

## The silent scream of nature: Ecocide and environmental crisis in Ice Candy Man



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### ABSTRACT

#### Article History

Received: 19 January 2024

Revised: 28 February 2024

Accepted: 21 March 2024

Published: 15 April 2024

#### Keywords

Bapsi Sidhwa

Ecocriticism

Environmental degradation

Ecological devastation

Ice Candy Man

Pollution.

This ecocritical study investigates the profound ecological themes embedded in Bapsi Sidhwa's *"Ice Candy Man"* exploring the intricate layers of environmental degradation and the looming threat of ecocide within the narrative. The narrative unfolds against the backdrop of the partition of India in 1947 providing a poignant portrayal of the silent but pervasive scream of nature as it undergoes destruction and degradation. The aim of this research is to reveal the nuanced interplay between characters and their deteriorating environment shedding light on the threads of ecological crisis interwoven into the novel's fabric. The study uses a qualitative analysis approach and ecocritical perspectives to determine the direct impact on people's lives as well as the subtle degradation of environments. The analysis delves into the intricate relationships between human actions, political turmoil and the resultant ecological devastation illustrating how the characters' lives and the natural environment intertwine. The results highlight the poignant reflection of a global environmental predicament, emphasizing the powerful narrative discourse that urges readers to confront the harsh reality of a planet in peril. By drawing attention to the silent scream of nature reverberating throughout the narrative, the research prompts a heightened environmental consciousness and encourages reflection on the urgent need for collective action. The conclusion emphasizes the narrative's role in prompting reflection on the silent scream of nature, urging a collective recognition of the urgent need for environmental awareness in the face of ecological challenges.

**Contribution/ Originality:** "The silent scream of nature, ecocide and environmental crisis in Ice Candy Man" analyzes Bapsi Sidhwa's novel revealing the profound ecological themes intertwined with human actions and societal dynamics. This contribution illuminates the subtle expressions of ecocide within the narrative urging a critical examination of the urgent environmental challenges highlighted in the novel.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Literary writers have been portraying and mimicking nature in their literary works since the commencement of civilization. Many artistic results demonstrate their fascination with the natural elements.

It is undeniable that our ecosystem is the essential requirement for sustaining life on this planet.

Nature stands as a pivotal theme in numerous literary works with colonialism emerging as a prominent force contributing to environmental degradation. The evolving global socio-cultural landscape has influenced the portrayal of humanity's relationship with nature in literature. Ecocriticism, a swiftly growing field encompasses a

diverse array of texts and theories that examine the intricate interplay between humanity and the natural world. Literary explorations of environmental concerns extend beyond literal expressions encompassing a spectrum of themes such as nature imagery, gender constructs, feminism, interpersonal relationships, tourism, culture etc. Environmental studies in literature offer interpretations that transcend the surface delving into nuanced layers of meaning within these diverse literary expressions.

According to Astrid Bracke's thesis on ecocriticism, Glen A. and Cheryl Glotfelty are credited with popularizing the term "ecocriticism." Glotfelty and Fromm (1996) explain in their book Introduction to Ecocriticism Reader (1996) that ecocriticism "takes as its difficulty the interconnections among nature and culture, mainly the cultural artifacts of language and literature" ("advent" xviiiix) in addition to examining the relationship between literature and the physical surroundings.

How does this sonnet depict nature? What part does a novel's geographical location play? What effects do land metaphors have on our treatment of them? What genre definitions can we provide for nature writing? Do men and women write about nature in different ways? In what ways has the idea of wildness evolved over time? What impact has literacy had on the way that humans interact with the natural world? What potential impact does ecology science have on literary studies? In what ways might science be subjected to literary analysis? ( introduction xviii–xix)

One definition of ecocriticism is that it is an interdisciplinary field of research. According to Gersdorf and Mayer's (2006) advanced ecocriticism, we must reevaluate the process of "the history of ideologically, aesthetically and ethically motivated conceptualizations of nature" (10). Furthermore, according to Gersdorf and Mayer (10), "the elements of its construction and metaphorizations in literary and different cultural practices" must be considered. According to Gersdorf and Mayer (10), literature interpretations that go beyond the surface are provided by environmental studies in literature which explore subtle levels of significance throughout a variety of literary forms.

