

Dialectics of Diegetic and Mimetic Patterns in Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man*

Farrukh Nadeem¹

Abstract

*In the wake of narratology, the art of storytelling becomes the focus of interest for structuralists and semioticians. With the discoveries of poetics, patterns and principals of narratives in Russian Formalism, the French structuralism also applied its tools and modes of investigation to contemporary modalities. As a result of this analytical culture in fictional criticism, the discourse analysis of narrative structures has attracted much attention as a field in western academia. A fictional text, being primarily the artistic representation of human actions through narratives, incorporates certain mimetic experimentations to endorse the structural/semiotic significance of showing along with the telling (diegesis) of events and incidents. At both the macro and micro levels of narrative structure, the interdependence of these two paradigms—diegesis and mimesis can vividly be observed in modern fiction. The presence of mimesis or showing through dramatizing of action, categorically marks, on the one hand, the situational gravity in a fictional text and, on the other, the significance of how the things happen besides what happens in a story. Research, therefore, offers a new critical paradigm to approach a well-known fiction, Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *Ice-Candy Man* that is entirely based on the tragic events of 1947 partition of the Subcontinent. How, narratively, Sidhwa juxtaposes telling (narration) with a spectacular showing of the tragic events, will be illustrated through textual evidence in my paper.*

Keywords: diegesis, discourse, *Ice-Candy Man*, mimesis, narrative, semiotics, narratology, semiotics

1. Introduction: Diegesis and Mimesis

“Narratology,” as defined by Todorov, a Bulgarian-French critic and semiotician, is “a science of narratives,” (Herman, 1995, p.88) and has been highly productive in exploring various dimensions of fictional texts. After a notable “narrative turn” in literary/critical theory and humanities, much of

¹ Lecturer, Department of English, International Islamic University, Islamabad

the structuralist and poststructuralist works produced after the 70s, seem to be focused on the narrative analysis of fictions like folktales, novels and short stories. It is, metaphorically, reflecting its prime focus on *method in madness*¹ i.e., on its narrative structure rather than meanings. This paradigm shift—from subject matter to formative principles of text, bridges up a gap between literature and linguistics or linguistics and poetics. Since its emergence in French academia, these ideas have been applied to various genres including epics, fables, ballads, novels and short stories. Since then, these ideas have been significant in exploring structural and semiotic dynamics in fictional texts. The critical debates and discussions amongst Russian Formalists like Vladimir Propp (1895-1975), Viktor Shklovsky (1893-1984) and Boris Tomashevsky (1890-1957) enriched the tradition of narrative analysis with new modes of investigation in literary criticism which, right after their translations into French, motivated French classical structuralists like Algirdas Julian Greimas (1917-1992), Emile Benveniste (1902-1976), Gerard Genette (1830-2018), Tzvetan Todorov (1939-2017) and above all Roland Barthes (1915-1980) in providing the architecture of Narratology as a highly productive discipline in the analytical tradition. These structuralists not only designed their own narrative models but also fruitfully applied them to various classical and modern fictional texts. However, the major focus in their work has been on the nature of narratives in shaping and organizing the organic patterns of a story.

A narrative can be defined as “the semiotic representation of a sequence of events meaningfully connected by cause and effect” (Ribo, 2019, p. 2). The Greek philosopher Plato, according to Berger (1994), created a narrative relationship between the art of telling—diegesis and re-presentation of actions, events and incidents – besides creating a line of demarcation between *mimesis* and *diegesis* in his third book of the *Republic*. “Fabulists or poets, he [Socrates] said, “proceed either by pure narration (diegesis) or by a narrative that is affected through imitation (mimesis) or both” (p. 407). Plato’s distinction helps Aristotle in strengthening his arguments in his *Poetics* where he theorizes the concept of tragedy through mimetic modes of text production. His concept of a mimetic plot, besides being based on cause-and-effect relationships, is certainly an organic whole with a magnitude in its actions. However, it is important to understand that despite a clear classification of *mimesis* and *diegesis*, there are certain grey areas where both of these paradigms harmoniously blend together, since, in

