender, and this is reflected in their work. With the rise of feminist philosophy, the patriarchal assumptions that have long governed society have been called into question. Both how women have been depicted in literature and their current writing style have been the subject of substantial debates due to the application of new notions about women to their conceptions. There is no gender gap when it comes to literary contributions. There have also been a number of female English writers from the Indian subcontinent going back to the 18th century. These authors prove that they can be as imaginative as the Western women writers of the past thanks to their diverse range of skills, hobbies, and writing styles.

Bapsi Sidhwa is an up-and-coming author in the Commonwealth literature scene. The best English-language author in Pakistan is also hers. Pre-colonial India and post-colonial India are the subject of her work. It's clear that she's coming at the story from two different places: from the Pakistani and Parsi perspectives. She advocates for both the Pakistani people and the disadvantaged Parsi minority.

According to Pratap Singh, she prefers to be referred to as a Punjabi-Pakistani-Parsi lady despite the fact that she is really a dual citizen of India, Pakistan, and the United States. Though her characters and stories are set in India, there is an air of exoticism about her that draws in readers from throughout the world, as Reshmi Gaur attests.

She was born in Karachi in 1939 into a prominent Parsi business family. Her parents Peshotom and Tehmin Bhandara migrated to Lahore soon after her birth, when the Parsi population was little over a hundred and fifty people in total. Thus, the family was shut off from Parsi society. She tells Feroza Jussawala everything about her Lahore childhood:

My upbringing would have been very different if I had been raised in Karachi, which is also a part of Pakistan. As a child, I would have been raised by Parsis. I was raised away from my family members, including my cousins and aunts and uncles. My family was not a large, close-knit group. My maternal grandmother lived with us for a few years, although she had little impact on my family's culture. My childhood was primarily shaped by the influence of my servants.

Her parents have no other children. She was, of course, depressed and lonely. When she was two years old, she had polio, which made her feel even more alone. In order for her to recover, she had to endure many surgeries. Her parents were told by the physicians not to put her through school and put her under any kind of academic pressure. As a result, an Anglo-Indian governess was hired to tutor her at home.

Bapsi Sidhwa

Diasporic Pakistani novelist Bapsi Sidhwa is a household name. She has written four English-language books based on her own life experiences, including the partition of the Indian subcontinent, mistreatment of women, immigration to the United States, and participation in the Parsi/Zoroastrian society. Having been born on August 11, 1938, in Karachi, Pakistan, and having moved to Lahore not long after, Bapsi Sidhwa was there throughout the terrible Partition of India. With polio throughout her childhood, she received her education at home, where she read voraciously until the age of 15. From Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore she went on to get a Bachelor of Arts degree (BA). When Sidhwa was only 19 years old, she married and gave birth to one of her three children. Having a family forced her to hide her writing talents. In the

middle of bridge games, she explains, "I'd take a break and write." A whole new universe has opened up for me now that I've been published". For a long time, though, she adds, "I was taught that Pakistan was too far in time and location for Americans or the British to relate with". She was a vocal advocate for women's rights at this period, participating in the 1975 Asian Women's Congress as Pakistan's representative.

Having received several rejections for both her first and second works, she opted to self-publish The Crow Eaters in Pakistan. Her literary popularity began as a result of this ordeal, which she regrets saying, "I would not want on anybody." As a result of her first two books, Cracking India and An American Brat, she has garnered various honours and honorary professorships. As a result, The Bride received the Patras Bokhri Award for Pakistani literature in 1985, and the Sitari-Imtiazin Award for Pakistani art and culture in 1991. While writing Cracking India for her third book, she received several accolades, including a German Literaturpreis, an American Library Association "Notable Book of the Year," and a New York Times mention. Cracking India was made possible in 1986 and 1987 by a Harvard Bunting Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Arts award. Lila Wallace-Digest Reader's Award winner in 1993, she received a $100,000 prize. Russian, French, and German translations of her writings have recently been made available. At Rice University, Mt. Holyoke, St. Thomas University, and The University of Texas, she has also taught college-level English classes. She has also taught at Columbia University, New York.