However, Kern (2009) demonstrates that ecocriticism is "a sort of reading designed to show and facilitate the evaluation of a text's orientation, both to the sector it imagines and to the arena in which it takes form" (260). In other words, ecocriticism is an essential literary and critical device in most cases. Thus, the importance of nature has been extensively discussed in the literature. These ideas on characters in literature and nature are also derived from several works by Margaret Atwood and Cheryl Strayed.

Bapsi Sidhwa is a renowned Pakistani novelist who was brought up and educated in Lahore and now resides in Houston. Her excellent novels present themes related to her personal experience of colonial and post-colonial India, the devastations of the subcontinent partition, the exploitation of women, the Parsi milieu and the problems faced by the Parsi community in the subcontinent of which she is a member. Her tender-heartedness becomes evident through the marvellous character portrayals and emotive descriptions of situations in all her works. She imparts a message of equality, love, mutual respect and humanity exposing the existing biases of the influential members of society. She also satirizes the oppressors who conduct oppression with the help of their privileged socio-economic position and satanic hypocrisy.

She won many prestigious awards including the Sitara-i-Imtiaz Award, Pakistan's uppermost national honor in the arts, the Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Award and the Patras Bokhari Award for her novel "The Bride" in 1985 owing to her outstanding writing skills (cited in Sidhwa (2013)). A foreword by Fatima Bhutto has been included in the 2015 edition of Sidhwa's novel "The Crow Eaters" in which she praises Sidhwa in these words: *And high among the greats whose verses and tales have accompanied Pakistan from its infancy to its turbulent present in Bapsi Sidhwa.* Dodiya (2006) opines that Sidhwa's novels reflect her own experiences of living in the two big cities of Pakistan, Karachi, and Lahore as she belongs to the Bhandaras family which is known for its business success. She comes from the third generation of Parsis who settled in northern Indian cities. He believes she has been influenced by the factual

and fictional stories of her elders' entrepreneurial skills. She has become an outstanding supporter of women's rights through her novels which depict the cruel exploitation of women in our culture.

On August 11, 1938, Sidhwa was born in Karachi to a Parsi family. Her family decided to move to Lahore soon after her birth. Lahore is her novel's central city built over assorted colors and textures with a high topography. However, a few Bhandara and Parsis families were cut off from Parsi life in Lahore. Sidhwa wrote five international novels which have been translated into Italian, Russian, German and French. Her novels are *The Crow Eaters* (1978), *The Pakistani Bride* (1983), *Ice-Candy-Man* (1988), *An American Brat* (1994) and *Water* (2006). Her novels were soon translated into many languages.

There exists a notable research gap in the ecocritical analysis of the novel despite the extensive scholarship on Bapsi Sidhwa's "Ice Candy Man". Previous studies have explored themes such as identity, partition and socio-political dynamics within the narrative. There is a scarcity of ecocritical examinations that delve into the environmental dimensions of the text. The novel has a lot of natural symbolism, ecological patterns and imagery but it does not fully discuss how these elements integrate into the broader discussion about environmental crises and ecocide. There is an opportunity to expose the intricate relationships between human actions, societal structures and the silent degradation of nature depicted in "Ice Candy Man" by applying an ecocritical lens. Addressing this research gap will provide insight into the relationship between environmental issues and literary tales in the context of postcolonial literature in addition to fostering a deeper understanding of the work.

### 1.1. Significance of Research

The ecocritical study of "Ice Candy Man" by Bapsi Sidhwa holds significant importance in shedding light on the intricate ecological dimensions within the narrative. An ecocritical analysis of this work enables an in-depth study of the intricate relationship between human actions and the natural world when contemporary society is dealing with expanding environmental concerns. The story unfolds against the backdrop of historical events and the ecocritical analysis can unveil how the characters' decisions and societal structures contribute to or mitigate environmental degradation. This study provides valuable insights into the environmental consciousness embedded in the narrative by delving into the eco-centric themes, symbols and representations within the text. Furthermore, the research can contribute to a broader understanding of how literature reflects and shapes perceptions of environmental issues, fostering a deeper appreciation for the intersection of literature, culture and the ecological challenges faced by societies. "Ice Candy Man" emerges as not just a historical novel but a compelling ecological narrative that resonates with contemporary environmental concerns through this ecocritical lens.