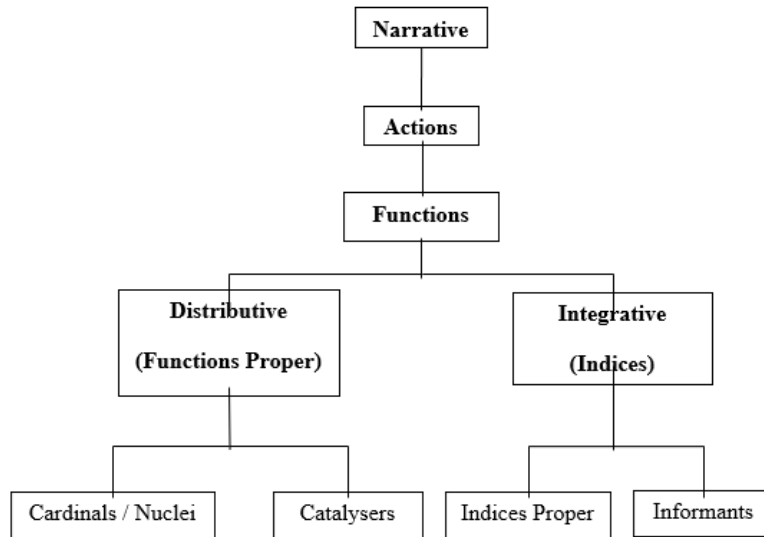
contemporary criticism, narrativity is not only a mimetic art but at the same time a diegetic paradigm. Traditionally the art of drama was considered to be a highly mimetic experience but in modern times narratologists have discovered compelling examples of implied narrators in this genre purely meant for performance (Richardson, 2007, p. 151). “Drama’s mimetic narrative qualities,” according to Lamari (2010), “are evident from Aristotle’s observations; in dramatic narrative, the story is communicated through the representation and not the telling of actions while the degree of narrativity depends on the richness of the events represented. Diegetic narrativity, on the other hand, refers to verbal, as opposed to visual or performative, transmission of narrative content, to the representation of a speech act of telling a story by an agent called a narrator” (p. 13). Keeping in mind the similarities and dissimilarities between *diegesis* and *mimesis*, we can observe, behind the showing of drama, the dynamics of the desire to tell a tale. Similarly in telling a tale, there exists, ontologically a desire to show how the event has actually happened. Therefore, there is a dialectically fictionalized relationship—telling in showing and showing in telling - that materializes narrative competence and performance. Collins (1991) for example, has identified, through a psychological lens, the dialects of *mimesis* and *diegesis* psychologically in Shakespearean plays and in Marlowe’s narration in the modern novel *Heart of Darkness* (p.8). Not surprisingly, Raymond’s (2019) research paper on Zadie Smith’s novel *White Teeth* highlights the narrative experimentation in the art of telling and showing that also becomes witness to the bilaterally significant narrative kinship between *mimesis* and *diegesis*.

2. Narrative Analysis: Exploring the Diegetic and Mimetic Patterns in *Ice-Candy Man*

Like all other serious writers of fictional texts, Bapsi Sidhwa has proved herself to have materialized prolifically possible narrative constituents in her novel *Cracking India* or *Ice-Candy Man*ⁱⁱ, written and published in 1991. To make it mimetically more accessible to the people of the subcontinent particularly, it was cinematically adapted in Deepa Mehta’s film *Earth*, produced in 1999. Primarily, a cinematic mode of production is more *showing* (mimetic) than *telling* (diegetic) in nature; however, the narrator is very much present in filming the actions and events through the lens of a camera. Conversely, within the fictional text, there are certain other narrative experimentations which reflect the simultaneity of *mimesis* and

diegesis which structurally as well as semantically prove to be formative factors behind the narrative magnitude of a fictional text like *Ice-Candy Man*.

In the wake of Structuralism and Semiotics, the phrase *narrative analysis* outshines the rest of the critical approaches. In his ground-breaking essay “An Introduction to the Structuralist Analysis of Narrative,” Roland Barthes (1975) divides functions into two narrative categories of distributive functions: functionality of *doing* involving actantial functions based on a cause and effect or sequence and consequence relationship in plot, and functionality of *being*—a spatio-temporal information communicated through certain indices, personal and cultural signs. These indices refer to narrative accessories like identity, colour, weather, location, cultural and ideological settings, atmosphere, and personality of character, a feeling, mood, a psychological trait or any other mark of identity. Narratively, these narremes or accessories demonstrate integrational relationships with the narrative structures of fictional texts. In the absence of actions, they provide not in quantity but the necessary important information about the characters, their feelings, and their respective ideological settings including dress, skin colour, ethnic background, cultural and natural living conditions. Besides the re-presentations and mis-re-presentations (in Cultural and Postcolonial studies), arts of characterization and caricaturing, ghostly ghastly apparitions can also be the narrative paradigms of indices. In realist novelsⁱⁱⁱ, in particular, both functions (working at the level of narration) and indices (working at the level of description) become correspondently productive in encoding meanings for the reader. This kinship between functions and indices can be equated with Mucignat’s (2016) views on the fictional relationship between *diegesis* and *mimesis* in a realist novel: “the system of representation of realist novels is characterized by a particular combination of *diegesis* (the level of action) and *mimesis* (the level of description) ... (p.5).” To facilitate the reader in this regard, Roland Barthes’ narrative model can be illustrated through the following diagram:

