"The 1947 Partition of British India into two independent nations (India and Pakistan) was accompanied by communal violence unspeakable in its brutality and ferocity, leading Mushirul Hasan to label it a bloody vivisection". 

One of the profound ironies of the period is that while a rhetoric and ideology of non-violence prevailed in the political push for freedom from colonial rule, a bloodbath accompanied the actual attainment of this goal. There is substantial evidence that many instances of religious violence were orchestrated by politically organized groups, however, there is also plenty of evidence that some of the violence was also ‘spontaneous,’ where individuals, incited into group-think, perpetrated opportunistic acts of aggression, sometimes unleashing escalating cycles of retribution. How did people who had been living together for centuries turn upon one another? How did average people become murderers, kidnappers and rapists?

Bapsi Sidhwa’s novel *Cracking India* has depicted a horrifying portrayal of the violence surrounding the Partition. "Ruthlessly truthful, deeply perceptive, she tells her story with rare courage, frankness and good humour". (Paranjape 82) The above mentioned quote describes the writing of Bapsi Sidhwa as observed by famous Urdu poet, Faiz Ahmed Faiz. Despite of their infinitesimally small number, the Parsi Zoroastrian community occupies an exceptionally important position in the history of India. Their role in the political, economic and social sphere makes them one of the most interesting groups. Bapsi Sidhwa, an
important Pakistani woman novelist, also belongs to the Parsee community and as they say that every writer’s life has a direct bearing on his/her writings, so does Sidhwa’s writings. Bapsi Sidhwa’s writings fall in the genre of Commonwealth fiction. Her four important novels, *The Crow Eaters, The Bride, Ice Candy Man, American Brat* reveal remarkably the diversity in the themes that are both general and particularly relevant globally to the subcontinent as well. She also implements irony and at times humor in her works to highlight a painful reality.

**About the Author**

Bapsi Sidhwa was born in undivided India, Karachi to be precise and was educated in Lahore. As a lonely child, she took to reading and her major authors were Charles Dickens and V.S Naipaul and eventually Leo Tolstoy. She fell in love when she was nineteen years of age and married a businessman from Bombay but the wedding broke up soon. She graduated from Lahore’s Kinnaird College for women. She spent about six years in India where she moved after her first marriage at the age of 19. Though, that marriage resulted in a divorce after which Sidhwa returned to Pakistan, she feels that the experience of having lived in India became crucial to her writing in both, *The Crow Eaters* and *Cracking India*. She then married a businessman from Lahore and was blessed with two daughters and a son.
She took to writing out of boredom and used this as a kind of therapy. Overall her writing style is influenced by Salman Rushdie, she feels her writing style is influenced by her manner of speaking which she calls “salad of languages”. She became a writer at the suggestion of an Afghan woman whom she met on a plane. She thought of her first novel after she heard the story of a young Punjabi girl who had run away from her tribal husband. In her first controversial novel *The Crow Eater* she reflects a very serious theme with the help of a mixture of farce, irony, fantasy, scatology and verbal incongruity. She herself explains in the preface calling the novel “the hilarious saga of a Parsi family”, and also as a “labour of love about the few eccentricities in the community”. Her second novel *The Bride* is dedicated to the simple deprived and courageous women of Pakistan. The heroine Zaitoon is a symbol of women fighting oppression.

Her third novel *Ice Candy Man* belongs to the genre of the partition novel popularized by Khushwant Singh, Manohar Malgaonkar, Chaman Nahal and Attia Hussain. "I feel if there's one little thing I could do, it's to make people realize: We are not worthless because we inhabit a country which is seen by Western eyes as a primitive, fundamentalist country only. . .I mean, we are a rich mixture of all sorts of forces as well, and our lives are very much worth living." 4
She uses the girl child narrator Lenny to examine the ruthless logic of partition as an offshoot of fundamentalism sparked by hardening communal attitude. She uses the “woman as a victim paradigm” where the victimization is caused by communal riots. Her fourth novel An American Brat relates to trends of globalization in the Indian Diaspora. The novelist, through the medium of humor shows how elders exert pressure of tradition, conformity to prevent the proposed marriage. Her fifth novel Water is focussed around India and exposes the hypocrisy and double standards of Indian society in the 1930’s, concerning unfortunate widows - the novel and movie explore a dark, morbid side of human society, but it has its tender and funny moods, too. Even today there are widow ashrams in Varnasi, their inhabitants may not be as young as Chuiya, but the very fact that they still exist is shocking in itself. Her Anthology City of Sin and Splendour: Writings on Lahore was published in 2006.

She mentions in an interview and her love for writing “I didn’t go to school as a child because I had polio, so I spent all my childhood reading and I think it was all that time I spent loving words that made being an author possible. You need that leisure and that love of literature to be able to write.” She is the first Pakistani writer to have been published in the West. She is notable for having opened up the idea of Pakistani writing in English, and having demonstrated its importance. She now lives in Houston, Texas. Among her many honors, Sidhwa received the Bunting Fellowship at Radcliffe/Harvard, the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Writer's Award, the Sitara-i-Imtiaz, Pakistan's highest
national honour in the arts, and the Literaturepreis in Germany and the 2007 Primo Mondello Award in Italy. She was also on the advisory committee to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto on Women's Development.

