

**Politics of Death: Existence and its Dynamics Echoed in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man***

**Bilal Ahmed<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Imran Ali<sup>2</sup>, Faisal Khan<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Doctoral Student at The University of Haripur, Corresponding Author,

Email: [malikb421@gmail.com](mailto:malikb421@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor English at The University of Haripur Email: [imranali@uoh.edu.pk](mailto:imranali@uoh.edu.pk)

<sup>3</sup> Lecturer in English at National Excellence Institute Islamabad.

Email: [faisibadsha002@gmail.com](mailto:faisibadsha002@gmail.com)

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**Abstract**

The current study aims to demarcate and critically interpret the existence of politics of death and its dynamics reflected in Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*. The sovereign forces, using different methodologies regulated the death(s) on the 'vulnerable subjects' or 'disposable bodies' as mirrored in the novel. Theoretically, the study is qualitative in its nature and employs Catherine Belsey textual analysis method to interpret the select text by reaching the research objectives like how sovereign necro-empowered gangs regulated several deaths. The study concluded that the systemic marginalization inflicted by political and communal forces, reflecting the entrenchment of necropolitical practices in the Partition era. However, Sidhwa resists these forces through her portrayal of the Parsee community, who embody resilience and counteract the necropolitical narrative. This study provides a detailed explanation of the marginalized and systematic socio-political conditions surrounding Pakistan's creation, contributing to critical discourses depicted in the select text.

**Keywords:** Bare Life, State of Exception, Necropolitics, Bio-Politics, Sovereignty, Nocturnal Bodies, and Social/Civil Death

**Introduction**

Achille Mbembe's (2019) notion of Necropolitics presents a strong base to analyze the context of partition in Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*. Politics, as an inevitable side of human life, exercise on human lives with an increase in the development of science and technology. An existing form of politics in the contemporary world is necropolitics or 'nocturnal body' which is 'molecularly equipped' to remain engaged with the world of death. Necropolitics offers a critical and theoretical base for analysing politics of death and exercise of power by sovereign authorities portrayed in the *Ice-Candy-Man* (1989). Necropolitics deals with the state and individuals where social or political institutions decide the authority over bodies' death and life. Individuals, communities and group of people mostly through the exercise of coercion, violence and exclusionary practices are deprived of status of being alive. This notion has challenged the old-styled notion of sovereignty and governance by highlighting the centrality of death in the exercise of power especially colonial, ethnic, and religious violence committed upon the characters. Necropolitics, in addition, brings forth the connection between violence, power and death which frames political and social images, highlighting the ways through which violence is legitimized

and normalized in the society. It finds the mechanism how oppression and injustice could be exercised. By revealing the ways adopted to regulating life and death, it focuses on the need to understand the complex dynamic of resistance and power in the society. It is necessary to take into account that in relation to the select novel that how some entities parallel to states have been created by using necro power and technologies to control, abduct, and profit from the exploiting religious identities of the people, how some groups of the mob take over the state and exploit basic fundamental rights of the people in the background of partition. Mbembe (2019) states in *Necropolitics* “the colonial site was one of the clearest modern expressions of this problematic whereby a crime against humanity was committed and not necessarily acknowledged as such. (p.126). He adds that sovereigns work in a space of oppression where they operate as a parallel state through *necronologies* (necro power and technologies) to control, maintain and profit through killings, abductions and tortures. They operate as a sovereign state and it seems that the ruling party through its political workers has taken over the city completely and govern the city by exploiting the basic fundamental rights of its citizens. In this regard the main aim of the current study is; In which ways do the *Ice-Candy-Man* reveal the dynamics and existence of Necropolitics in the inception of Pakistan? Manifesting the ways in which dynamics and existence of Necropolitics have been reflected in the *Ice-Candy-Man* during the 1947 divide of sub-continent. Methodologically, the current study uses a qualitative research design, textual analysis and thematic analysis to explore the intricate working of sovereign entities, and for the primary source, *Ice-Candy-Man* has been opted. For the conduct of the study, the relevant data collection process involved visiting websites and online libraries to get scholarly works. The study also takes care for the ethical consideration, and ensures authenticity and integrity of the research process. Collected secondary sources assists achieving the objectives of the study. Moreover, the study mainly rests on Mbembe’s framework of Necropolitics (social death, civil death, living death) Agamben’s Bare life and State of Exception, to examine the power over death and life of the characters. The analytical process involves thematic analysis and systematic coding as informed by the theoretical framework. In sum, it helps representing how bodies’ lives and deaths have been shaped in the select text.

### **Review of the Existing Post-colonial Knowledge Production**

The post-colonial intellectuals in the field of Post-colonialism like Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Frantz Fanon, and Homi Bhabha had laid the grounds for analyzing the subaltern revolt and resistance, colonial violence, and politics of identity. Therefore, Achille Mbembe’s intellectual production addresses a critical niche by problematizing the ‘death’ as a methodical tool of politics. Dissimilar to Fanon’s critical narratives of colonial violence Mbembe’s focus is on systematic exercise of death even in post-colonial context.

Fanon in *Wretched of the Earth* (1963) stresses a strategy by the colonizers “to the past of oppressed people, and distort, disfigure, and destroy it” therefore it is expected that the natives who proclaim that “colonialism came to lighten their darkness” (pp. 210-211). The natives of those colonies required to “remind their people of the great pages of their history” as “a reply to the lies told by the occupying power” (p. 213). He focuses to celebrate the rich culture and history of the natives’ lands so that the colonized people could be aware of the condemnation and dehumanization committed upon them by the colonizers. Fanon in his book, *Black Skin and White Masks* (2008) addressed the psychological inferiority complexes encountered by the natives, where the binary opposition of black and white, barbaric and civilized have been re-examined and these terms for black (colonized African), white (colonizers) and barbaric (colonized natives), civilized (white colonizers) have been addressed to cure the soft and hard slavery of the natives by arguing that based upon the color being black colonial masters subjugated them and maintained colony.