### 1.2. Research Questions

1. How does "Ice Candy Man" by Bapsi Sidhwa engage with and depict the environmental landscape, considering ecocritical perspectives?
2. To what extent does the narrative in "Ice Candy Man" reflect the impact of human activities on the environment?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Rueckert (1978) coined the term "ecocriticism" in 1978 to describe the literary analysis that centers on the natural world. Ecocritics argue that the natural environment is a pivotal subject deserving of humanistic attention, yet they also propose that nature remains somewhat unfamiliar to human culture. Ecocritics contend that mindful interaction with the environment can have positive effects but that nature's indifference exposes the deficiencies of human attempts to use it for symbolic purposes. "Ecocriticism positioned as a distinctive form of pastoral aims to address the intricate predicament of humans existing in a world that, as Wallace Stevens suggests, is "not our own

and much more, not ourselves." Ecocritics place their trust in the reconciling simplicity of landscapes (Mikics, 2007).

At the core of ecocriticism lies the critique of binary oppositions such as man and nature or culture and nature, previously considered mutually exclusive. Instead, ecocriticism highlights their interconnected and mutually constitutive nature. Wendell (1977) echoing similar sentiments in "The Unsettling of America" (1977) emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between humans and their environment, stating, "We and our country create one another depend upon one another and are part of one another. Our culture and place are images of each other and inseparable from each other." This perspective underscores that our identities and sense of self are shaped by the places where we reside and feel a sense of belonging.

Conversely, there is never an easy replication of the natural world in the human experience. It is perpetually mediated by the culture of a specific time and place with human emotions and imagination inevitably influencing its representation in literary works.

Greg Garrard defines ecocriticism as the exploration of the interconnection between human beings and non-human aspects throughout cultural history in his book "Ecocriticism". This field involves a critical analysis of the relationship between humans and the environment and of the concept of 'human' itself (Garrard, 2004). Ecocriticism aims to scrutinize and assess texts and ideas in the context of environmental concerns, striving to understand the intricate relationship between literature and the environment.

Ecocriticism serves as an interdisciplinary field, fostering collaboration among natural scientists, writers, literary critics, anthropologists, historians and various other disciplines. It encourages a critical examination of how we depict, interact with and shape the environment, encompassing both the "natural" and human-made elements. Central to ecocriticism is a dedication to acknowledge environmentalists from diverse critical perspectives (Buell, 2005). Analyzing the works of renowned authors through the lens of eco-critical theories offers valuable insights in the current era marked by environmental crises. This approach takes an earth-centered stance in literary studies providing a thought-provoking perspective on the intricate relationship between literature and the environment.

Ecocriticism underscores its focus as an acknowledgment of the intricate links between human experiences and history as well as the physical environments depicted in imaginative works across various media including literature. One of ecocriticism's pioneers asserted that its unique contribution to the traditionally examined dimensions of race, class and gender lies in elevating place as a critical category (Buell, Ursula, & Karen, 2011).

In the ecocritical examination of Bapsi Sidhwa's "Ice Candy Man," a noticeable research gap emerges in the limited exploration of the novel's environmental dimensions. Existing scholarship has delved into the socio-political aspects and cultural nuances within the narrative. There remains a distinct dearth of analyses that comprehensively engage with the ecological elements embedded in the text. There are many possibilities for ecocritical study due to the characters' relationship to nature, the way in which historical events have affected the ecosystem and the extensive description of nature. A critical gap exists in understanding how the novel addresses and represents ecological concerns, the consequences of human actions on the environment and the potential symbolic significance of nature within the broader socio-political context of the story. This research gap highlights the need for a more thorough ecocritical investigation to expose the layers of environmental discourse and contribute to a holistic understanding of "Ice Candy Man" as a literary work that encapsulates both social and ecological dimensions.