**About the Director**

Born on 1st January 1950 in Amritsar, Punjab, Deepa Mehta is a Canadian film director and screenwriter. Her films focus around the Indian community in India and the Diaspora. She embarked on her film career as a screenwriter for children's films. In 1991 she made her feature-film directorial debut with Sam & Me, a story of the relationship between a young Indian boy and an elderly Jewish gentleman in Toronto which won first honorable mention in the ‘Camera d'Or’ category of the 1991 Cannes Film Festival. Mehta followed up with Camilla starring Bridget Fonda and Jessica Tandy in 1994. In 2002, she directed Bollywood/Hollywood, for which she won the Genie Award for Best Original Screenplay. She has also been nominated for the prestigious Academy Award.

Her Trilogy of three elements, Earth, Water and Fire, all of which were set in India have been both a masterpiece of art as well as a subject of controversy. The first film in the series, Fire (1996), is set in present day India was highly controversial film among certain quarters of the nation India because of its depictions of homo sexuality and also because of use of the names of Hindu goddesses with characters and portraying these characters as lesbians. The next
two of her films are also notable for her collaborative work with the author Bapsi Sidhwa. Sidhwa's novel *Cracking India*, (1991, U.S.1992, India; originally published as *Ice Candy Man*, 1988, England), is the basis for Mehta's 1998 film. Her next movie *Water* was published by Sidhwa in 2006 as *Water* itself. Except for the British officer in 1947 *Earth*, foreign characters are absent. While *Earth* focuses on the 40s, *Water* on the 30s, *Fire* looks at the contemporary India of the 80s and the 90s, of the post feminist and post Babri Masjid period. Therefore, in terms of filmmaking, Mehta’s journeys from the present to the past step by step, looking for roots, causes and explanations. “For all practical purposes, the films are women centred but the female body and its sexuality is delinked from procreation. Not a single child is born in any of the three films even if child characters are centre stage and occupy important roles. Intimately woven with India and its cultural values, these films have received a wide ranged response.”

**Script v/s Screen**

*Ice Candy Man (Cracking India)* is set in Lahore, India from 1946-1948.*Cracking India* weaves a tale of people who belonged to one nation but shared different faiths. Their lives take a different turn as the nation to which they belong, cracks and divides into Hindustan and Pakistan. The novel has been narrated from a neutral point of view as the narrator is a small girl, Lenny who belongs to the Parsee family who believed in neutral faiths supporting neither of the religious groups. Bapsi Sidhwa opens her heart in one of the
interviews and states “As a child in Pakistan, it was very like Lenny’s life in Cracking India. Like Lenny, I had polio as a child and spent a lot of time with the servants. I had a number of operations, and wasn’t sent to school. I didn’t have an extended family and this resulted in my being a little isolated. I was given my first novel, Little Women, as a kid by my private tutor. It introduced me to a world of fantasy and reading---I mean extraordinary amounts of reading because that was the only life I had.”

The painful partition of India left a mark on all those who witnessed it. Robert Ross, in a review of Cracking India, has summarized the situation in Lahore like this: “Assigned to Pakistan by those who cracked India, Lahore turns into a microcosm of the violence associated with Partition as the Hindus flee, the Muslims arrive, and the Sikhs wreak havoc.” The narrator of the novel, Lenny, is an eight-year-old Parsee girl who is handicapped by polio. Lenny observes: "I feel such sadness for the dumb creature I imagine lurking behind the wall." (Ice Candy Man Pg1) She is a Parsee, a member of a religion that is neither Muslim nor Hindu. Her Hindu nursemaid is ‘ayah’ who has a list of suitors listed to her name. Ice Candy man is one of them, he sells ice candy in summers and birds in winters. ‘ayah’ has two more admirers a china man, the ‘pathan’ and the masseur. They all form a bunch of good friends spending their time in each other’s company and taking care of Lenny.
The story moves on smoothly until the partition becomes evident and when it really happens, Hindus Muslims and Sikhs who were originally living together in peace, now become the worst enemies. Woven in these relations is a story of India’s political events. This relation between ‘ayah’, Ice-candy man take a bitter turn as he now begins to see her not as his beloved but as a Hindu, a woman who is in literal terms an enemy. It happens in this course that ‘ayah’ being a Hindu is forced to hide in Lenny’s house because the Muslims are seeking revenge with Hindus and their women. Lenny out of innocence reveals about ‘ayah’s’ whereabouts and the Ice Candy Man sends men who drag her out of the house and he sells her in a brothel, turning himself into a pimp. Eventually when things begin to settle and Lahore becomes a part of Pakistan, Lenny’s God mother on her request finds out about the ‘ayah’ and is told that she is now married to the Ice Candy Man. One day a police party comes to ‘Hira Mandi’ and takes ‘ayah’ away from Ice-Candy-Man. She is put at the Recovered Women’s Camp on Warris Road which is well-guarded. Ice-Candy-Man visits the camp to see his beloved but is beaten up badly by the Sikh sentry.