He states “I discovered my Blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave-ships” (p. 84). He focuses to reject this imposed inferiority faced by the natives and assert equal humanity and this breaking of the chain should commence in his own land without submission to white supremacy. Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (2001) discussed Orientalism as in academic, imaginative, tradition where non-whites are labelled by the whites. He explains Orients as non-whites, eastern and Occident as white-Europeans or colonizers. He argues that Orientalism is a practice of constructions and generalizations of/ about the orients since it is a product of personal assumptions of the Occident who identifies Orients as barbaric, emotional, uncouth, other and uncivilized natives of an exotic, mysterious and mythic land. He says “every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric” (p. 204). Moreover, Homi K Bhabha states “The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction” (1994, p. 70). He re-visited the western discourses and came up with the idea that colonizers use the tactic to make non-whites as inferior and slaves. He also used the term ‘mimic man’ for the natives who were trained as missionary to spread English motives who are an “inner compatibility of empire and nation” (1994, p. 87). Likewise, Bhabha and Spivak stress more on the hybridity, and subaltern agency whereas, Mbembe’s work accentuates the understanding of sovereign violence, and its physical dimensions making it specifically relevant to re-examining the literature of partition. Mbembe’s discourse, contrary to the above moves, relates to the Necropolitics showing some of the sovereign powers deciding the ultimate fate of the body. He states “...sovereignty means the capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is *disposable* and who is not” (27). Mbembe expended the notion of bio-politics of Mitchel Foucault (1980) who noted, “biological existence was reflected in political existence with the sovereign state controlling bodies as a way of achieving hegemony” (p.142). Mbembe responded life in a biopolitical frame is always already subjugated to and determined by the power of death (Mbembe, 2003, 2019). ‘What place’, he asks, ‘is given to life, death, and the human body (in particular the wounded or slain body)? How are they inscribed in the order of power?’ (Mbembe, 2003, p. 12) Mbembe also talks about the other state of death in which ‘weapons are deployed in the interest of maximum destruction of persons and the creating of death-worlds, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life’ (2003, p. 40). Referencing not only physical death but also social death, these death-worlds severely impact entire populations, ‘conferring upon them the status of living dead’ (Mbembe, 2003, p. 40). Mbembe illuminates how modern power systems sustain themselves through systematic violence and the instrumentalization of death. This perspective offers a critical lens to examine the perpetuation of necropower in postcolonial states and their complicity in global systems of oppression, thereby revealing dimensions of political control that earlier theorists could not fully addressed.

## **Interpretation and Analysis of the Collected Data**

### **Politics of Death**

Sidhwa mirrors the coexistence of Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus in pre-partition, picturing the rich bond of intercommunal relationships. She vividly paints the moments of shared culture profound friendship, among the members of these communities. Park in Lahore serves as the symbol of harmony, peace, and love of different religious individuals before the partition. Different characters from different religious and cultural backgrounds for example, Ayah as Hindu from Amrat Sar, Sharbat Khan from NWFP, Ice candy man from Lahore, and Masseur as Muslim, Mr. Singh as Sikh, the butcher, the government house gardener, Imam din, the China man and Lenny

as Parsee girl coexist in harmony and used to gather in Park with Queen Victoria's statue. They are depicted as discussing, conversing and doing light hearted talk, all spinning around Ayah, who is portrayed as the central figure of their company. Sharbat Khan proclaims that "I must bring the mountain to you (Ayah), what would you like" (p.77). It means, Sharbat Khan is at the service of Hindu girl irrespective of his religion. It is depicted that Ayah has love feelings for Masseur (Muslim) "Ayah is seen as more of masseur" (Sidhwa, p. 119). She wants to have a glimpse of masseur "Where masseur is, Ayah is" (p. 121). Ayah does not care about religion; she is ready to marry Masseur without taking care of her identity as being Hindu. Masseur also proclaims "you know I worship you" (p. 158). The love relationship between Ayah and Masseur is the mark of harmony and coexistence between Hindu and Muslim at the grass root level of the Indian society. In addition, once Imam Din as Muslim took Lenny baby to his village Pir Pindo, the village is well known for the strong bond of Muslims and Sikh. Where they have inter-communal relationship irrespective of being religious Sikh and Muslims, this is the reason that Imam Din as part of this village, took her in order to celebrate Baisakhi festival which is celebrated together by both Muslims and Sikhs pertaining to the birth of Sikh religion and the wheat harvest. Moreover, the Muslims villagers of Pir Pindo used to go to the other village named Dera Tak Singh where Sikhs were residing greater in numbers. Before the divide of India, In Rana's village Sikh and Muslims, including neighbouring villages, both used to coexist peacefully, having respectful relations with each other. This is also depicted through the respectful and fatherly words of Sikh granthi who wishes Parveen and Khatija (sisters of Rana) as per his religion that they may be blessed with seven lives. He also jokes about their marriages that they will have to arrange marriage for them because they are growing old with the passage of time. Till this time, the religious differences have not been given any importance and the religion does not hinder relationships and interactions. People living in subcontinent used to participate in each other's ritual and ceremonies. People in Punjab, are from the same cultural background, like Sikh and Muslim in the village (Pir Pindo) who share a common ancestry named as 'Juts'. As the story grows, this lovely existence, and fragile coexistence has been broken by the rising narratives of political ideologies, which headed towards unrest and communal violence. Transitioning from investigation of coexistence to the upcoming section that plunges into the systems of becoming necro-political subjects, this examination will be focusing on the travel towards the self-identity and agency in the backdrop of partition. By inspecting, in which ways the characters would navigate personal as well as collective identities and what were the prodigious factors, altered the entire society. It would shed light on how the social and historical upheaval frame the process of becoming subjects, which ultimately led to the one of the greatest displacements of the world where 15 million migrated, and between one and two million died; highlighting the hidden forces which operated to make this historical event happen.