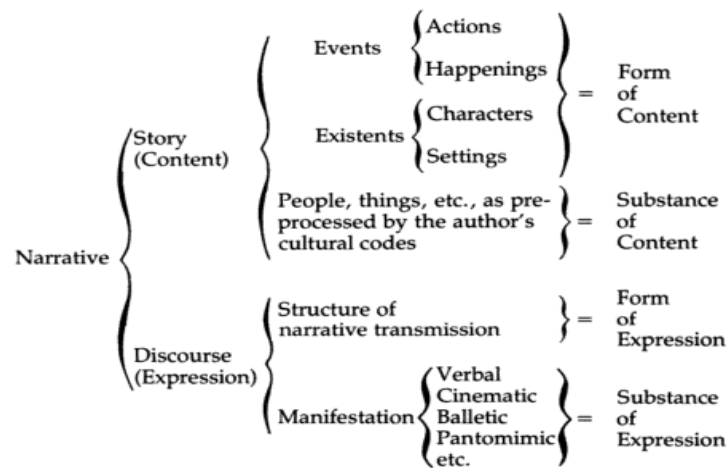


Through the application of this model to *Ice-Candy Man*, not only the indices but also the proairetic substance (the sum total of all the actions and happenings in the text) of this work of fiction can also be examined. In the similar way, against the integrative functions or indices mentioned in this narrative model, the novel's major characters like Lenny and Ayah Shanta can be identified, examined, decoded and analysed. We can further observe the dynamic role of language in delineating the tragic character of Ayah Shanta through the indicial classification—indices proper and informants - introduced by Barthes. By equating these indicial functions with mimetic values in overall narrative patterns of the novel *Ice-Candy Man*, we can see how the components of *showing* project and foreground the tragedy of Shanta and how these units contribute to the narrative impression of this novel. In addition to that, Sidhwa's art of characterization becomes distinctively important since she never leaves a communicative gap between her textual patterns and the interest of the reader in her characters. In her lifelike descriptive modes, she has approximated the character of Shanta to the pre-partition cultural settings of the Subcontinent by describing her age, colour, facial expressions, the shape of her body and above all her social class:

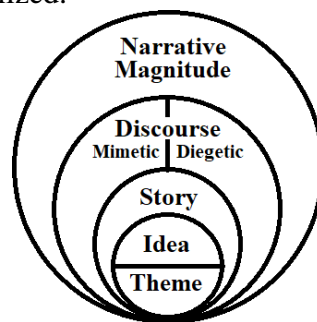
Ayah is chocolate-brown and short. Everything about her is eighteen years old and round and plump. Even after her face. Full-blown cheeks, pointing mouth and smooth forehead curve to form a circle

with her head. Her hair is pulled back in a tight knot. And if her looks were not stunning enough, she has a rolling bouncy walk that agitates the globules of her buttocks under her cheap colourful saris and the half-spheres beneath her short sari-blouses. The Englishman no doubt had noticed (p.3).

Similarly, the American narratologist and semiotician Seymour Chatman (1980) has introduced his model^{iv} in his *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* which incorporates many important narrative segments particularly about characters and their cultural settings. The “existents” mentioned and “classed as characters and cultural settings” in the following model relate to Barthes’ indicial functions of being (Mosher, (1980), for, the word “existents” used by Chatman (1980) is synonymous with Barthesian “beings.” Working at the level of description, these components are less actantial and in the words of Mosher (1980) comparatively static in the dynamics of diegesis but can be approximated through these indices of showing or mimesis. Since every life in this world has an ideological and cultural context, fictional texts will definitely ensure their presence to show the identity, class, gender, ethnicity, ideology and other cultural contexts of their characters. Unlike poetry, fiction cannot afford being very metaphorically abstract, and a fiction has to be conditioned with contextual issues or place, time and space from which it socially and culturally grows. Writers, along with *what happens* and *how it happens* incorporate the information of where and *with whom the events have happened* in their fiction.



Chatman's (1980) model illustrates that together with telling an event of a story, the characters and settings are described through various linguistic features. Modern fiction, according to Barthes (1975) is highly indicial as compared to the quickness of narrative patterns in popular and classical folk tales. Chatman (1980) has furthered his discussion by referring to E. M. Foster's significant line of demarcation between *story* and *plot*, according to which, *the king died and the queen died* is a simple sentence expressing two tragic events, whereas the sentence *The King died and the queen died of grief* is a narrative structure based on cause-and-effect relationship. In both sentences, according to Green and LeBihan (2002), there are features of narratives, but plot transforms the events by combining temporal succession with cause (p.46). This causation actually shows how the events have happened; otherwise, it is simply a statement without providing a solid reason behind the happening. In the modern and contemporary ways of fiction (of indices), this grief (an emotional and reflective state of being) is the central area of narrative concern that means an entire narrative structure will preferably emerge between two deaths expressed in the sentence: *The king died and the queen died (of grief)*. This is what Bapsi Sidhwa empirically reflects in her novel *Ice-Candy Man*. Between happenings she illustrates the causes or contextual identities or how somebody looks while he or she undertakes some action. Therefore, the narrative models are helpful in identifying the narrative roles of lexical units. The basic purpose behind introducing these narrative models in this research is to demonstrate how the descriptions of settings and characters and their cultural contexts respond as mimetically as dialectically to the narrative frameworks of their stories. The understanding of these models, through narrative analysis, is helpful in examining the well-integrated mimetic and diegetic structures of narratives in different discourses of fiction. Through the application of aforementioned models, we can see how the narrative magnitude of fictional texts is materialized.