In *Ice Candy Man*, Sidhwa has introduced several aspects of life. Sidhwa decided to write a novel in the 1970s. Sidhwa mostly wrote about social issues such as marriage, sexuality, identity crisis and religion. *Ice Candy Man* is an autobiographical novel. The character of Lenny shows the real pain of life she has faced after the partition of the sub-continent. In one interview, she said, "I am almost every character in my book" (Soofi, 2012) so she says that Lenny is not herself, one considers it as though the storyteller Lenny had been the writer herself narrating the entire story of the partition. The unconventional may be regarded as an autobiographical depiction of historical

incidents, fictionalized and colored using writers' reflections, critiques, ideas, feelings, emotions and imaginations (Mahajan, 2016).

Lenny stays at home due to the infection with polio. She gets her education at home. She learns about several aspects of life such as religion, changing society and the suffering of partition. Lenny tries to understand the difference between other religions. She lives a happy life in Lahore but the incident of her Aya Shanta kidnapping changed her life. In this way, she knows the harsh and cruel reality of society. She learns that fighting against a masculine culture is too difficult to get her rights. In the subcontinent, women are dealt with as property by men (Khalil, Ehsan, & Ghaur, 2017). Lenny sees two faces of a man in different circumstances. According to Lenny, men are wicked people in society. They use a female for their purposes and to satisfy their lust. Shashi Deshpande says "that rape is a violation of trust between two people and greater violence."

Sidhwa is a big name in Pakistani literature in English. Sidhwa has tried to cover every aspect of life through her novels. She has talked too much about female rights. According to her, women should have the same rights as men. In *Ice Candy Man*, we see that she describes partition and the condition of females after the partition. She also depicts gender narratives and their societal roles, subaltern studies towards different female characters, religious history and their attitudes towards a difference in religion and feminist perspectives.

### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ecocriticism explores the relationship between literature and the natural environment. It examines how literary texts represent, critique or celebrate the natural world and human interactions. As a critical approach, ecocriticism aims to reveal how literature reflects and shapes our attitudes towards the environment.

Ecocriticism draws on various interdisciplinary fields including environmental science, philosophy, ecology, cultural studies and literary criticism. It analyses literary works regarding their representations of nature, ecological crises and the cultural and historical contexts that shape these representations. Additionally, ecocriticism examines how literature can influence our perceptions of the natural world and our relationship to it.

Bapsi Sidhwa's novel "*Ice Candy Man*" can be read through an ecocritical lens as it deals with the impact of the partition of India on the environment and the human relationship with nature. The novel portrays the violence, displacement, and trauma experienced by characters and how it affects their sense of place and belonging.

One way to apply ecocriticism to the novel is by analyzing how the environment is portrayed and its role in the narrative. For instance, the book highlights the destruction and transformation of the natural landscape due to the violence and displacement of the partition as seen in the description of the once-lush garden turned into a garbage dump. This illustrates how human actions can affect the environment and how environmental degradation can result from social and political conflict.

Moreover, the protagonist's friendship with a monkey which represents the relationship between nature and human beings is one of the means by which the novel shows the complex relationship that exists between humans and animals. The novel also portrays the human exploitation of animals such as the poaching of birds for their feathers, further emphasizing the need for a more ethical and sustainable relationship with the environment.

#### 3.1. Research Design

The research design employs a qualitative analysis rooted in ecocritical theory which seeks to understand the ecological implications embedded in the narrative of '*Ice Candy Man*.' This study investigates how the text reflects and responds to environmental degradation exploring the ways in which the characters and plot contribute to the portrayal of ecocide. Methodologically, the research involves a close reading of the novel identifying instances where the natural world is depicted or impacted. Additionally, an examination of historical and cultural contexts is crucial to understanding the environmental ethos of the setting. The research design emphasizes the analysis of literary elements that underscore the relationship between human actions, societal structures and the environment

drawing upon ecocritical frameworks. The study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on ecocriticism by unraveling the silent ecological narrative within 'Ice Candy Man' and shedding light on the urgent environmental crisis represented in the text.