Parsi

When it comes to Bapsi Sidhwa's viewpoint on Indian Subcontinent's Partition, her religious detachment from the most immediate impacts is what makes her perspective so fascinating. Zoroastrian exiles escaping Islamic expansion in the 8th century C.E. arrived in India with a glass of milk, which signified that the Indian people were cohesive and homogeneous and should not be messed with, according to the traditional account. In response, the Parsees threw a sugar cube into the milk, claiming that it would dissolve and sweeten the culture. As a result, the Parsees were allowed to settle in India since they did not engage in proselytising or politics. Consequently, Bapsi Sidhwa was able to see the Partition from a safe distance, as Parsees retained a religious and political neutral attitude. "The conflict was between the Hindus and the Muslims, and as a Parsee (member of a Zoroastrian sect), I thought I could offer an impartial account of this vast, historic struggle," she recalls in an interview.

Zoroastrianism's roots may be traced back to the Proto Indo-Iranians as far back as 3000 BCE. These people lived east of the Volga River in the South Russian Steppes. Pre-Iranians recognized the cyclical pattern of reality in day and night and the seasons therefore they looked to the sky, land and water for gods. Many of these peaceful shepherds were forced to become soldiers after bronze casting was discovered about 2000 BCE. Around 1500 BCE, this civilization gave birth to Zarathustra. He was able to communicate with one God, Ahura Mazda, "The Lord of Light," after meditating for many years. One of the first monotheistic faiths, then, is Zoroastrianism. Zarathustra used his conversations with Ahura Mazda as inspiration for a collection of hymns known as The Gathas. Singing of a God who was all-knowing and active in the here and now, he

sang of an all-powerful God. According to Zarathustra, who drew on the traditions of his people, Ahura Mazda's strength is shown via the universe's exact rules (Asha). It is also thought that Ahura Mazda granted humanity the divine ability to discern their God, which is known as the 'VOHO MANOH'.

Death and marriage are two of the most important concepts in Zoroastrianism. For disposal of the deceased, Dakhma-nashini is the sole approved procedure. Open to the sky and birds of prey, the Dakhma encases the body in a stone coffin. In the same way that other deceased animals and plants join the food chain, the body too enters the food chain, highlighting the circle of life once again. Additionally, Dakhma-nashini assures that the water supply is safe. To maintain ethnic identity and custom, marriage outside of the faith is prohibited, as is conversion. Zoroastrians and Parsis recognize no distinction between race and religion. As the globe gets more linked, Bapsi Sidhwa's most recent work, An American Brat, deals with this issue. Currently, the global Parsee population is at over 1 million. It is common for them to be Anglicized and educated.

Zoroastrianism's most revered deity is the Faravahar. Symbolizes the soul's journey through existence and its final unification with Ahura Mazda via the intellect, Faravahar's central portrait depicts a guy whose profile represents the belief in the ultimate primacy of the soul in the universe. Wings of the soul spread out as the soul travels through life. Zoroastrians divide the day into five distinct periods: morning; noon; afternoon; and evening. Each wing contains 5 feather layers that correspond to each of these periods (Gehs). The masculine profile's ship's two curving legs represent the two conflicting paths of good and evil that each soul must choose for it. The soul's rudder is symbolized by the bird's feathery tail, which dangles between its two hind legs. Hvarasta, Humata (Good Thoughts), and Hukhta (Good Work) are all feathered layers (Good Deeds). Reincarnation and various realms of life beyond this world are symbolized by the ring in the man's hands, which reminds Zoroastrians of the cycles of death and rebirth.