### **Becoming Subjects (Hindu, Muslim and Sikh)**

Achille Mbembe (2019) used the term 'nocturnal bodies' in a *Necropolitics*, by which he means that nocturnal bodies refer to the hidden and darker sides of system or society. It works on the oppressive and violent features of the society which is crucial to its functioning. It includes all the negative things such as injustice, segregation, violence and oppression. However, apparently, they are ignored and kept out of the mainstream narratives of democracies, but it still works surreptitiously to create the disposable and non-disposable classes. However, these aspects are usually contradiction to the general norms, values, equality and justices of the society. In sum, the hidden aspects, or realities play pivotal role to impact and shape the society. In the subcontinent's background, how such hidden forces have been operated to create the unique, or vulnerable bodies. This section of analysis examines to what extent the nocturnal bodies in Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*

transformed individuals. Mbembe articulates in his book, *Necropolitics* “In the economy of biopower, the function of racism is to regulate the distribution of death and to make possible the state’s murderous functions.” (2019, p.71). In the background of partition of subcontinent, it was not race, rather religion that exploited different religious identities to regulate and distribute the hidden death. Sidhwa exposes Hindu, Muslim and Sikh political leaders’ discourses reached to the lower classes of the society which commenced function of demarcating and dividing society into highly unique and vulnerable death like status. Shanta started realizing herself Hindu, Ice-candy-man at once turned staunch Muslim. What darker forces at play, are who made them so? Some of the people consciously rejected this division and preferred social bonds like friendship etc., there are many instances’ Muslims protected non-Muslims at the expense of their lives. Our concern is looking at the nocturnal forces which hiddenly worked, and divided the society through discourses. Sidhwa (1989) mentioned that these are the discourse creating personalities such as “Gandhi, Jinnah, Nehru, Iqbal, Tara Singh, Mountbatten” (p.93). Sidhwa deliberately resisted this divide through Lenny saying “Mother, Father and their friends are always saying: Gandhi said that, Nehru said that. Gandhi did this, Jinnah did that. What’s the point of talking so much about people we don’t know?” (Sidhwa, p. 29). Through Lenny, Sidhwa has foregrounded the fact that these leaders are involved in bloody games, they are doing politics in the name of religious identity. As the conditions got intensified, the Hindu Muslim trouble is started to be taken place, Ayah says “What’s it to us if Jinnah, Nehru and Patel fight, they are not fighting our fight” (Sidhwa p.75.). People like Ayah, living in Lahore was none of the concern with the political elites and their slogan. They had no personal point of quarrel with each other, nor it was the concern of their class. Their lives, deaths, and status of being living-dead are getting organized to be shaped by the sovereigns. From this view, violence commenced to be taken place, and Hindus and Muslims began to intensified, and riots were heightened by local political leaders. She also revealed that “one day everybody is themselves and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian, people shrink dwindling into symbols. “Ayah is no longer...Ayah---she is a token. A Hindu” (Sidhwa, p. 93). Sidhwa revealed that such women like Ayah had been deprived of even status of being human, rather became a token or disposable subject, who could be looted, raped killed, and abducted by the necro empowered war machines. Sidhwa reveals, killings and murders of the unknown people in the streets, nobody identifies who has involved in killings, and throwing dead bodies in open spaces. Similarly, the police looked crippled, has no power to intervene and enforce the writ of state, as Sidhwa says “Either the police can’t do anything or they don’t want to” (p. 76). This sort of situation had been created where everybody was facing his or her death, which may occur any time. This colony of India became a state of subjects of sovereigns, like the necro empowered groups where state’s role of protecting colonial people pushed in background. Mbembe (2019) states in *Necropolitics*, “In the colonies, the sovereign might kill at any time or in any manner” (p.78). This was the situation where, the huge class of people got vulnerable and Ayah being an eyewitness, got troubled. In this state of existence, colony’s supreme powers could not do anything to protect the people from the fear of death. Rather it was the colonizers that let it happened as the division of Punjab; the colonizers have decided to tear up Punjab and all those living in it, Gurdaspur gone to India and Lahore to Pakistan. This has affected the careless life of Ayah as well and she saw burning of the Lahore, and roar of *Allah o Akbar* from Muslim scoundrels, and *Sat Siri Akal* from Sikh rascals. Ayah is completely destroyed and emotionally died, when she comes to know about the murder of Masseur, her lover. He was her last hope, who could protect her from the violent upheaval of the life, himself become subject of imposed death, leaving her alone on the verge of life and death. In sum, this incident unravels that necropowers distorted and disrupted the social fabrics, targeted the disposable individuals, such as Masseur who was a sign of love and hope for Ayah. Thus, such deliberate deaths, fostered mistrust, fear, and

state of living-death among the alive disposables. In conclusion, the nocturnal bodies are manifestations of necropower. The study exposes that the character, such as Ayah, once had enjoyed normalcy, and a sense of security herself became the victim of the nocturnal bodies, or disposable body, experiencing betrayal, fear, sense of loss as the mass violence escalates. It is reflected that many innocent lives, such as of Masseur lost, families of the people getting destroyed, and the diverse unity of the society is becoming irreversibly damaged.