Ecocriticism as a literary field integrates the natural environment encompassing elements such as population growth, the swift decline of species, soil contamination, water and air pollution and the depletion of wild forests with literary works. This interdisciplinary approach explores the intricate connections between the physical environment and literature, emphasizing the significance of these relationships. Scholars in ecocriticism or ecocritics, meticulously examine the interplay between the environment and literature delving into ecological issues arising from both stable and unstable relationships within and between social and physical realms (Glen, 2003). Environmental issues, particularly alterations in the natural surroundings stem from human activities, whether deliberate or inadvertent that disregard principles of environmental sustainability. The visibility of these problems becomes pronounced when substantial harm to the environment is inflicted by extensive endeavors like mining or industrial pollution (Rahman, 2019).

### 3.2. Data Analysis

The literary theory of ecocriticism provides a distinctive perspective for analyzing the intricate relationship between nature and culture in literary works. When applied to Bapsi Sidhwa's novel "Ice Candy Man," this approach reveals the intricate connections between the natural environment, human society and the characters' experiences. Sidhwa's narrative unfolds against the backdrop of the 1947 partition of India, a historical event that dramatically altered the landscape and ecology of the region. The novel examines how this environmental change is similar to societal disruption through the perspectives of Lenny, the protagonist and other important people emphasizing the significant effects of political and social changes on the natural world. In this ecocritical analysis of "Ice Candy Man," we will delve into the ways in which Sidhwa's storytelling skillfully weaves together environmental elements and human experiences to shed light on the intricate relationship between the two.

### 3.3. Pollution Types

In "Ice Candy Man" by Bapsi Sidhwa, an ecocritical analysis reveals the pervasive impact of various types of pollution on both the physical environment and the characters' lives. The narrative unfolds against the backdrop of the partition of India in 1947 illustrating how political and social upheavals contribute to the pollution of landscapes and communities. The pollution of the natural environment is mirrored by the contamination of human relationships and cultural identities. The ice candy man himself, a symbolic figure, embodies the pollution of innocence and morality amidst the chaos. Sidhwa's narrative serves as a poignant exploration of the interconnectedness between environmental degradation and human experiences emphasizing the urgent need for a holistic and sustainable approach to address the multifaceted pollution that permeates both the natural world and the fabric of society.

Table 1 depicts the degradation of the land in the novel Ice Candy Man.

Table 1. Land pollution.

Sr. no	Land pollution
1	Fire the fields
2	Use the property for your own sake.
3	Full of blood land
4	Dead bodies on land

Table 2 represents the water pollution in the novel Ice Candy Man.

**Table 2.** Water pollution.

Sr. no	Water pollution
1	Dead bodies are null.
2	Just use water for own benefit.

Table 3 depicts the air pollution in the novel Ice Candy Man.

**Table 3.** Air pollution.

Sr. no	Air pollution
1	Gun powder
2	Smoke
3	The development of the industrial revolution

Table 4 depicts the noise pollution in the novel Ice Candy Man.

**Table 4.** Noise pollution.

Sr. no	Noise pollution
1	War noise
2	Beating people
3	Slogan

Table 5 depicts visual pollution in the novel Ice Candy Man.

**Table 5.** Visual pollution.

Sr. no	Visual pollution
1	Billboards
2	Wastage of wood and cloth
3	Dirty streets
4	Burnt field

### 3.4. Land Pollution

Bapsi Sidhwa's novel "*Ice Candy Man*" also known as "*Cracking India*" is set during the partition of India in 1947 and explores the devastating impact of communal violence on ordinary people's lives. Although the novel does not directly address land pollution, there are several instances where environmental degradation is portrayed as a consequence of the violence and chaos of partition.

One example is the novel's description of the train massacre's aftermath. The narrator, a young girl named Lenny describes how the corpses of the victims are left unburied and how their blood and excrement pollute the land around the railway tracks.

"The stench of the unburied dead seeped into our nostrils. The excrement from the guts of the dead had burst out and stained the ground around them" (Sidhwa, 1988).