The diagram above shows the interdependent relationships of various components in a fiction. It can be understood through the narrative sequence that starts with the central idea of the novel and that, for example, in Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man*, is the horrors of 1947 partition. After the theme and the idea, we have, in this narrative structure, the concept of story. The novel *Ice-Candy Man* is a fictional *his-story* of Partition; therefore, the French structuralist or narratological *histoire* or the Russian formalist term *fabula* can be used for the word story. The term discourse is already used in narratological spaces in terms of Russian formalist fictional concept *Sjuzhet* (pronounced as Soojay). Both *fabula* and *Sjuzhet*, in the narratological perspective, have to be mutually coordinated for the desired sublimity of art. In a similar way, both *diegetic* and *mimetic* structures have to be amalgamated into an organic unity like a chemical compound. However, if the *fabula* of a fiction is recounting or telling (diegesis) of the story, then the formalist *Sjuzhet* is possibly the paradigm of enactment and an illustration of how the events have happened, therefore, though not strictly but denoting the paradigm of showing, mimesis (Bordwell, 1997, p.346, Pavis, 1998, 101). Nevertheless, the main concern of this research is to locate the process which ensures the appropriation and approximation of mimesis with the totality of narration in Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man*. Understandably, working on some significant aspects like 'how has the story of this novel been composed?' or 'what kind of dialectical relationships have been materialized in the creative process of Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man*?' needed these narrative structures to be explained, through some modules and examples in detail. It is owing to this analytical desire, some narrative models have been included and exemplified in research.

A narrative analysis of a fictional text works at both levels, at micro as well as macro levels. Keeping the micro structures in view, the linguistic constituents which play a significant narrative role in forming the patterns of events and incidents of stories are examined. All epics, novels, ballads, elegies (Urdu *Marsiya* in narrative form) and short stories have certain features of mimesis which make the narrative partially or equally dramatic. Writers deliberate certain linguistic experimentation in their fictional works which, stylistically, result into literariness and foregrounding of their discourses. In this regard, the narrative utterance determines the essence of its message, its meaning. A narrative utterance is, grammatically, a syntactical arrangement of the lexical choices used for communication. In

creative writing these lexical choices are deliberated to cultivate an intended narrative affect. Merely the *spontaneity of emotions*^v, with reference to fiction with serious symbolic values, is another fallacy which the critical tradition after poststructuralist studies hardly accepts. A fictional analysis, seen through minimalistic lens, demonstrates that each and every linguistic unit possesses a narrative value and that value is determined through fictional experimentation. For instance, the sentence “The poor bird in the cage was crying loudly” carries two adverbs—adverbs of place and manner, and if we add the adverbial phrase “last night” in the beginning of this narrative utterance, the situatedness as well as the situation of the event will become more tragic and clear to the reader since its time has also been shown in the story. Now the narrative syntax will appear like, “Last night the poor lonely bird in the cage was crying loudly.” Primarily this sentence seems to be an integral part of any [symbolic and allegorical] story because the past continuous tense marks the continuity of the action—the crying of the lonely bird in the cage. The use of adjectives like ‘poor’ and ‘lonely’ and adverbs of time (last night), place (in the cage) and manner (loudly) are mimetically juxtaposed to enrich the intensity of a narrative situation. It means that along with the narration of the event, there is a sound description of the same event carried out through qualifiers and determinants like adjectives and adverbs; the adjectives qualifying a noun and the adverbs qualifying a verb, “crying.” Therefore, the sum total of these linguistic devices used in this single narrative utterance indicates its distinctively mimetic strain of showing that ontologically classifies the nature of the event in the story, on the one hand, and similarly contributes to the totality of its action and impression, on the other. The novel under consideration here, *Ice-Candy Man* copiously offers similar mimetic patterns in almost every chapter.