### **Social Death in *Ice-Candy-Man***

Mbembe is of the view that social death is not merely restricted to biological or physical form of violence, rather expands its domain to the marginalizing or excluding people politically, socially, psychologically within a society. It may be, based on cultural erasure, segregation, religious discrimination, racial and ethnic inferiority and superiority. This sort of power dynamics has been used to reinforce systems of control and domination, highlighting mechanisms, wherein certain groups are rendered as voiceless and invisible, within society. To investigate this, let us examine how the text reflects Ayah's experiences, both as described in the previous section as free woman, and later as a victim of social death or enslavement. Beginning with Ice-candy-man, the admirer, and a closed-friend of Ayah after Masseur, who remained busy in getting the bliss of her company, hovering around, inviting her to come with him to cinema, looked for her, in parks, down the streets and roads. His inclination and love for her go into the opposite direction, may be because of non-recognition of his love emotions by Ayah. He changed suddenly and turned out to be a completely different man during the communal tension. The extremists, violent roars and entities, strongly impacted him as a result, he aligns himself with brutal groups. His attachment symbolizes, that he becomes a token or robot under control of the nocturnal forces. He says "I lose my senses when I see the mutilated bodies on the train from Gurdaspur...that night I went mad...that night I lobbed grenades through the windows of Hindu and Sikhs...I want to kill for each of the breast they cut off the Muslim women...the penises" (Sidhwa, p. 156). His statement suggests that he experienced the trauma, and manipulated it to justify further killings of innocents, and demonstrated the sufferings of Muslims can be used to provoke violence against Hindus and Sikh. Therefore, it can be concluded that he was moulded to a wild-person through ideological weapons, especially of religion. He joined as a war-machine that served the larger political or ideological drives, once originated from political leaders of subcontinent. Ice-candy-man identified and realized himself as Muslim, this sudden recognition turn him into completely another person, and he comes to Lenny's home with a group of Muslim assaulters and abducts Ayah identifying as Hindu, "they drag Ayah out, they drag her by arms, stretch tout and her bare feet that want to move backward...her lips are drawn away from her teeth and the resisting curve of her throat open her mouth like the dead child's scream-less mouth" (p.183). This could not be called just a personal act of violence, but an image of broader political tumults where political and personal violence intertwined. His transformation from a normal character to the violent one, signifies that the ideological forces of being Muslims and Hindus work to manipulate him for the agendas. In the shared environment, Mbembe (2003) has articulated that such exceptional spaces are no longer the only sphere of the military or the governmentalized state, but certain private groups can also exercise the right to kill; they can create exceptional spaces and set the law aside, and this incident of abduction of Ayah symbolizes that there is no state, no law enforcement agencies, and no institution to protect her. Colony's judicial system has been suspended, that is why, Mbembe has said that "The colony is thus the site par excellence where controls and guarantees of judicial order can be suspended—the zone where the violence of the state of exception is deemed to operate in the service of "civilization" (Mbembe.p.77). During the time of partition, certain women had been reduced to mere flesh, or disposable body (not women) for being Hindu in Muslims majority areas,

such as in case of Ayah. She has been transformed to the subject of disposability, having no right, control, and sovereignty over her body, like those of slaves, possessing no autonomy over their bodies, and regulated as per the discretion of their masters/sovereign. Schmitt ([1921] 1986) defined sovereign someone “who have the monopoly on the ability to decide on the exception” (66). In Mbembe’s words “The slave has a price. As a property, the slave has a value. The slave’s labour is needed and used, so he is therefore kept alive, but in a state of injury, in a phantom-like world of horrors and intense cruelty and profanity.” (Mbembe. p.75). Ayah, as a woman becomes slave, but not those like of traditional slaves under the slaves’ laws, rather, I would call her a modern thrice-slaved, first by the hands of colonizers, second, by the patriarchal structures that gave her an inferior role, thirdly by her own friend (empowered sovereign) Ice-candy-man as her master. How the exploitative system of patriarchy along with religious forces provide grounds in the social and civil death of Ayah, has been examined as: After abducting Ayah, Ice-candy-man takes her to Red Light Area in Lahore, her name has been altered, from Shanta to Mumtaz. Amir (2014) states that the lashkars, instituted by the State for outsourcing violence, harass, kill, and kidnap anyone who defy the state of siege. As she has been made Muslim; it certainly means, she has no power over her identity to be chosen, to opt religion of her choice. Her identity has forcibly been changed and attached with another person to do what Ice-candy-man wants her. Where her body became the object of control, her life has become a thing of sex trade. She breaths but in state of death, that is to say a living-dead, a skeleton as Mbembe articulated “The methods of killing do not vary greatly. In the case of massacres in particular, lifeless bodies are quickly reduced to the status of simple skeletons.” (78). Her life is clear eraser of being herself and stripping away from humanity. Her abduction resulted into devastation of her life, which reduced her to mere status of skeleton. Ice-candy-man declares himself her master, and Ayah his slave. He has taken complete physical control over her life and as a result, she has entirely been ruined as if continuously suffering from many deaths. She has become a commodity, cut to mere body, or thing, she can be bought, and sold, as per the will of his master. Her attractive and fresh appearance have disappeared. “Where have the radiance and animation gone, can the soul be extracted from its living body” (Sidhwa, p. 260). Mbembe says “This power over the life of another takes the form of commerce: a person’s humanity is dissolved to the point that the slave’s life can be said to be possessed by the master. Because the slave’s life is like a “thing,” possessed by another person, slave’s existence appears as the perfect figure of a shadow.” (2019. p.75). In conclusion, she has a shadowy existence, not real, where her voice is quietened, herself is denied, and her humanity erased. Ayah is deprived of everything, dignity, privilege, honour and above all being herself. She suffers from, ‘loss of home’, ‘loss of rights over her body’, ‘loss of her political status and rights’ and more than all, right to free life. She has been caged in the colonial riots and losses her bodily autonomy, as a result of sovereign’s division of demarcation of disposable. She is deprived of having political representation, and degraded to the status of being slave, as a result her body become the subject of Ice-candy-man’s control. Mbembe (2019) articulates “The slave’s humanity appears as the perfect figure of a shadow. Indeed, slaves condition results from a triple loss: loss of a “home,” loss of rights over one’s body, and loss of political status. This triple loss is identical with absolute domination, natal alienation, and social death “expulsion from humanity altogether”. (Mbembe, p.74-75). In sum, it could be concluded that she had been degraded from the status of being human to disposable-human, suffered alienation, her lover masseur got killed, deprived of her own family and home after the drawn line of Partition in subcontinent.