One day, Lenny comes to know that ‘ayah’ has been shifted to Amritsar with her family. Ice-Candy-Man has also followed her across the Wagah border into India to pursue his love. The novel ends on this sad and tragic note. Nehru, Gandhi, and Jinnah are the names often heard in the novel. By writing about a child growing up during this time in India and Pakistan’s history, Sidhwa
confronts many important social, historical, and political issues with humor and compassion and leaves us with the question whether after all the bloodshed was the Independence worth celebrating?


![Image of the movie 1947: Earth](image)

**Production Details**

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<th>Role</th>
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<td>Director</td>
<td>Deepa Mehta</td>
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<td>Producers</td>
<td>Anne Masson, Deepa Mehta</td>
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<tr>
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<td>September 16, 1998</td>
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<tr>
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It's 1947 and the borderlines between India and Pakistan are being drawn. A young Parsee girl with polio is introduced. She is Lenny (Maria Sethna), the narrator who narrates the story through the voice of her adult self (Shabana Azmi). She bears witnesses to tensions between Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in that area where her family hopes to remain neutral to the tensions. She belongs to a wealthy family based in Lahore and is protected by her parents, Bunty...
(Kitu Gidwani) and Rustom (Arif Zakaria). Her caretaker is ‘ayah’, a beautiful Hindu woman, Shanta (Nandita Das). She is caught between the love of two men Dil Navaz, the Ice-Candy Man (Aamir Khan) and Hassan, the masseur (Rahul Khanna). All three of them share different faiths but form a part of one group. Partition causes the once united group to divide and tragedy falls on them. On the eve of Independence, a train from Gurdaspur arrives in Lahore, with corpses inside. Among those butchered are Dil Nawaz’s family. This traumatic incident scars his psyche. At the same time, he loses the ‘ayah’ to Hassan. This inflicts in him a feeling of revenge and he therefore gets the ‘ayah’ pulled out of Lenny’s house brutally and takes her away. The movie ends here and once again the voice of the adult narrator is heard. Earth was the Indian nominee for the 2000, 72nd Academy Award for Best Foreign film.

When we sit down to draw parallels between the script and the screen version of it, it becomes mandatory to talk about the culture that forms the basis of both the art forms because both the art forms follow the same script more or less except that the script version is a more detailed one. The Parsis and Parsi culture has been well depicted in the novel as well as the movie. Bapsi Sidhwa talks in her interview about her being a Parsee “Lahore was a city of five million when I was growing up and there were only 200 Parsis. Naturally, one adopts the mores of the dominant society. This is particularly true of Parsis, we are a people who have no land, so we have to adapt to whichever culture we find ourselves in. I would describe myself as a Punjabi-Pakistani-Parsi woman,
because all three societies influenced me. I guess I actually have a whole medley of identities. And that's wonderful because this combination made me the writer I am.”

The native of “Fars” (a province in Persia) is literal meaning of the word Parsi. The Parsis are an ethno-religious minority who reside in parts of Mumbai in India and in Karachi and Lahore in Pakistan. They left their homeland over twelve hundred years ago to save their religion from the invading Islamic Arabians in the seventh century. They are the followers of Prophet Zarathustra and their religion is called Zoroastrianism. This community is found to be a very adaptable community and in India they have adopted Gujarati as their language. They were also the first to learn English in India. Most of them speak at least three languages and Bapsi Sidhwa shows this linguistic diversity in her work *Ice-Candy-Man* as she herself is a part of this culture. In an intimate interview with Julie Rajan, when Bapsi Sidhwa was asked “How did your religion impact your career aspirations, or do you think it had any impact?” She replied “Yes, it did, in different ways. I felt marginalized as a Parsi in a predominantly Muslim society. Some people, very few really, would say things like: Can you be Pakistani if you're Parsi? Whereas to Indians, I am a Pakistani. If I was a Parsi in India I don't think I would have felt as marginalized—simply because there are so many Parsis there”. 
Deepa Mehta too captures the same Parsee culture and spirit in the movie. Lenny’s family and a few other mates belonging to their religion have been shown wonderfully in a truly cinematic manner and authentic way. The Parsee culture was bound to be one of the focuses of the movie as well, but here too we find the detailing reduced, like the doctor’s visit to see Lenny when she develops a pain in the leg and the fellow Parsis visit their home is missing. Had this scene been incorporated in the movie, more light would have been thrown upon Parsi culture and their behaviour. Nonetheless it is seen that there are instances where characters talk about their Parsi identity and existence.