“HORRORS OF PARTITION” ICE-CANDY-MAN

Ice-Candy-Man In 1991, Milkweed Editions published Cracking India by Sidhwa as her third book. Up to this point, it's her most sombre and political book. This book is the only one in which she employs a kid narrator who has been diagnosed with polio. Lenny, a little girl at the beginning of the novel, tells the narrative in the present tense and first person. The history of the Partition conflict fades into the background as the major emphasis shifts to personal suffering. Due to hardening communal views, fundamentalism has led to the inevitable progression of division. The tale is set in Lahore, the capital of pre-partition India. This is a book about upheaval, and the people in it come from many walks of life. People of many faiths may be found in India. As the story develops, a variety of viewpoints from the impacted populations are presented on the issue of division.

The following is a brief summary of the novel's historical setting. There were two different countries on the subcontinent when India earned independence from Great Britain in 1947, the Hindu motherland India and Pakistan. After years of religious struggle, this was the political solution. To do this, millions of people were compelled to relocate, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of people. They were forced to flee their homes, lose their wealth and property, succumb to sickness, and many women were subjected to

rapes and subsequent punishments from their husbands and families. The Punjabi plains of northern India, a fertile farmland crisscrossed by five rivers, were the scene of most of the carnage and suffering. Pakistan was granted Punjab's largest city, Lahore, often dubbed "the Paris of India." As a result of its advantageous location, the city became a vast camp for refugees.

Using point of view as a literary approach to establish a philosophical understanding of history becomes very important for novelists. A Parsi family and the individuals who enter their life are the centre of ***Ice-Candy-Man***, which is more focused on partition than the previous two books. To get a sense of what life was like in India before to partition, read this book. As the tale progresses, the reader's attention is drawn to the Ice-Candy-personal Man's story rather than the historical facts. Lenny, a polio patient, is being cared for by an 18-year-old ayah in a Parsi family by The **Ice-Candy-Man**, who is a close friend and admirer of the ayah. Sidhwa is thorough in specifying the ages of her characters, as she is in all of her works. We learn about the plot of the book via Lenny, which detracts from the severity of the narrative. In her narration of her world's transformation, she is both sophisticated and awe-inspiring. Adults are the ones who communicate via the kid's memories, therefore the reader is always on the lookout for any impressions that the youngster could recall later in his or her adult life."

The Ayah, not her parents, is Lenny's constant companion. Her Godmother, Godmother's younger sister "slave sister," and Lenny's younger brother Adi, who is a year her junior, are all good friends, ,Ayah is the focus of the narrative and a major draw for the characters. In Lenny's words:

> *Ayah is a short, dark-haired woman. There's nothing about her that doesn't scream "I'm eighteen." It's even her face that I'm not fond of. Her full-blown cheeks, wide lips, and smooth forehead make a round shape with her head. ' Her hair is neatly tucked behind her ear in a knot.*

Thirteen people adore Ayah. With them are Imam Din, the Government House gardener; Hari the Chairman; Imam Din the Cook; the pathan knife-sharpener; butcher; the tiny Sikh Zoo attendant; Masseur; and the **Ice-Candy-Man**. When it comes to using public rumour and newspaper stories, Sidhwa is right up there with Mistry. Her characters, like Hardy's, play the roles of commentator and translator, such as the Masseur, the Government House gardener, and Sher Singh. They talk about their bosses and the subtle shifts in political climate that are happening all around them.

As a result, the reader gets a glimpse of society and the events that led to the Partition from the perspective of the underdog.

The Pathan uses a pedal-powered machine to sharpen knives, while the Masseur has "developed an oil that will sprout hair on bald heads." The Chinaman sells embroidered bosky silks from door to door. An array of botanicals, including mustard oil, pearl dust and monkey glands" are used in the formula. By repeating the Urdu couplets of Ghalib, Mir, Zauq, and Faiz, he attracts the attention of the Ayah. Iqbal's Shikwah is used as the novel's epigraph; it's a coincidence. The poet laments to God over God's skewed treatment of Muslims and non-Muslims in the distribution of rewards and penalties. **Ice-Candy-Man** is a multifaceted character in this crew. He's a Muslim street trader, and he's lured to the Ayah as so many others have before him. Lenny sees the **Ice-Candy-Man** go from being an icecream vendor to a bird salesman to a

cosmic telephone link to Allah as well as a pimp in the course of his career.