### **Shaping People’s Bodies to be Disposable**

*All Englishmen will burn in hell for the trouble they’ve started in Punjab! And let me tell you. The Christian hell is forever (Sidhwa, p.112)*

Mbembe (2019) articulates in his book *Necropolitics* “colonies are similar to frontiers, inhabited by ‘savages’ colonies are not organized as a state form and do not create a human world” (p.77). It means Indian colony was not a state, it was degraded version of sovereign state. None of the body was considered human, rather there were mere exposed biological bodies to death, as existed in the state of nature, like those, who are the soft-subject of predators’ indirect or direct prey. Committing violence, lawlessness, and brutality amongst the natives on ethnic, religious, cultural or tribal lines becomes the tool of politics of death, where disposable bodies (colonized human flesh) can simply be exploited and eradicated. To Agamben “the law includes in itself the living [il vivente] through its own suspension” (p.11). The ‘non-humans’ have been developed to the central logic of necropolitics which looks at work to have control and dominance through the management of death and life. However, in Indian colonial background, Sidhwa depicted that the colonizers have used and exploited the discourses to divide people into different classes, religions, geographies, cultures by destructing the multiethnic and multi-religious society. The British broadly divided Indians through biopolitical lens by reducing them to animal-like state. To hold the sense of superiority over the native Indians, British colonizers used the strategy of ‘divide and rule’ so as to maintain control over the local inhabitants. The colonizers have fragmented the existing religions, ethnicities and cultures of the bodies so that they can weaken the resistance to have grip over control. It provoked hostility between Hindus and Muslims. The divide and rule policy used religion to drive a wedge between Indians which eventually resulted in the death and displacement of millions of people, as well as the destruction of key economic assets (Lyer, 2010; Tharoor, 2017). In sum, this biopolitical operation on the Indian peoples so as to govern manage, and control the biological lives of the Indians endangered unsecured some vulnerable groups. Cacho (2012) characterizes such bodies as pre-emptively criminalized, “considered criminal-in-being, unlawful for who they are, not what they have done” (64). Since the end of 1857’s war in subcontinent, they prevented the emergence of a unified anti-colonial movements by dint of the divide and rule policy. But later, in 1946, Britain got weaker economically, encountered huge destruction as a result of lengthy World War 2. Because of this they could not hold control over the colony’s matters and started to reflect handing over the administrative matters to the native people. This was not an easier job to smoothly provide them their territory back rather it was much more difficult to leave the colony behind. For, they had already instilled identity questions to exercise bio/necropolitics in sub-continent through political parties. Which later proved as a time bomb for the disintegration of Indian people. Sidhwa depicted the dialogue between Inspector General Rogers and Mr. Singh, Roger says “If we quit India today, old chap, you will bloody fall at each other’s throat” (Sidhwa, p. 62). This was the exact expression of colonizers divide and rule policy. Mr. Singh replies “because of your divide-and-rule monkey tricks... you always set up one against the other... you just give Home Rule and see we will settle our differences and everything” (Sidhwa, p. 63). Out of these dialogues it can be inferred that Mr. Singh did not know the power of such discourses which have been used to make people into groups like ‘who are to live’ or ‘who are letting to be died’. These discourses were so bio politically influential and later got proved when history’s biggest displacement occurred in the land of subcontinent. According to Mbembe (2019) “the colony represents a site in which sovereignty fundamentally consists in exercising a power outside the law (ab legibus solutus) and in which “peace” is more likely to assume the face of “endless war” (p. 76). Under the guise of sovereign (Britian) taking the policy of ‘divide and rule’ into account, it is concluded that the native political parties represented different religions played necro-political role as exact cultivated by the colonizers. For example, Muslim league talked about Muslims and disregarded the other people. Similarly, hiddenly congress favoured Hindus. Therefore, later, this biopolitical divide, became the point of violence later in the displacement of western Punjab. These parties shaped and decided the lives and deaths of the



individuals therefore, As Mbembe has articulated that the “Presentation of politics as the work of death, I now turn to sovereignty, defined as the right to kill” (p. 23). In conclusion, Sidhwa is right in regard to the role of Christian Englishmen as colonizers that they shall be burning in hell forever because of setting a stage for the bloodshed of hundreds of thousands of innocent Indians. The Mountbatten plan was to tear up the Punjab, and eventually, the line was drawn, however, there were some who consciously resisted this division on religious lines, denied this divide and rule policy consciously and helped the vulnerable section of the society.

### **Trauma and Resilience: Children Bodies**

“Kill us all ...kill us all but spare the children” (Sidhwa, 1989, p. 200).

Social death and Civil death focus on depriving people of civil rights, legal protection, and social recognition experienced by targeted groups or individuals. This concept transcends from legal definition of civil death to wider kinds of segregation, marginalization and dehumanization which is facilitated by the exercise of sovereign powers to take control over life and death. Civil death also results into social stigma where individuals can be treated as non-citizen within a society. It is also used as to deprive people of privileges and rights so as to get social control. The novel also depicts the biological, civil and social death of children. “The concept of civil death has evolved from its origin as a total loss of legal and civil rights to more targeted forms of disenfranchisement, particularly evident in the context of felony disenfranchisement in the United States” (Wright, 2013, p.220). Sidhwa reflects displacement and loss of innocence during the partition of India. Taking example of Ranna, the little child who manages to escape from the butchery taking place in the village. He has been depicted as a witness to see and face the harsh realities of the partition. He says, “he saw his eleven-year-old sister, Khatija, run stark naked into their courtyard. Her long hair dishevelled her boyish body bruise, her lips cut and swollen and a bloody scab where her front teeth were missing” (p. 202). His witnessing of deaths shatters his innocence, robs him of carefree life of childhood which plunge him into the world of uncertainties, difficulties and fear. After having witnessing all of his family members dead, Ranna flees from Pir Pindo to his aunt’s village in hope of getting himself secured from death. During the way, he sees Sikhs and Hindus who have already killed and destroyed several villages. But he manages to escape to his aunt’s village where the confusing activity was being taken place. There were no Sikh attacks rather villagers were shouting and running here and there to evacuate the whole village. Meanwhile, Ranna manages to search out his aunt among the people. “The moment, he caught the light of recognition and concern in her eyes, the pain in his exploded and he crumpled at her feet unconscious” (p. 205). His aunt further pronounces about him that Ranna was badly injured. While washing his wounds, she says that “I did not remove the thick scabs that had formed over the wounds, I thought I would see his brain!” (p. 205). When fainted, the village midwife checked his nerve and declared him dead. In the same position, uncle and aunty left him in the cot and moved ahead, remembers the dream “he has lost too much blood, let him die in peace” (Sidhwa, p.207). Ranna says, because of terrifying roar and throbs he sits up on the cot, again finds the bad demons, Hindus and Sikhs. Having severe injuries, runs again and hid himself in the hay. Later, he is forced to go to Lahore on account of partition and he becomes displaced refugee and lone survivor. Mbembe (2019) quotes Elias Canetti, “the survivor is the one who, having stood in the path of death, having known many deaths and having been amid the fallen, is still alive” (p. 88). Ranna and children like him have been butchered and those who escaped could not find their mother and father or kins. It can be professed that he is profoundly shaken and traumatized by the horrors he has witnessed in the time of partition. As Sidhwa narrates that “there were too many ugly and abandoned children like him scavenging in the looted houses and the rubble of burnt-out buildings” (p.207). To put it briefly, during this time children faced social and civil death through loss and trauma, such experiences