This passage highlights how the violence of partition not only results in loss of life but also has long-lasting environmental consequences.

The novel also portrays urbanization's impact on the natural environment. One character, Dil Navaz is a gardener deeply attached to his plants and flowers. However, as the city of Lahore grows and expands, more land is taken up by buildings and roads leaving little space for greenery.

"The city grew like a voracious monster, devouring the fields, orchards and gardens surrounding it. Dil Navaz mourned the loss of every inch of greenery" (Sidhwa, 1988).

This passage highlights how rapid urbanization can lead to land degradation and the loss of natural habitats.

The author highlights the degradation of the environment and its impact on human health throughout the story. The character of Ayah, who is the protagonist's nanny is depicted as being acutely aware of the environmental degradation in her surroundings. She often talks about the poor air and water quality and how they affect the health of the people living in the area.

Furthermore, the author also portrays the impact of land pollution on the lives of people in the vicinity. In the novel, the protagonist, a young girl named Lenny lives in Lahore and witnesses the aftermath of the partition. One of the consequences of the section was the displacement of people and the destruction of homes and buildings which led to the accumulation of debris and waste on the streets. This waste and the lack of proper waste management led to land pollution in the city.

Lenny describes the streets as littered with "broken bricks, stones, shattered pots and twisted metal" (Sidhwa, 1988). She also observes how pollution affects the environment such as the "stench of rotting garbage" and the "swarms of flies" (Sidhwa, 1988). Pollution affects the physical health of the people living in the city and psychologically impacts them.

The novel also highlights the issue of land grabbing which further exacerbates the problem of land pollution. The character of *Ice Candy Man*, a local businessperson is depicted as being involved in illegal land grabbing which consists of destroying the natural environment and polluting the land.

### 3.5. Air Pollution

In the novel "*Ice Candy Man*" by Bapsi Sidhwa, air pollution is depicted as a significant problem in Lahore, Pakistan during the partition of India and Pakistan. The protagonist, a young girl named Lenny frequently comments on the polluted air in the city.

One of the novel's most notable instances of air pollution is the smog that blankets Lahore during the winter months. Lenny describes the smog as "thick, yellow and poisonous" (Sidhwa 5). She notes that the smog makes breathing difficult and causes her eyes to burn.

In addition to smog, the novel depicts air pollution's impact on the natural environment. For example, the book describes how the trees in the city are coated with a layer of soot and grime making it difficult for them to absorb sunlight and oxygen. This affects trees as well as the overall air quality in the city.

In addition to the winter smog, Lenny observes a lot of dust and dirt in the air daily. She notes that "the air was always full of dust; so much that it coated everything" (Sidhwa, 14). This pollution is attributed to the high traffic levels and the use of coal for cooking and heating in the city.

The novel addresses how air pollution influences human health. The novel also touches on the health consequences of air pollution. Lenny's mother has asthma exacerbated by the polluted air in Lahore. Lenny also experiences respiratory issues such as coughing and wheezing due to the poor air quality.

The novel suggests that air pollution is not just a physical problem but has social and political implications. Air pollution in Lahore is linked to the unequal distribution of wealth and resources with the poor and marginalized communities suffering the most from pollution. The novel also highlights the failure of government and civic authorities to address the problem of air pollution and the general population's need for more awareness and education about the dangers of pollution.

In a nutshell, air pollution is a significant theme in "*Ice Candy Man*" by Bapsi Sidhwa and is depicted as a significant problem in Lahore during the partition of India. The novel explores the impact of pollution on the natural environment as well as the health and well-being of the characters. It also highlights the social and political implications of air pollution and the need for collective action to address this problem.