In a dinner where a Sikh (Gulshan Grover) and a British get into an argument regarding their nation, it is the Parsi couple (Lenny’s parents), who are shown taking an absolute neutral stand and bringing an end to their fight. In another scene Lenny’s mother talks about their history where she says that Parsis were allowed entry into India when their leader had sent a bowl of milk filled with sugar to the Indian prince in order to tell him that Parsis would remain like sugar in milk, adding sweetness to it but invisible. To this Lenny replies “we are invisible”. This sentence touches her mother’s heart and makes her to think. In another instance we see that Lenny’s father talks to her mother and asks her to adopt a neutral stand like the Swiss do.
Ice Candy man written by Bapsi Sidhwa was initially published in 1988 in London and this was the title that Sidhwa had intended to keep. However in the 1991 American edition the title was changed to Cracking India as the publishers thought that the Americans would confuse Ice Candy with drugs. However Cracking India is more explicit because it directly focuses on India and its partition. The novel is autobiographical in nature as the girl-child narrator suffers from polio, which afflicted Sidhwa at a young age. While we see that the movie has not retained either of the two names and very intelligently been named as 1947 Earth, giving it a more global appeal. Deepa Mehta's 1947 Earth is another controversial Partition saga. The second in her trilogy (Fire, Earth, Water) this film has run into controversy and has been accused of being anti-Muslim, anti-Hindu and anti-Sikh, depending on one's political and religious allegiance.

Overall the Ice Candy Man is a novel of upheaval, partition and politics which includes a cast from all communities, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians. Thus a multiple perspective of partition emerges as viewed by all
the affected people. His eyes are restless and his heart is poetic, he has the gift of oration and knows well how to win people. He loves ‘ayah’ and is happy with his undivided life that he leads with his friends in undivided India. What happens then, that the Ice Candy Man’s (Aamir Khan) eyes become bloody, his heart becomes brutal and he transforms from a lover to a molester? Well this might be one instance but history has witnessed innumerable cases like this where the happy lives of people had changed overnight not because of their personal grudges or decisions but because of the most brutal act ever witnessed in history named ‘Partition’.

The novel is unique and different from other novels of partition because it is the only novel written by a woman and that too a Parsi woman, another unique aspect of the novel is that the narrator of the novel is a girl child Lenny. Lenny is like a persona that Chaucer adopts in his Prologue to the Canterbury Tales rendering credibility by being almost a part of the reader’s consciousness. It is a source of sharp irony and enables the author to treat a historical moment such as Partition without morbidity. The unique aspect of this ‘partition novel’ is that the author throughout maintains for us a balance between laughter and despair. In the interview done by Julie Rajan when Bapsi Sidhwa was asked about the neutral narrator she replied “It came naturally because I was a small child during the Partition. When I was writing, I literally inhabited the persona of a child; it is more like a trick of the mind. As a child, you lack prejudices---the hatred and biases you learn as you grow up. I didn't think of it in so many
words, but when I was imagining and beginning to write the story, suddenly the narrator's words came out as this child's voice. As I continued, I found it was working perfectly. Lenny is an innocent, bewildered child; when you see things through her eyes, the atrocities are in a way more chilling. I guess a writer works out these things unconsciously.”

The cruelty, the horror, the human loss and the dislocation of partition have otherwise been dealt with by various authors like Khushwant Singh in *Train to Pakistan*, B Rajan’s *The Dark Dancer*, Manohar Malgaonkar’s *A Bend In The Ganges*, Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi* but what makes Bapsi Sidhwa’s novel a different one is the influence of violence on the girl child narrator, the change of attitude of the Parsi community, the use of allegory to depict the horrors of Partition and the role of rumour and the dangers of communal frenzy. All these are aspects of partition that get reflected in the novel and these aspects are rather unique that make this novel different from other novels of partition. The movie opens with a narrative voice in the background that is Shabana Azmi’s voice. She retraces her life from the point when she was an eight year old child and used to paint a map of undivided India. The narrator is shown from a distance at the end of the movie, she resembles Bapsi Sidhwa and the ones who have read the novel would know that the novel is an autobiographical novel as well as she herself is a witness to India’s partition. Unlike the novel where the narrator Lenny steps in time and again to narrate the story, the movie continues without any flashback, in one line covering the political and personal events
until it reaches independence. This novel is a political novel and the author herself admits this in one of her interviews with David Montenegro. "The main motivation grew out of my reading of a good deal of literature on Partition of India and Pakistan. What has been written by the British and the Indians naturally reflect their bias. And they have, I felt after I’d researched the book, been unfair to the Pakistanis. I felt whatever little I could do to correct an injustice I would like to do. I have just let facts speak for themselves, and through my research I found out what the facts were."

Although the novel is a novel of Partition, it is deeply political in telling of events from a Pakistani rather than an Indian perspective. The major political figures of that time, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lord Mountbatten, Subhash Chandra Bose, Jinnah have been portrayed but not in a completely positive light and this is a part of Sidhwa’s conscious design. It is seen that the masseur says about Gandhi on one occasion “He’s a politician yaar,......it’s his business to suit his tongue to the moment” (p.91) Sidhwa makes her Pakistani bias evident when she mentions how India was favoured over Pakistan at the time of Partition “The Hindus are being favoured over the Muslims by the remnants of the Raj. Now that its objective to divide India is achieved, the British favour Nehru over Jinnah. Nehru is Kashmiri, they grant him Kashmir. Spurning logic, defying rationale, ignoring the consequence of bequeathing a Muslim state to the Hindus....They grant Nehru Gurdaspur and Pathankot without which Muslim Kashmir cannot be secured (p.159). Jinnah’s role is
redefined because she feels that his role depicted by the British was unfair she feels that he was caricatured “as a very stiff villain of peace”. In the movie we do hear these political names but do not see these Political figures. Dil Nawaz does talk of Jinnah and the Hindus about Jawaharlal Lal Nehru. There is a scene where we see a crowd of men and women sitting and listening to Nehru’s freedom speech right after the painful scene where a train from Gurdaspur arrives with dead bodies. This may be called the director’s intentional technique in order to contrast the Independence with the misery and the cost people paid for it.