left great psychological scars which haunted them long after the physical violence ended. Ranna's escape from the village serves as a reminder of partition, who narrated the personal experiences, and blood sheds done during the events of partition. It provides example that the bloody partition of 1947 led to huge displacement, horrors, killings, atrocities and loss of lives where Ranna's experience is a microcosm of the broader dark horrors faced by millions of the people. In necropolitical contexts, what happens to the survivors who become victims to the disposable class of the society? I would say, violence becomes routinized and normalized which blurs the boundaries between death and life. The rape and killings of the men, women and children in Pir Pindo village became normal and unique for Ranna as it is described that after passing of certain time "how easily Ranna has accepted his loss and adjusted to his new environment" (p. 211) It means, through the course of time, such deaths became desensitized. This desensitization includes, psychological coping techniques which allowed him to accept horror fact and continue living. Mbembe (2019) states "in the logic of survival the horror experienced upon seeing death turns into the satisfaction that the dead person is another. It is the death of the Other, the Other's physical presence as a corpse, that makes the survivor feel unique". (p.88) This makes the necropower as a normal practiced where oneself has been survived from death world. This normal may not include the simple normalization, indifferent to all the bloodshed and horror experience. It means, the person does so for the sake of protecting his biological life. Though, the observations of assassinations in front of Ranna, inflicted upon his immediate kins and villagers is horrifying experience for him. His escape and the sense of sorrow and loss might haunt him for the long time, as no one was left, all killed. This miracle of being alive after necro-political disturbance provided him with strength to make himself alive in the death-world and his unique survival is a key facet of his character's journey where existence of death turns into serious satisfaction of being alive, reflects a state of normalization who by chance, left alive.

### **Marginalization and Exclusion: Bare Life and State of Exception**

Agamben's (1998) notion of bare life (in Latin *vita nuda*) critically narrates the individual's existence where they have been reduced to biological existence. It addresses the phenomenon of bare or unprotective life, where some of the individuals, communities, or population have been exposed to a state of disposability or expandability. Stephan Humphreys (2006) states "Agamben ... understands the state of exception to be 'essentially extra juridical' something prior to or other than law. (p. 678). Such people often relegated by racism, colonialism, religious extremism or other kinds of structural violence which led them to systematic discrimination and dehumanization which renders their lives precarious and their deaths inconsequential. Agamben (1998) states "Placing biological life at the center of its calculations, the modern State...does nothing other than bring to light the secret tie uniting power and bare life" (p. 6). Sidhwa depicted the bare life of the characters during the time of partition of Pakistan and India, violence occurred among people of different religions. Which created a state of exception; in this situation all the rules and regulations, laws and moral norms observed suspended. Agamben referring camp (1998) stated 'Insofar as its inhabitants were stripped of every political status and wholly reduced to bare life, ...the most absolute biopolitical space ever to have been realized, in which power confronts nothing but pure life, without any mediation' (p.171). In the context of current study communal brutality affected the whole country and especially, at this time, the suspension of laws allowed the arbitrary exercise of violence and power against the weaker population. It is observed that control of the state remained weaker, for example, a man asks about the role of police to be done at this crucial time of violence? he comes to know that "The Muslims in the force have been disarmed at the orders of Hindu sub-inspector" (Sidhwa, 1989, p. 197). The people have become the subject of unchecked brutality and there exists no legal protection by the formal authorities. In terms of sovereign bodies