Her romantic exploits become crucial to Lenny's understanding of the world around him. You can see the connection between Leny's world of childhood delights, innocence, and the ever-shifting ambiance. Adults, like the Masseur and Ice-Candy Man, provide the Ayah a peek of what it's like to be a woman and sexuality. In the beginning, powerful and accomplished women like Rodabai and Ayah Help to keep her safe. Lennie's quest to make sense of the illogical events of the division is central to his maturation process and his quest to comprehend adult life as a whole.

India's independence from the British and the creation of India and Pakistan coincide with Lenny growing up. Lenny's strong love for Ayah and the loss of innocence that follows their developing connection through the division is an energising heart of the story. Little Lenny watches the clamorous horrors of partition from the lap of her lovely Ayah, or holding her skirts as Ayah is followed by her suitors through the fountains, cypresses, and marble terraces of the Shalimar Gardens. It's 1947. Lahore, Pakistan, is where Lenny feels most at home, surrounded by the love and support of her extended Parsee family. Lenny is observant and takes note of everything: clothing, scents, colour, the tan on one's skin, even the pupils of one's own eyes. Bashful, scared eyes of olive oil colour.

Like Chaucer's persona in the prologue to ***The Canterbury Tales***, Lenny lends legitimacy to the story by becoming practically an integral part of the reader's awareness. A child's awe inspires her to look at the world around her with a fresh perspective and a willingness to make mistakes. Her naivete, like Chaucer's character, is a source of keen irony in her childlike innocence. Sidhwa's use of a kid narrator allows him to avoid morbidity, pedenticism, or condemnation in his treatment of the holocausts of partition. It also aids her in maintaining a delicate ebb and flow between the two.

Partition has only been the subject of one Parsi book***, Ice-Candy-Man***. When India's diverse groups found themselves in flux at the start the twentieth century, the Parsi community showed a non-committal stance towards it. Through the perspective of Lenny, the Hindu-Muslim love-hate connection is shown in a simplified form.

From the very beginning, the story establishes the mood and tenor of the events. Anticipating Lenny's impartiality in recounting division, the Parsi gathering at the Fire Temple in Lahore for the Jashan prayer, to commemorate the British victory, serves as an example of the narrator's neutrality. They have always been loyal to the British, but they are worried about India's impending division and don't know which group to support. Col. Bharuch, the ruthless Parsi doctor and head of the Parsi Anjuman, sounded a cautionary note:

> *There is no question that the guy in jail is gaining political acclaim... But we're not interested in taking this shortcut to fame and money. The fight for home rule is no longer the only issue. It's a fight for supremacy. When Swaraj is implemented, who will be in charge? Says the colonel with an accusatory finger pointed at us as if we were harbouring wicked thoughts. There will be a power struggle between Hindus, Muslims, and even Sikhs, and if you try to get in the thick of it, you'll be minced into chutney!'*

And he also advises them to be cautious and tells them to keep an eye out for scams and fraud:

> *Not only one, but two or even three new countries might emerge. A failure to perform due diligence might result in the Parsees taking up arms for the wrong cause.*

"Let whoever desires rule?" Col Bharuch tells his people at this period of uncertainty. The Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and Christian communities are all represented! This is their territory, and we shall abide by their laws!"

The Parsis will maintain a neutral stance in the power struggle in India among the country's three largest ethnic groups. This Parsi racial psychology informs the narrator Lenny's unbiased viewpoint. In a sense, the Parsi community's attitude reveals Lenny's collective subconscious.

Why did you wait so long to bring your kid in?' the doctor says to the patient when he finds out his son has been coughing for six days and his father doesn't even know about it. The doctor lets out a loud yell.