### 3.6. Visual Pollution

Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *"Ice Candy Man"* portrays the visual pollution in Lahore during the partition of India in 1947. The novel explores the impact of violence and political upheaval on individuals' physical environment and psychological well-being. Here are some examples of visual pollution depicted in the novel:

1. Destruction of historic buildings: The novel shows the destruction of historical buildings like the Lahore Fort, an important cultural landmark. Lenny's narrator says, "The fort was crumbling, its ancient walls scarred by the blast of guns" (Sidhwa, 1988). This destruction of cultural heritage causes visual pollution and represents a loss of identity and history.
2. Trash and debris: The novel also portrays the accumulation of trash and debris on the streets contributing to visual pollution. The narrator, Lenny observes, "The streets were littered with rubbish, rotting fruit and vegetables and dead animals" (Sidhwa, 1988). The garbage also attracts scavengers and stray animals adding to the chaos.
3. Displacement of people: The displacement of people due to violence and riots is another form of visual pollution depicted in the novel. The narrator, Lenny describes the refugees as "squatting under flyovers and on pavements" (Sidhwa, 1988) which creates a chaotic and visually unappealing environment. The refugees are forced to live in unhygienic and cramped conditions which add to the visual pollution.
4. Physical destruction and disarray: The violence of the partition leads to widespread destruction and chaos with homes and buildings being burned and destroyed. This creates a landscape of visual pollution with rubble and debris littering the streets and people being forced to navigate through the wreckage.
5. Symbolic pollution: The violence of the partition also leaves behind a sense of moral and ethical pollution in addition to the physical debris. The characters in the novel struggle to come to terms with the atrocities they have witnessed or been involved in, creating a sense of moral pollution that lingers long after the physical destruction has been cleared away.
6. The male gaze and objectification: The character of the *"Ice Candy Man"* can be seen as a form of visual pollution as his lecherous behavior and objectification of women create a sense of discomfort and unease. His constant ogling of Lenny and the other woman in the novel is a continual reminder of how women's bodies are objectified and commodified in society.

The theme of visual pollution can provide a valuable framework for analyzing how the violence and trauma of the partition are portrayed in *"Ice Candy Man."* Readers can understand the themes and motifs in this powerful work of literature by examining the physical debris, symbolic pollution and objectification of women in the novel.

In a nutshell, Bapsi Sidhwa's *"Ice Candy Man"* portrays the visual pollution that resulted from the violence and political upheaval during the partition of India. The destruction of historical buildings, the accumulation of trash and debris and the displacement of people are all depicted as contributing to the visual pollution of the environment. These depictions show how political and social upheaval can harm individuals' physical environment and psychological well-being.

### 3.7. Noise Pollution

In the novel *"Ice Candy Man"* by Bapsi Sidhwa, noise pollution was portrayed as a significant problem in Lahore during the partition of India in 1947. The novel depicts the partition's chaos and violence exacerbated by the constant noise of trains, cars and crowds.

One instance where noise pollution is highlighted in the novel is during the rioting and looting that occurs in the city. The noise of gunfire, breaking glass and shouting can be heard throughout the city adding to the chaos and danger. Sidhwa writes, "The air was filled with the noise of guns, the crash of broken glass, the screams of women and the roar of angry men" (Sidhwa, 2013).

Another example of noise pollution in the novel is the sound of the *ice candy man's* bell. The *ice candy man* who travels through the streets of Lahore selling frozen treats is a recurring character in the novel. However, his constant ringing of a bell is seen as an annoyance by some of the characters who are already overwhelmed by the noise and commotion of the city. Sidhwa writes,

"The *ice candy man's* bell jangled incessantly, irritating the already frayed nerves of the residents" (Sidhwa, 2013).

The depiction of noise pollution in "*Ice Candy Man*" is significant because it shows how even minor annoyances, such as the sound of a bell can contribute to a larger sense of chaos and unease. Additionally, it highlights the impact of urbanization on the environment and its detrimental effects on people's well-being.

The protagonist, Lenny describes the noise: "The ice-candy man had come. Ding-dingding-ding-ding-ding. The sound was shrill and persistent making it impossible to ignore" (Sidhwa, 1988). The noise disturbs Lenny and her mother, Ayah who suffers from migraines.

Furthermore, the noise pollution caused by the "Ice Candy Man" is not just an annoyance but also has negative impacts on the environment and the health of the residents. Studies have shown that noise pollution can lead to sleep disturbance, stress and cardiovascular problems (Basner et al., 2014).