or authorities, whether it be a ruler, institution, group or government make the situation horrified without being bound by the usual legal limitations. For example, let's see the necro-empowered group of Sikhs attackers depicted in the select novel. Sidhwa recounts the event through Ranna, which took place in village Pir Pindo. This village is located nearby Amritsar, however, dominated by Sikhs, Jagjit Singh (who had sympathies for Muslims) also warns the Muslims, that there are Hindu, Sikh and Muslims rumours of riots being heard therefore, they must evacuate the village and move to Pakistan, because their lives being Muslims could be at risk. But most of the Muslim inhabitants resisted the proposal, and in return of their love for land, they declined and stated "what face will we show our forefathers on the day of judgement if we abandon their graves? Allah will protect us" (Sidhwa, 1989, p.197). For these Muslims, religion was not prioritized, rather soil, and their love for village, where whose forefathers have lived for centuries had been given value. Because leaving the graves means, leaving their all behind. This decision of letting themselves in highly vulnerable state of existence, they waited, and hoped for the circumstances to be turned in their favour. As common men, they believed that Allah will protect them from such riots because they had never believed about the killings and getting killed by their own Sikh brothers. But on contrary to that, all of sudden the situation turns opposite, and a local Sikh leader from Dera Tek Singh, organized the mob and attacked on the village *Pir Pindo*. Why Sikh mob got organized necro-politically, let's delve deeper into the thought, Mbembe (2003) explains that the production of such necro-empowered groups with advanced technologies of killing can create similar situations such as ghettos and plantations anywhere. In connection to the background of novel, the mob organized by the Sikh of Dera Tek Singh is catalysed as necro empowered group, who as per the situation found themselves violently empowered, and began to targeting Muslims majority villages, whom, they consider Other. This group of Sikhs got authority, and was provided religious justification. This necro-political advanced technology of killing, in Mbembe's term the modern weaponry or war machines in systematic manner carried out the violence. Sidhwa states "In fifteen minutes, the village was swamped by the Sikhs—tall men with streaming hair...waving full sized swords and Sten guns, roaring *Bolay so Niha! Sat siri Akal.*" (Sidhwa, 1989, p.199). How Sikh have justified looting and killings of the Muslims? They are motivated by their religious belief 'Bolay so Niha! Sat Siri Akal' seeing their violent actions as divine service, and such beliefs are justified and manipulated by some dark forces, transforming them into tools of necro-political powers. Sidhwa's reflection of violence against Muslims is the evidence of necropower, where they suddenly confronted bare life as theorized by Agamben. This sort of unique existence of villagers of Pir Pindo stripped them of social and legal shield which reduced them to the vulnerable being. As in Banerjee's (2008) words, they are "Objects of sovereign power but excluded from being its subjects" (8). During the communal violence, Sidhwa depicted the direct violence occurred when "They (Sikhs) are killing Muslims, setting fires, looting, parading the Muslim women naked through the street---raping and mutilating them in the centre of villages and in mosques. (Sidhwa, 1989, p.197). 'Killing', 'looting', 'raping' and mutilating them' is the stark example of religious or ethnic cleansing of the Muslims by the Sikh mobs. It can be posited that individuals are objectified and brutalized becoming mere bodies to meet death and violence. Let us take another example from the text, in the event Ranna was hidden inside the room, he heard the screams coming from outside where a woman was being raped by the Sikh rascal. He heard, a woman crying and begging to Sikh. "Do anything you want with me but don't torment me...for God's sake don't torture me" (Sidhwa, 1989, p.200). Sidhwa depicted that there was no value of woman's life, no value of chastity of women, as she had no right over her own life, body, chastity which is being tormented just because of being identified as Muslim. There exists another instance when Ranna heard a teenager's cracked voice who was roaring and wailing "I don't want to die...I don't want to die" (Sidhwa, 1989, p, 200). It provides a vivid image of necropolitics stressing on

the fear, chaos and uncertainty. In the village, the Muslim villagers suffering from the reality of communal necropolitical violence and its destructive consequences in the form of death. Taking someone's life is the ultimate or supreme act one can commit in others life, has been done in the time of partition. Sidhwa portrayed that the villagers planned to hide women girls and children in the hopes of escaping detection highlight the vulnerability and precariousness of the life in time of conflict. The attacks by the group of Sikhs reveals that villagers' lives are most vulnerable, no law of colony at work. They have been represented as harmless creatures who do not take part in political matters of the country but, framed disposables, became victim to the rage of religious unidentical discourses to each other. For example, Ranna advanced and hears the intolerable cries and screams coming from the mosque where he saw the horrifying scene of Muslim woman being gang raped screaming "...great anguished sobs—and at intervals she screams you all will kill me! Hai Allah...Y'all will kill me!" (Sidhwa, p. 202). In another scene, Ranna sees the daughter of Maulvi being raped by the Sikh assaulter. He also hears her mother's screams coming from the mosque which symbolizes some of the figures have been committing rape with her. And Ranna also hears the voices and yawns of relief sighs of the Sikh saying 'Wah Guru' which suggests that assaulters are thanking their Guru for providing them women to be raped. The rapists' casual response invokes religious ideologies to be justified and glorified against killings and raping Muslims women as 'others. The ideological apparatus work to tear apart women from other ideological construct and giving birth to a situation where state of exception is being carried out. In conclusion, the 'state of exception' centred on the situation where normal political and legal norms suspended and the subject like the daughter of Maulvi, Chidda, (Ranna's mother) and other women and children exposed to this unique state of exception where nothing worked in protection of these people which ultimately, culminated the social and civil liberty under the colonial rule and made all the victims subject of state of exception. In the same backdrop, the researcher would like to use term 'Others' meaning (not colonizers) but only disposable (Indians) men and women from Hindu, Sikh and Muslim communities. The religion was exploited and operated to make them 'Others' from their own culture, their selves, from their lands, and all that what they had inherited from their forefathers, under the newly construct of being Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. Looking deeply, this process of making others had long been commenced, since the arrival of British, who scientifically worked on these lines to tear the people apart which at the end led to the extreme violence. Imagine this situation, Sidhwa portrays, during the attack, a Sikh was assaulting a woman where Ranna observes Sikh says "Stop whimpering you bitch or I'll bugger you again a man said irritably... men laughed there was much movement stifled exclamation and moans, a woman screamed ...cracking noise and rattle of breath from the lungs. Then a moment of horrible stillness" (Sidhwa, p. 203). In making of this situation, it's not only the external exploitative feasible circumstances involved, rather greedy and brutal personality of a Sikhs also contributed which ultimately, paved smooth ways for Sikhs to be wild, killer, raper and felonious to the Others as well In *Pir Pindo*. In a nut shell, and to be specific to portrayed necropolitics---the sovereign powers in subcontinent denoting to individuals and entities who took control, and powers over the lives and deaths of the people during as well as prior to the times of partition, manifested in various forms. However, in the backdrop of current study, the sovereigns' forces have been labelled in three main layers as depicted in the novel:

- The colonizers/ideologues/discourse creators (English),
- The narrative shapers (political parties),
- Assaulters or necro-empowered groups of Hindus, Muslims or Sikh, who became fully empowered over the lives of the Others in the novel's context.