From the beginning of the story in *Ice-Candy Man* to its ultimate consequentiality, there are many lines and paragraphs which catalyse simultaneously mimetic and diegetic effects according to the required narrative magnitude in the novel^{vi}. The phrase narrative magnitude is not very familiar in contemporary literary criticism; however, it signifies the sum total of all the linguistic, structural and stylistic experimentations culminating in unity of impression. In fictional texts, its meanings are different from the liberal humanist criticism of poetry. Here, it incorporates all that materializes either *what happens* or *how something happens* in a

fictional text like a novel or short story; in other words, it conditions a harmonious amalgamation of telling (diegesis) and showing (mimesis). By approaching a popular phrase ‘chemical compound^{vii},’ and, similarly, by applying an esemplastic and re-productive power of imagination on different components of fiction (Warnock 1976), this well-coordinated and formative relationship between diegesis and mimesis in a fictional text can be easily cultivated. Already known to the student of literary criticism, Aristotle’s concept of mimesis entails an action in a dramatic text which is highly based on a conflict—a tug of war between two opposite groups or ideological power structures, whereas in a modern novel, mimetic elements mark their presence through descriptively embedded narrative techniques, like the art of characterization, description of cultural and ideological settings and showing a particular character in a particular situation. In modern fiction there is no quickness of actions in their narrative patterns; instead, there is much emphasis on the descriptive elements which ensure, linguistically and figuratively, how the events happen in fiction. Above all there is a dramatization of events in fictions too, and that is materialized through these stylistic components and certainly these forms of foregrounding make a novel like *Ice-Candy Man* different from popular narratives.

Lenny, in Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy Man* is a polio-ridden five-year-old Parsee girl with an unmitigated will to respond to her cultural context despite an unfortunate limp. Notwithstanding her physical disability, this narratively very promising young girl performs, with a comprehensively benevolent approach towards the characters around her, a narrative obligation assigned by the writer in her novel on the horrors of the 1947 partition of the Subcontinent into two ideologically separate countries, India and Pakistan. “What is more” Morten (2006) writes in his essay ‘Infusion Theory, Communalism and Postcolonial Futures: A reading of Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Cracking India*,’ “Lenny’s observation that her friends ‘shrink’ and ‘dwindle’ into symbols and communal identities, exposes the vulnerability of the people to the sovereign power of the state and its tacit sanctioning of ethnic and communal violence” (p. 91). Keeping in view such gruesome events and happenings of partition, Sidhwa has embellished Lenny’s discourse with distinctively appropriate syntactical variations and lexical choices and chains. These are untraditional linguistic choices and chains which empirically reflect how her empathetic observation, in the very

adverse circumstances of life, stylistically foregrounds her reflections and expressions exactly in accordance with the nature of the tragic events and happenings in 1947. However, in the flow of this narration, no less is the narrative value of the dialectical kinship between diegesis and mimesis embedded structurally in the novel. In the following paragraph we can see how, in *Ice-Candy Man*, the little protagonist Lenny describes her surroundings:

My world is compressed. Warris road, lined with rain gutters, lies between Queens Road and Jail Road: both wide clean, orderly streets at the affluent fringes of Lahore. Rounding the right-hand corner of Warris Road and continuing on Jail Road is the hushed Salvation Army Wall. Set high, at eight-foot intervals, are the wall's dingy eyes (p.1).

Seen through Barthes' (1975) narrative model, the above paragraph hardly shows any narrative association with *distributive functions* or with Chatman's *events*, rather it can be examined through *indicial functions* since the cultural settings of the little protagonist and a homo-autodiegetic narrator,^{viii} Lenny has described in detail. By showing her locale to her readers, she wants to make us realize that at the time of partition, she lived with her family in Lahore closer to Warris Road. She describes her home, her place and domestic space in these words:

Opposite it, down a bumpy, dusty, earth-packed drive, is the one-and-a-half-room abode of my grandmother. With her dwell her docile old husband and her slave sister. This is my haven. My refuge from the perplexing unrealities of my home on Warris Road (p.2).

The linguistic segments used in these paragraphs indicate Bapsi Sidhwa's concept of narrative realism. She has taken the reader to her lifelike domestic settings with a minute description of all that belongs to her. However, all the pauses in her seemingly broken syntax signify a dialectical relationship between two paradigms of realism: linguistic and social. We can see this relationship more pungently, through a realistic lens, when she takes the reader to show her younger brother with mythical aura. The politics of gendered identities run through the veins of this description as she unconsciously starts feeling belittled against the culturally privileged status of her brother:

My brother is aloof. Vital and alert, he inhabits another sphere of interests and private thoughts. No doubt he too is busy picking up knowledge, gaining insights. I am more curious of him than he of me. His curiosity comes later. I am skinny, wizened, sallow wiggly-haired, ugly. He is beautiful. He is the most beautiful thing, animal, person, building, river or mountain that I have seen. He is formed of gold mercury. He never stands still enough to see. He turns, ducks, moves, looks away, vanishes (p.22).

Barthes' concept of *indices* and Chatman's *existents* can be vividly observed here in the description of Lenny's little brother. Similarly, one of the central characters and Ayah Shanta's suiter and her violent hunter is Ice-Candy Man himself who proves to be shockingly and wickedly ideological in the plot of the novel. Left at the mercy of colonially endorsed class-based cultural settings, he keeps changing his positions as if he is a protean self—a floating signifier - till he receives the blood-curdling news of mutilated Muslim women bodies. As appropriate as necessary is the description of his character and his activities in the novel *Ice-Candy Man*.