Another painful theme of the text is the suffering of those people who got dislocated because of partition. Bapsi Sidhwa at times uses the technique of reportage. Bare facts present the horror of the greatest communal divide in history. The neighbours of the Sethis, Mr and Mrs. Singh hurriedly leave Lahore with their two children and a few belongings. Other goods are left behind with Lenny’s parents. Sher Singh the zoo attendant flees from Lahore due to insecurity after his brother-in-law is killed. Similarly the student fraternity of King Edward’s Medical College is disrupted. Prakash and his family migrate to Delhi and Rahool Singh and his pretty sisters are escorted to a convoy to Amritsar. In Lenny’s household, the gardener Hari is circumcised and becomes Himmat Ali and Moti becomes Davis Massih, showing the politics of compromise and survival. Masseur’s mutilated dead body is found in a gunny sack.
The money lender Kirpa Ram flees leaving guineas and other wealth behind. Communal mayhem and riots cross the class divide. Even middle-class families like the Shankers flee in haste. The Muslim village of ‘Pir Pindo’ is attacked at dawn and swamped by Sikhs. Men, women and children are massacred. Bapsi Sidhwa as a sensitive novelist shows that humanitarian deeds are also performed by individuals like Rodabai, known as Godmother, Lenny’s mother and Jagjeet who with a furtive group of Sikhs visit the Muslim village of Pir Pindo under the cover of darkness to warn them of an impending ‘Akali’ attack and also drives to supply the people who want to cross the border with petrol. She shows partition as a series of images and events depicting human loss and agony. Lenny observes that Lahore is no more a cosmopolitan, the Hindus and Sikhs have fled. Bapsi Sidhwa mentions in the same interview that “Yes, it is about identity, in a way. People read different things into the book. When readers tell me about what they see in the book, I find it very interesting and I learn from their insights. I was just attempting to write the story of what religious hatred and violence can do to people and how close evil is to the nature of man. Under normal circumstances people can be quite ordinary and harmless; but once the mob mentality takes over, evil surfaces. Evil is very close to the surface of man.”

Burning streets of Lahore, one of the most poignant scenes of the movie that comes after the train from Gurdaspur arrives filled with corpses. ‘Ayah’, \[86\]
Hassan and Lenny go to console Dil Nawaz who is burning both with sadness and communal hatred, as they are in the middle of their talk they witness another horrifying scene of the movie where a Hindu mob rips apart a Muslim man right from the middle pulling him in between two vehicles and Muslims in turn bombard the houses of the Hindus.

Lahore is suddenly emptied of yet another hoary dimension: here are no Brahmins with caste marks-or Hindus in ‘dhotis’ with ‘bodhis’, only hordes of Muslim refugees (p. 175).

This scene leaves an impact on all of them and most of all on Lenny who vents out her anger on her doll pulling her from one side and taking help from Rustam from the other side in order to rip her apart from the middle. This scene has been depicted in the novel with the same intensity and even more depth where Lenny narrates it. Without doubt, the novel covered in great detail the incidents and events that shaped up the political history and also Bapsi Sidhwa
had added a few powerful characters in the novel that the director left out. It can be argued that those characters were left out keeping in mind the running time of the movie. True it is till some extent but one feels Bapsi Sidhwa, by incorporating such characters wanted to highlight some of the parallel themes in the novel apart from partition which perhaps was not the focus of the Deepa Mehta. The film too runs on similar lines and is full of violence and naked truths that have scarred the nation’s psyche. Some scenes are unbearable and horrifying like the spectacle of the train that arrives from Gurdaspur filled with corpse and organs of Muslim men and women leaves the audience shock struck. That in fact is the climax moment of the moment, a turning point in the life of Dil Nawaz that in turn influences the lives of all the characters because his sisters were in that train. In the movie too people’s struggle to survive has been shown with a lot of pain. Here too Hassan’s body is found mutilated in a gunny bag, Hari is circumcised and becomes Himmat Ali and Moti becomes Davis Massih , The Singhs flee from Lahore and so does Sher Khan with the help of Hasan. Other characters and details have been left out in the movie but the ones that have been shown have done an impactful job.

The narrative technique used by Bapsi Sidhwa is quite similar to the one used by Attia Hosain in her partition novel Sunlight on a Broken Column. In her novel the narrator is Laila who reveals the trauma of Partition through her memories and insights of the Taluqdar family disintegrating. Lenny too is like her, nostalgic and restless. The mature Laila reacts against communal tensions
whereas the young Lenny instinctively reacts against the horrors of partition. The narrator does not lapse into a glorification of the past or take refuge in mysticism or epicureanism.