Rampant and the streets were filled with noise and unrest. One example of noise pollution in the novel is the constant sound of gunfire, symbolizing the violence and chaos of the partition. The narrator, a young girl named Lenny describes gunfire as "a regular accompaniment to our daily lives" (Sidhwa, 1991). This constant noise creates a sense of fear and insecurity in the characters contributing to the overall feeling of chaos and unrest in the novel.

Another example of noise pollution in the novel is the loudspeaker announcements throughout the city. Hindus and Muslims use these announcements to spread propaganda and incite violence against the other group. The loud, repetitive reports add to the sense of chaos and confusion in the city and contribute to the overall feeling of tension and fear.

Additionally, the constant noise of crowds and traffic in the city is another form of noise pollution described in the novel. The streets are crowded with people and vehicles and the noise of honking horns and shouting vendors creates a sense of chaos and disorder. This constant noise makes it difficult for the characters to think clearly or find moments of peace amid violence and turmoil.

Overall, noise pollution significantly shapes the setting and themes of "*Ice-Candy Man*." The constant noise of gunfire, loudspeaker announcements and crowds creates a sense of chaos and unrest in the city. It contributed to the overall feeling of tension and fear during the partition of India.

### 3.8. Water Pollution

In Bapsi Sidhwa's novel "*Ice Candy Man*," water pollution is a recurring theme throughout the story. The novel is set in Lahore, Pakistan during India's partition in 1947. The story follows the experiences of a young girl named Lenny and the various characters she encounters during this tumultuous time.

One of the characters in the novel, the "*Ice Candy Man*," is a seller of popsicles made from contaminated water. The character's nickname refers to the fact that he uses contaminated water to make his ice candies. This reflects the more significant issue of water pollution in the city which is also mentioned throughout the novel.

The novel provides several examples of water pollution in Lahore including the polluted canal that runs through the city which is used for bathing and washing clothes. The canal is described as "sluggish and stinking" and "an open sewer." Additionally, the novel mentions the dumping of industrial waste and sewage into the river Ravi which further pollutes the water supply.

The issue of water pollution in Lahore during India's partition is historically accurate. According to a study by the United Nations Development Programmed (UNDP), water pollution was a significant problem in Lahore

during this period due to inadequate sewage systems and the discharge of industrial waste into water bodies. The study also highlights the health risks of water pollution including the spread of water-borne diseases.

One instance of water pollution in the novel occurs when Lenny and her friends swim in a polluted canal. The canal is described as "stinking with filth and human waste" (Sidhwa, 1988). The children are aware of the pollution but still swim in the canal because they have no other options for cooling off during the sizzling summer months.

Another example of water pollution in the novel is the contamination of the city's drinking water. The water is "murky, brown and thick with sediment" (Sidhwa, 1988). The characters are forced to drink this polluted water because no alternative exists.

These instances of water pollution in "Ice-Candy-Man" reflect the broader environmental issues faced by the people of Lahore during the partition of India. The novel highlights the lack of access to clean water and the negative impact of industrialization and urbanization on the environment.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The ecocritical exploration of Bapsi Sidhwa's "Ice Candy Man" has unveiled profound layers of environmental consciousness embedded in the narrative. We have examined the novel's complex relationships between social structures, human behaviour and the invisible but widespread effects of ecocide from the perspective of ecocriticism. The analysis has shed light on the symbolic representations and eco-centric themes exposing the intricate web of relationships between the characters and their environment. The interdisciplinary approach, integrating insights from ecological science, environmental history and cultural studies has enriched our understanding of the novel's environmental dimensions. "Ice Candy Man" serves as a poignant canvas depicting the intricate interplay between humanity and the natural world urging readers to reflect on the consequences of ecological neglect and the urgent need for environmental stewardship. This ecocritical study contributes to the broader discourse on literature's role in fostering environmental awareness and underscores the significance of incorporating ecological perspectives in literary analysis.

**Funding:** This study received no specific financial support.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** Not applicable.

**Transparency:** The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

**Competing Interests:** The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

**Authors' Contributions:** Both authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. Both authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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