On bitterly cold days when ice sales plummet, Ice-Candy Man transforms himself into a birdman. Burdened with enormous cages stuffed with sparrows and common green parrots, he parades the paths behind the Lahore Gymkhana lawns and outside the Punjab club (P.25).

All the places and cultural spaces mentioned in the above paragraph, first of all, demonstrate Sidhwa's art of narration loaded with appropriate predicates and adverbial phrases, which ultimately contribute to the overall magnitude of her art of narrating a story on delights and plights of diverse communities, first in British India and eventually in Pakistan. Secondly, they prove to be the *indices* and *informants* introduced by Barthes (1975) in his 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative,' through which the reader can understand the whereabouts of different characters in the novel.

Thirdly, the character Ice-Candy Man's ever-changing acquaintances reflect his mobile relationship with his social surroundings and cultural contexts. Fourthly, the reader realizes that there is some purpose behind the powerful introduction of the cultural settings which may host something consequential in the ending of the novel. Fifthly, and lastly, the little

narrator Lenny's observations of her surroundings including her perspective are also revealed to the reader.

There is another technique Sidhwa uses frequently and successfully in the narrative discourse of her novel *Ice-Candy Man*, that, by breaking the flow of the story for a comprehensive introduction of one of the characters who participate in an action or a dialogue, she foregrounds that participant or character with a distinctive discourse. For Example, the words in italics^{ix}, in the following paragraph characteristically paint the personality of the village Chaudhary:

The village *Chaudhary*—sitting by Imam Din and the mullah—says, 'I don't think it is because they can't...I think it is because the *Sarkar* doesn't want to!' *He is a large man, as big-bellied and broad-beamed as Imam Din, but at least twenty years younger. He has large, clear black eyes and an imposing cleft in his chin. As he talks, he slowly strokes his thick, up twirled moustache: without which no village headman can look like a Chaudhary.* 'But all that is in the cities,' he continues, as if he has considered the issue for some time. 'It won't affect our lives' (p. 54).

Without italics, the lines re-connect to the natural but narrative flow—diegesis of the fiction. The words in italics reflect Sidhwa's lifelike art of characterization through which she shows the fictional beings accurately according to their religion, sects, classes and other cultural settings. This diegetic-mimetic practice, dialectically materializing the fictional magnitude of *Ice-Candy Man*, keeps occurring throughout its narrative discourse. Right after the realistic description of village Chaudhary, the narrative has been reconnected to the main plot where the common people, in an ideologically divided community, are seen to be worried about the imminent danger of losing age-old cultural relationships, and consequently becoming deadly enemies in their own village. The paragraph, as a whole, reflects this frustration cartographically destined by the elite politics of the British Raj for the local helpless Punjabi folk.

Sidhwa makes Lenny jump into every situation in her locate and it is owing to her detailed observation that Lenny reflects her experiences by juxtaposing mimetic and diegetic patterns in her story. For, instance, there is serious brawl between a Punjabi Sikh character and a British Inspector

General Mr. Rogers on the issues of freedom and independence, and eventually, they exchange harsh words about each other's political contexts. Reacting against Inspector General's remarks about a Sikh political party—"The Akali's are a bloody bunch of murdering fanatics," Mr. Singh becomes violent. How Mr. Singh looks and behaves in his utter rage becomes the focus of the narrator of the story. Lenny captures Mr. Singh's movements and expressions with a microscopic observation: "*Mr. Singh's rhythmically knocking knees grow perfectly still. In one quick movement, drawing his legs to his chair, almost knocking it over, he stands up*" (p. 61). A judiciously creative use of predicates, adverbs and verbs in above lines, in italics, reflects how Mr. Singh's character has been idiosyncratically delineated in this intensely critical situation. This is how skilled fiction writers frequently make use of these linguistic components to cultivate simultaneity of narratives. Like adverbs of time, place, manner and frequency, the purposeful use of adjectives or predicates also implies the narratively showing techniques time and again channelized in literary fictions. These devices have been tremendously helpful for designing the narratively significant features of a character particularly through the art of characterization. Owing to her creative faculty, Sidhwa can halt any action at any stage of her story to deliberate the psychological effects of events on the nerves of other characters, particularly Lenny. For instance, in the following paragraph, while telling the story she is also describing the horrifying moments in a language that accurately projects the horrors of partition, we can observe how Sidhwa has appropriated her language in accordance with the tragic moments of 1947:

Then, they are roaring and charging up our drive, wheels creaking, hooves clattering as the whipped horses stretch their scabby necks and knotted hocks to haul the load for the short gallop. Up the drive come the charioteers, feet planted firmly in shallow carts, in singlets and clinging linen lungis, shoulders gleaming in the bright sun. Calculating men, whose ideals and passions have cooled to ice (p. 174).