Allegory is another literary device used by Bapsi Sidhwa to depict the trauma of partition. The child Lenny is a victim and after suffering the violence that we see throughout the novel, the little child gets filled with violence and her destructive instinct is vent out on her dolls. "I pick up a big bloated celluloid doll. I turn it upside down and pull its legs apart. The elastic that holds them together stretches easily. I let one leg go and it snaps back, attaching itself to the brittle torso." p.138. She is not satisfied until she tears apart the legs of the doll with the help of her brother Adi. Her violent act serves as an apt allegory on the mindless violence of partition. It shows that where a young girl is powerless to stem the tide of violence, the frenzied adults too are trapped into similar kind of outbursts. Lenny thereafter breaks down and cries at the destruction she has caused showing allegorically how human beings repent after they have caused destruction and wreaked havoc.

The narrative voice employed by Sidhwa is both unique and ambivalent. As an eight year old girl, Lenny is both a self reflexive and an observant character that narrates the incidents, introduces the characters and talks aloud. The narrative of the novel therefore becomes a kind of autobiography of the character. The author intentionally chooses the young girl child as the narrator.
because she becomes the voice of a minority community, lends a voice to the anxiety of the underprivileged. She is not just marginalized as a child but also as a girl, as a Parsi and also as a physically deficit member of the society. She is a never tiring explorer filled with inquisitiveness. She is shown coming across post colonial politics, gender divisions, victimization and dilemmas of the minority community. She imitates the elders, observes the world around her, listens to the gossips, can understand the word partition and eventually she also gets influenced and affected in her innocence after witnessing some horrifying experiences like revealing ‘ayah’s’ hiding place or even watching her cousin Ranna live after losing his family. However it is seen that there is not just one narrator or narrative in the novel. Bapsi Sidhwa had witnessed Lahore burning in 1947. Her novel has an autobiographical element embedded in it. In the movie, the swapping of the narrative voice between Lenny and the author herself has been done wonderfully and with a lot of craftsmanship. With Shabana Azmi’s narrative voice that is heard once in the beginning and once in the end, interweaving all the major events like a pearl string, the movie 1947 Earth truly stands out as a masterpiece doing every bit of justice to its source Cracking India.

Lenny baby (as she is referred to in the movie) the narrator has keen but sad eyes. She is happy in the company of her ‘ayah’, the cook, the masseur, the butcher, the Ice Candy Man and her cousin. She learns a lot about life from these people and also a lot about Partition, about friends who now talk about
their Hindu, Muslim and Sikh blood and what will become of them when the nation cracks. She also learns about physical love, sexuality and desires from her ‘ayah’ and her lovers.

Once when asked a question by her cousin about her marriage she proudly replies that “I shall marry the ‘massage walah’ or the ‘ice candy man’”. She watches her ayah cuddling with the masseur (Rahul Khanna) at times and at times with Dil Nawaz (Aamir Khan) and then subconsciously weaves a similar picture for herself. The ayah’s flirtatious self and her intimate scene with the masseur have been dealt with artistically and candidly with a musical number playing in the background. This certainly works as a selling point for the movie. Deepa Mehta has just not shown a love making scene for the mere physicality of it but intelligently she turns the focus of it towards the ‘gaze’, Lenny watching the love making from one aperture and Dil Nawaz from the other. Here the camera technique used is undoubtedly the best in the movie. The camera captures all that we wish to see and gives it a double viewpoint or montage as we may call it. It breaks his heart to see his beloved making love with another man. This scene is also influential in further aggravating Dil Nawaz’s anger against the ‘ayah’, first because she is now viewed as a mere Hindu by him and second because it smashes his ego to watch her in bed with another man. From here on we find the rage and the revenge seething in his eyes and he eventually avenges himself by giving away Shanta to his Muslim mates and squashing her identity. Although here we find that the further story
of ‘ayah’ has been scrapped off from the movie because of paucity of time but in the novel we find that she is sold in a brothel where Dil Nawaz becomes a pimp and eventually marries her but is unable to get her love in return. She is ultimately sent to Amritsar with the help of God Mother where the Ice Candy Man follows her for the sake of his love. Had this aspect been shown in the movie, the protagonist, Ice Candy Man would have been seen under a different light altogether, because his transformation for the third time would have been witnessed by the audience where he now turns into a bewildered, lost lover hunting for ‘ayah’ from one place to another facing atrocity for her sake. The movie ends when he takes her in a cart and the opinion formed about him has no place for sympathy unlike the novel.

The question is that after watching the movie what views are we supposed to form about the Ice Candy Man? Do we term him as a victimizer or a victim himself? Do we empathise with him or out rightly hate him and term him brutal? That is something Deepa Mehta leaves for the audience to decide but that questions haunts the audience for long even after the movie ends. Technically the movie looked perfect as expected by Deepa Mehta who deals with her movies with perfection. Her directorial skills and choice of characters cannot be questioned. She makes her characters memorable; we all remember Dil Nawaz, the wonderful ‘ayah’, the ‘chuiya’ from her movie Water or even for that matter Kitu Gidwani who plays the role of Lenny’s mother stands out as a chiselled actor. But all said and done Aamir Khan has given one of the
most memorable performances of his life. The jealousy in his eyes is seen whenever he finds ‘ayah’ giving more attention to the masseur.