'I'm sorry, sir,' the guy apologises. It was a mystery to me. Isn't she supposed to have told you this?' Are you a husband or a barber? And Pakistan is what you all want! To rule a nation, you must be aware of what is going on in your own home.

Throughout the story, we see a pattern of communal harmony in which the three major faiths of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs all live in harmony with one another without violence. But Lenny's dreams at the beginning of a new day are indicative of an impending death and devastation. On a motorbike "coming to grab me (Lenny)" is an exquisite Nazi soldier in one of her dreams.

Another recurring childhood nightmare is that of "guys in uniforms gently chopping of a child's arm here, a leg there," which is more revealing and provocative. She thinks she's the kid in the dream, and she's not sure why. They "dismember" her, but "I feel no pain just an appalling feeling of loss—and a terrible fear that no one is worried by what's occurring."

In the same way that the decapitation of that infant was horrible, the nightmare foreshadowed India's imminent vivisection. Because of its distance from the religious-political conclusion, Lenny's lack of suffering suggests her community's apathy. Seeing no one worried about what is occurring sums up the lack of concern on the side of the government to check on the unfettered show of cruelty during the division.

Having a zoo lion get out and viciously attack Lenny is another nightmare that she suffers from:

> *As long as the lions in the zoo don't roar, Even when he doesn't roar, my daydreams become terrifying nightmares, with the hungry lion sauntering from the back of the house to the bedroom door and leaping through with bare-fanged claws to bite me in the gut. This happens only when he's at his most terrifying. There is nothing left in my gut except a deep, deep pit of despair. It doesn't matter if he roars at night or not, I wake up each morning to the lion's howl. At the crack of dawn, he gets to work on it, preventing me from sleeping.*

The ravenous lion, which always rises at the crack of dawn, seems to be a metaphor of the river of mutual enmity unleashed at the dawn of Indian Independence to wreck havoc on both sides of the border for Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. With these three nightmares, the writer teaches the reader about the horrible

and violent pattern of communal hatred that was clearly visible during the partition of India.

Sidhwa now turns the narrative on to Lenny, who tells the tale of how community ties have changed through time. Throughout the narrative, we see a pattern of communal harmony amongst the Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs in rural India. Lenny gets her first taste of rural life on her first visit to Pir Pindo, a Muslim community 30 miles east of Lahore. In Pir Pindo, she meets Muslims and Sikhs from Dera like Tek Singh who are concerned about the deterioration of communal relations in the metropolis. Anxiety over it is shared by local Mullah Jagjeet Singh. "Brother, our communities originate from the same ethnic stock," he says, echoing the religious harmony of Pir Pindo and the surrounding villages. Whether we identify as Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh, we are all essentially Jats. In a sense, we're all one big family.

CONCLUSION

Sidhwa distinguishes apart from other Indian authors of English-language literature for a wide range of reasons including her raucous humour, contempt for traditional values, sense of justice and deft use of archetypes in characters. This lady is a fantastic example of the many different cultures she has lived in. Authors of subcontinental English literature have found new depths in her work because of her use of flashy language. This subgenre's "prim and rigid standard," as Anatol Lievin puts it, has been liberated. Greater freedom in the treatment of sexuality in Indian subcontinental English writing has been a long-term ambition of Khushwant Singh's. Bapsi Sidhwa has been a trailblazer in this field for quite some time. Namita Gokhale and Shoba De, the queen of smut, are two more current Indian-English writers who have followed this trend. A third-world author like Mulk Raj Anand, Bapsi Sidhwa feels that the author has a responsibility to play in evangelising. There are a number of examples of injustice that she tackles in her many books. Bapsi Sidhwa, for example, mentions the behaviour of superheroes like The Crow Eaters and Ice-Candy-Man. Authors are accustomed to possessing other people's bodies and inhabiting historical situations in their work.

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