In the midst of such gruesome moments, Lenny shows her mother instinctively protecting her children. As a Parsee woman, she is not much concerned about the ideological debates echoing in the streets of Lahore; rather she is horrified for having seen her defenceless cubs at the mercy of adverse circumstances, even in their own home. Lenny paints her mother

and the novelist foregrounds her instinctive expressions thoroughly at the peak of maddening pandemonium:

Flanked by her cubs, her hands resting on our heads, she is the noble embodiment of theatrical motherhood. Undaunted. Endearing. Her cut-crystal lips set in a defiant pucker beneath her tinted glasses and her cropped waved hair (p. 175).

It is in this episode that the sagacious narrator Lenny has dramatically re-presented the gristly events to show the dreadful fate of the helpless Hindu Ayah Shanta. She is hunted down by an infuriated group of (ideologically) uncontrolled men who drag her to their desired locations. There is a painfully telling-showing narrative relationship between the subject and the object of this atrocity experienced by the Indian multitude at the mercy of homicidal circumstances. This act of dragging a beautiful Hindu girl of eighteen would have been a revengefully successful moment in the lives of the victorious youth but equally painful for the narrator who appropriates her syntax with a heinous act of dragging happening before her eyes. The sentences in italics mark the mimetic presence of Sidhwa's narrative discourse; it demonstrates, syntactically, how the horrifying act of dragging occurs:

They drag ayah out. They drag her by her arms stretched taut, and her bare feet—that want to move backwards—are forced forward instead. Her lips are drawn away from her teeth, and the resisting curve of her throat opens her mouth like the dead child's screamless mouth. Her violet sari slips off her shoulder, and her breasts strain at her sari-blouse stretching the cloth so that the white stitching at the seams shows. A sleeve tears under her arm (p.178).

The narrative does not stop here, as the miserable condition of Shanta, has been furthered though Lenny's observation^x. However, staying helplessly true in her life causes an irreparable setback for Shanta and deep-etching pricks of conscience for the narrator, Lenny. It is on account of this catastrophic revelation of truth, the little narrator, Lenny had to accept:

I am the monkey-man's performing monkey, the trained circus elephant, the snake-man's charmed cobra, an animal with conditioned reflexes that cannot lie (p.178).

Metaphorically Lenny's internal defeat has been displayed through her own traumatically cryptic expression. As a matter of child psychology, the question of the whereabouts of Shanta was too overtaxing for the little narrator trained to trust her relationships. It is owing to her trust of the Ice-Candy Man; Lenny opens her mouth despite the insistence of her mother not to reveal the truth, she is beguiled by the overwhelming supplications made by one who is apparently honest in his words—the Ice-Candy Man, but eventually she realizes she has been beseechingly been deluded by him to hunt her Ayah down. Obviously an ever-changing character has he been throughout his life and according to Cilano (2013), "he inhabits at least five different identities—ice-candy seller, birdman, Sufi mystic, poet and fakir," he was craftily qualified for changing his position as firmly as possible. Sidhwa is showing how at this stage of nightmarish life, the guilt-ridden Lenny felt herself agonizingly metamorphosing into 'an animal with conditioned reflexes that cannot lie' (P.178). Amongst the violent lies and amidst the overriding culture of false consciousness in British Raj, Lenny could not afford to be associated with power of lies; despite her weak legs, she had instead to be firm-footed in the moments of trials and tribulations. Dialectically, she has revealed her submissive-to-the-truth inner self in two lines. In the following lines in italics the only telling that happens to appear is 'The last thing I noticed was Ayah,' the rest of the syntactical arrangements correspond to the showing of Ayah Shanta's miserable condition as she was dragged to her fatally fateful destiny.

The last thing I noticed was Ayah, her mouth slack and piteously gaping, her dishevelled hair flying into her kidnappers' faces, staring at us as if she wanted to leave behind her wide-open and terrified eyes (p.179).

In this way, Sidhwa fictionalizes the tragic events in the time of partition but through linguistic and syntactical realism. She appropriates the language of her fiction (according) to the needs of her narrator's reflections on some particular event. This syntactical pattern holds true for another episode, when Lenny hears about migrated people from PirPindo, she runs towards the house which Ranna has reached after countless sufferings. This 'running for Ranna' has been sensationalized by Sidhwa through an appropriate combination of narrative segments. Reaching there, Lenny comes across:

A small boy, so painfully thin that his knees and elbows appear swollen, is squatting a few feet away concentrating on striking a

marble lying in a notch in the dust. He is wearing ragged, drawstring shorts of thin cotton and the dirty cord tying them in gathers round his waist trails in the mud. His aim scores, *and he turns to look at me*. His face is patchwork of brown and black skin; a wizened blemish. *He starts to get up*, showing his teeth in a crooked smile; and with a shock *I recognise Ranna*. His limbs are slack and brittle...(p.189).