Rahul Khanna made a debut in the film industry with this movie. He suits the role of a quiet and a decent man and his bare expressions at times fill up the void created by the film maker. His Hindi with an English accent is not detected and he manages to deliver a good performance. His role ends abruptly when he is found murdered in a sack by Lenny. The minor characters that form a part of ‘ayah’s’ group too are just perfect for their roles. There are just no loose ends as far as the characters and their performance is concerned. The cinematography technique is perfect and the camera captures the right people with the right timing. The characters look memorable. Nandita Das has played the role of ‘ayah’ in the best possible and most memorable way.
The plot of the movie is more or less the same even a few dialogues are retained in an exactly similar manner the dialogue where Lenny asks her mother and the ‘ayah’ replies saying that there would be a tunnel that would divide India and Pakistan are retained but with a literal translation in Hindi. The movie incorporates a lot of code mixing making ample use of Hindi, English, Punjabi and even Urdu in order to bring about the true picture of India of that time. The style of the movie is racy and the scenes shift quickly and beautifully between Lenny’s house, the park in which all of them sit and the burning streets of Lahore. A lot is conveyed by expressions rather than individual contemplation. There are not many scenes where we find actors thinking, repenting or even contemplating but rather the action is the focus of the camera.

We have a very strong theme of feminism running throughout the novel and it is highlighted with the help of female characters like ‘ayah’, the God mother, Electric aunt, Lenny, Lenny’s mother, the untouchable girl child ‘pappu’ or
maybe her mother. Except the God mother and the electric aunt these characters are also present in the movie. They have been left out from the movie but their absence does not make the plot devoid of its impact but erases the point the novelist wishes to make about women particularly. We have seen that there is no successful marriage in the novel. Either it is not there at all like the God mother who decides not to get married or if at all it is there like ‘pappu’s’ marriage to an old man or Lenny’s marriage to her father that is not a happy one or if it has to be there it is cancelled like in the case of ‘ayah’. We see that in the movie the focus is not much on this subject. All the marriages are shown in it but the suffering part like the domestic violence that Lenny’s mother undergoes and yet continues to love him is missing and the scene where ‘pappu’ visits the doctor with her child is also not there. These events are small and that is why having been left out but it cannot be missed that they add a different status to the novel which misses in the movie. The ‘ayah’ is the main female character who suffers the trauma of partition both physically and emotionally. Throughout the movie she is ‘objectified’ and her physicality is shown as being one of the reasons behind her doom. She is aware of her attractive and desirable self that keeps most men around her busy. She in fact enjoys the company of men and her friendship is strong with all the four men. The turmoil in her life arises after she decides which man does she really love. This incident is clubbed with the unfortunate event of partition and therefore the beginning of her traumatic life. As a feminine character she is loving towards Lenny and others around her but the transformation in her character is
justified as she eventually becomes the voice of many women who had to suffer at the hands of destiny. She is a woman and more than that a victimized woman. Both in the novel as well as the movie we feel helpless and pathetic after witnessing what she goes through.

Since the plot and the major events of the movie are the same as that in the novel, the movie although dependant, is independent of its script version. It has the beauty of the best things shown in the novel. The novel certainly is a seminal text in the historical and political context; it also is a part of feminist and cultural studies and diaspora Pakistani literature as well. It has served as a very helpful and influential text for all the reasons and has had the ability to influence the literary and the non literary readers. The movie too stands out as success story in modern fiction. It has also had the ability to remind the audience the cost that we had paid for our independence, the brutality of love, and the changing definitions of friendship, the murdered innocence of a child and the scarred memory of the people who lived through cracking India. It leaves you sad, thoughtful and awestruck.

Mehta repeats certain patterns in all three movies (Sam and Me, Fire and Earth) but with different degrees of success. In all three, this pairing is a narrative strategy to explore the dynamics of class, race, religious and cultural differences. One of the central relationships in each movie is between a disabled person and his/her caregiver. In all three, the disabled person is higher
in economic status but lower in dependency status than the caregiver. In Sam and in Fire, they are old, colorful personalities, cantankerous and spirited. But in 1947-Earth, Lenny is a girl stricken with polio, and she spends much of her time with her ‘ayah’, Shanta. In all three cases, Mehta excels in realism, and all of us can recognize someone we know in these characters.

Both the novel and the movie are art forms written and directed by diasporic women writers. Let us consider what makes Deepa Mehta inspired, what motivates her to do what she does. In a 1998 interview with Vinita Ramchandani, it is said being raised in India yet living in Canada, Mehta felt confused about her identity for a long time: "I've never felt Canadian. I used to be upset about being called a 'visible minority,' that's what they called colored people there. I used to come to India and was called an NRI [Non Resident Indian] here. The problem was not about belonging' anywhere; it was a dislike for labels. Now I feel very happy being who I am, Deepa Mehta."