The colonizers having the supreme power, ruled the India from 1857 to 1947, they made laws to run the multicultural society where Individuals were not having the same social status as the

Britishers had, rather they were considered as colonizers. Britishers had colonized India to exploit the resources and rule subcontinent, therefore, in order to avoid any rebellion, they allowed the political parties to be formed like Congress and All India Muslim so that they could manipulate, control and regulate the peoples as per their benefits. These political parties further worked to spread Hindu Muslim discriminatory discourses. Osuri (2006) argues that the discourse of risk and threat is a function of bio as well as necropolitics which exposes to death or torture those deemed to be risky. These narratives worked well in making of the people who were already living on the verge of life and death such as masseur, Ayah, Sharbat Khan and Hari etc. These parties created an environment where communal identity became a tool of conflict and this manipulated identity associated with the core principles of necropolitics where political parties earned the status of being sovereigns and determined the very life and death of the bodies, based on newly constructed identities. Leaders of Political parties had power over the life and death of the bodies, decided their status of existence on the religious identical lines through using ideological apparatuses by Althusser (2008) states that, “no (ruling) class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and, in the State Ideological Apparatuses” (p.81). Eventually, it worsened the division and led to the extreme communal violence such as the rapes of the Muslim women in *Pir Pindo* and killings of the Muslim men, and Ranna’s witness of migration of villagers to Pakistan. Sikh of Dera Singh a local political leader of Master Tara Singh signifies as having sovereign political leader framing the other as threat to Sikh’ existence and identity. Such political leaders fixed necro-political order of death and life of the bodies as contingent upon one’s communal identity. The depicted atrocities in *Pir Pindo* and Lahore describe the harsh realities of necropolitics. Sovereign political leaders had imposed death on larger scales and determined who among the bodies to be alive in a state of death, and who is to be died Pertaining to this, Mbembe views (2019) “Sovereignty consists in the power to manufacture an entire crowd of people who specifically live at the edge of life, or even on its outer edge”. (Necropolitics: p. 37). In short, *Ice-Candy-Man* depicts the role of political leaders as propagating divisive identity narratives so that bodies be prepared for the commitment of politics of death, where they can exercise deadly power to manipulate their identities to justify killings, violence control and death. It depicts that this manufacturing was done by the colonizers, and political leaders in subcontinent, the common men existing in different regions of India had nothing to do with matters in connection with religion, or religious identities. They have been selected and made subjects of exploitation by instilling identity questions in them. Among these, some people joined violent groups and became as agents or war machines of sovereigns which ultimately led to a great communal violence ever happened in history of the world. The Indian assaulters worked as volunteer militia during the partition to rape kill, and mutilate the bodies of dead of Others on the basis of religiously different. They turned themselves into the status of private militias. In this regard, Mbembe has (2003) talked about armies, about which he says: “Urban militias, private armies, armies of regional lords, private security firms, and state armies all claim the right to exercise violence or to kill” (p.32). As depicted in *Ice-Candy-Man* the Sikh attackers on *Pir Pindo* as violent group exercised and regulated extreme power over bodies of the village, proclaimed dominance over the lives and deaths of Muslim villagers of *Pir Pindo*. It could be argued that these groups have been made, and further sharpened by propaganda on ideological lines and the narratives created divisions, which further fuelled hatred and fear converting common people into war machines. They turned out to be the sources of destruction, torn apart the harmony and peace existed in subcontinent. The mobilization of Sikh assaulters is the symbolic of how necropower was operated by use of violence and terror. Similarly, A mob of Muslims from among, particularly Ice-candy-man, abducts Ayah in Lahore, and made her an object of sex trade, this kind of sovereign power transferred to the group of assaulters worked to create social, civil, and

biological death of the Other in the time of partition. This transfer of necro-power to the Muslim mob resulted into extreme subjugation of Ayah and turned her into disposable subject. In summary, it could be argued that the portrayed disposable bodies became the object of politics of death where they confronted the extremist dilemmas of the time and which eventually stripped them of their identities and endured extreme physical and psychological trauma including the essence of necropower.

## Conclusion

The interpretation of *Ice-Candy-Man* through the framework of Necropolitics and Agamben's State of Exception and Bare life revealed several significant discoveries of social, political and cultural dynamic of subcontinent during the time of partition. It is exposed that native political leaders also played vital role in framing the deaths and lives of the people under the guise of independence of 1947. The native leaders such as Jinnah, Nehru, Gandhi and others contributed to the divide and rift of the society on religious grounds, which further strengthened the necro-political landscape. They were the manifestation of nocturnal bodies having, segregation violence and oppression in their discourses which work to create disposable bodies within the society. Their political narratives devised Indian society into Sikh, Hindu, and Muslims fraction creating tensions which led to public violence. They were fighting for independence from colonial rule, also became the mediators of bio-political and necro-political powers influencing the fates and identities of the millions of the Indian peoples. Mbembe (2019) local militia, militant groups rise to sovereign powers in such unbridled contexts. In case of the *Ice-Candy-Man* the groups of Sikhs and Muslims got sovereign powers, exerting authority and control over deaths and lives of the characters. This transformation highlights the reflection of the novel's necro-political landscape where local groups or non-state actors attained substantial power and spread violence. It is found that children's bodies, like that of Ranna, and Khatija also preyed to the necro-political forces because of being Muslims in Pir Pindo, Khatija has been brutally murdered by Sikh and Ranna manages to escape having extreme injuries. In sum, it portrays children also suffered from being different identity and confronted bare life, and state of exception where laws were suspended and made them Others exposing them to the death. It is also concluded that the dilemma and plight of the women in subcontinent, revealed through the character like Ayah (Shanta) and Hamida, reflects the brutal reality of necro-political violence.

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