Except a few diegetic sentences in italics, the entire paragraph demonstrates how Lenny's friend Ranna looks after his arrival from PirPindo to Lahore in servant quarters. It was the most appropriate introduction to a character that has succeeded in making his way to Lahore after going through an endless chain of suffering. For narrative magnitude, Sidhwa had to strike a narrative equilibrium between longitudinal (diegetic) and latitudinal (mimetic) patterns in her fiction, and she appears to have mastered her creative skills through her own philosophy of creative fiction. Moreover, the diversity of characters in her fiction makes her narrative attitude dialectically democratic for there is a vivid diversity of perspectives on the issue of partition. Sidhwa has not only narrated the consequential effects of cartographic politics in India but also shown them through dialogues, actions and events. The novel as whole is understandably a narration but, the mimetic aspects of the fiction make it psychologically more impactful for there is higher truth, larger than life presented artistically in the novel *Ice-Candy Man*.

3. Conclusion

Observing a categorical line of demarcation between poetics and politics of fictional texts, the Russian formalists, French structuralists, semioticians and narratologists have shown their analytical interest in the forms, structures, patterns, linguistic constituents, stylistic units and formative principles of narratives for studies that are deeply rooted and more scientific. The models they have introduced in literary, critical and cultural studies are equally productive in analysing the fictional texts from South Asian. Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *Ice-Candy Man* has been repeatedly seen through political and ideological lenses. However there is still an attractive textual gap which invites writers and critics for productive debates and discussions on the narrative structure of the novel. Similarly, much has already been said on the themes and cultural issues, but the intrinsic value

of lexical choices and chains in the syntactical patterns of the novel is still under question in contemporary discussions. What the novel says is obviously clear to all interested in South Asian fiction in English but how it has been syntactically narrated is yet to be explored. A deep interest in the dynamics of language or linguistic units in the narrative structures of Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* motivated me to carry out this research. In addition to that, what inspired me in its fictional narrative was the binary but a dialectical relationship between mimetic and diegetic patterns that I have examined through contemporary narratological debates. In my observation, Sidhwa, while telling stories, is deeply interested in bringing her characters and settings into the discursive limelight. This kind of analysis also helps us understand the dialogical nature of the creative imagination of fiction writers like Sidhwa who are interested in painting the happenings diegetically as well as mimetically. Bapsi Sidhwa must be appreciated for persistently entwining herself with poetics of her narratives despite the tragic nature of the events she has based her fiction on. She never loses her narrative contact with aesthetic worth through the literariness she accomplished in *Ice-Candy Man*.

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Endnotes

ⁱ It means that a narrative analysis of any fictional text is fundamentally concerned with its form more than its content, but at the same time it implies that the form and content of a literary text are as concomitant to each other as a word and its meaning. The purpose behind using Shakespearean “Method in Madness” signifies this interdependent relationship between the structural pattern of madness and its meaning.

ⁱⁱ This novel was originally published as *Ice-Candy Man* in England later on it was published with a different title *Cracking India* in US and India.

ⁱⁱⁱ The term realism appears to be controversial and convincingly relative in contemporary criticism. However the phrase ‘realist novel’ is still used for the fiction written on some historical facts. Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy Man* is not a piece of historical fiction; rather it is fictionalized discourse of pre and post partition events.

^{iv} https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Chatmans-diagram-of-narrative-cited-from-chatman-1978-p-26_fig1_320172355/download.

^v It refers to the Romantic poet Wordsworth’s concept of creative writing.

^{vi} The uncommonly used phrase “narrative magnitude” in contemporary literary criticism is not much different from Aristotle’s concept of action-centred magnitude discussed in his *Poetics*. Aristotle’s concept of magnitude implies a quantitative as well as qualitative proportionality in action. It is basically an actantial proportionality which culminates in dramatic magnitude in a tragedy.

^{vii} A popular phrase in romantic criticism associated with Coleridge’s theory of creative imagination. It is different from the phrase ‘mechanical mixture,’ which means that the ingredients of the composition retain their individual properties whereas in the chemical compound these compository elements or distinct ingredients lose their individual properties to make a unifying whole or an organic unity. Fictional imagination also works in a similar way as it fuses not only the distinct components together but also creates a harmonious blend of diegesis and mimesis to present a fictional reality in a novel.

^{viii} The term narratologically implies that the narrator is not a silent or passive observer of the events; rather he/she performs an important role in the story.

^{ix} These words or lines have been italicized not by the writer Bapsi Sidhwa in *Ice-Candy Man* but by the researcher to show the difference between narration and description for the sake of research.

^x The men drag her in grotesque strides to the cart and their harsh hands, supporting her with careless intimacy, lift her into it. Four men stand pressed against her, propping her body upright, their lips stretched in triumphant grimaces (P.178).