Both are Diasporic women writers but they belong to a different generation of diasporic writers. Bapsi Sidhwa is a first generation writer but Deepa Mehta is a second generation diasporic writer. This difference in the generations is seen in the works of two women. Where Bapsi Sidhwa was an eye witness to the partition, she felt the pain of it and wrote down every detail after witnessing it personally. Whereas Deepa Mehta, because of being a second generation diasporic writer could not feel the pain of partition as personally as Bapsi...
Sidhwa. This might be a reason why her portrayal of characters or even events is not as much detailed and impactful as in the novel.

1947-Earth, on the other hand, is a film of juxtapositions and parallels through which the political anxieties of two different classes are projected. Also it concentrates more on open spaces that allow interaction between different groups and genders. Open spaces contextualise the locale with its monuments and architecture and capture the past. It is a very Indian film in its showcasing of festivities, romance and songs. The kite-flying scene facilitates a romantic closeness while Pappoo's marriage scene is bereft of the upper class wedding celebrations that would cater to the non-cultural viewer.

Instead it subverts it by showing the unequal marriage. In the first few minutes of the film there are four songs; there is also a love triangle. It is focussed on the evil, the unleashed beast, inside all of us that leads to mindless violence. Dil Nawaz the Ice-candy-man is the dynamic character in the film. He takes on
role-playing as an astrologer, dervish and so on. He is ready with a couplet on the drop of a hat and it is he, who when he faces the violence of the partition, discovers the animal within all of us. Earth is thus a film not only about politics and conflicts of religions but also about colonialism, violence and revenge - the total debasement of the human being.

Earth had its own share of controversy and came in for some very bad reviews - as a simplistic representation of partition, as a distortion of the reality and as a typical Bollywood movie. It was the actuality of the event of partition that was the real strength of the movie; the re-living of this in celluloid was bound to affect him deeply. In terms of aesthetics, the film is an improvement on the novel which has a thin narrative and Lenny as the observer-narrator (in the novel) has far too mature responses. Lenny serves as a link between the two classes as she has free access to both and is gifted with a native curiosity, which allows her to slip under the table or be a voyeur without any compunction whatsoever experiences that send her into adulthood sooner than desirable.

Earth has a clear-cut division into two halves - the first with its moments of sharing, mild flirtations, kite flying and community get-togethers with politics a growing concern, the second is unrelieved in its grimness, disruption, oppression, broken friendships and violent hatred. Hassan's concern for others his Sikh friend, the bereaved Dil Nawaz, Shanta, the girl he loves is pushed
back by Dil Nawaz who destroys the two lovers. This rising crescendo is accompanied by intermittent noises in the background- Nehru's 'Tryst with destiny' speech, the beat of Shanta washing the clothes, the sounds of the riots and finally the blasts. These four stages also mark a stage by stage destruction of the abstract idea of trust and express a mixture of hope and anguish (Nehru's speech), rage at the helplessness in face of the events (washing the clothes), and lawlessness and chaos (the arson and the blasts).

Hassan and Dil Niwaz represent opposite attitudes. Hassan says that "lit is my brother" and offers even to convert and migrate in order to be accepted by Shanta. He resists violence and is always the peace maker. The most tragic event is perhaps not the ending but Hassan's murder when a co-religionist kills him. The total debasement of Dil Nawaz is completed later by another act of betrayal when he betrays the trust of a child as he inveigles himself into her confidence and is instrumental in the violence against Shanta. The futility of violence in terms of human loss is not merely in the death toll but the destruction of all finer emotions of life.

The diaspora is, in no case, a homogeneous group and its emotional ties and relationship with the home culture will vary according to its attitudinal base, reason for emigration and the generation living abroad. A first generation adult migrant carries a cultural baggage and an emotional involvement that is difficult to neutralize or rationalize. Any attempt to introduce ethnic culture to
the west can be viewed with suspicion - whether it is a translated text, cultural myth or a socio-political reality. It is difficult to determine as to the dividing line between genuine concern and showcasing in response to market strategy. Again all diasporic showcasing is not the same. It is not Shanta's captive body being dragged out in Earth that is the ending. The image in itself is a powerful one of rapacious hunger and extreme helplessness and lingers in memory. But the real ending is Lenny's feeling of guilt. A guilt which is not only Lenny's but should be everyone's, including Dil Nawaz, the British, the political leaders and the frenzy-driven masses. The individual is superseded by a felt collectivity of guilt felt at a very human level which is passed on to the viewer.

At a Press Conference, Deepa Mehta made three points: she did not make her films for the west; the issues were more important to her, she went ahead without any fear of the taboos; if the subject interested her underlying subtext was a search for peace. Hassan in Earth was the 'peace' man as are Gandhi and Narayan in water. In another interview she attacked western perceptions of India. The west chose to see India as (a) spiritual (b) poverty-stricken (c) or the country of Maharajas and palaces. The trilogy reflects on Deepa Mehta's relationship with India as she explores the socio-cultural problems, patriarchal institutions like marriage and family, religious interventions in politics, the politics of caste and gender, she also focuses on the human need for freedom and the development of an agency. Her film concludes that power is shared and the location of power is shareable.
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