

## **Abstract**

This dissertation attempts to conduct a case-oriented comparative analysis of the historiography and literature of political partition in both the Indian Subcontinent and Palestine. Despite the clear dissimilarities between the partition in both countries in terms of their historical contexts, size, and overtness of the conflict, a comparison between both of them would help in understanding and elucidating the consequences of partition on the everyday man. To achieve this aim, the dissertation adopts an interdisciplinary approach where the first chapter examines the historiography of partition in both geographic localities by relying on the tools of new historicism. The second chapter investigates the possibility of finding common leitmotifs and genres in partition literature in order to reach a model through which we can read partition literatures in a comparative manner. Finally, chapter three uses critical cartography and narrative mapping as a means to examine the different depictions of map-making in partition literature. Thus, the dissertation falls into an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion.

To achieve this aim, this dissertation examines sections of the following works: *Train to Pakistan* (1956) by Khushwant Singh; *The Heart Divided* (1957) by Mumtaz Shah Nawaz; *Cracking India* (1991) by

Bapsi Sidhwa; these works depict the partition of the Indian Subcontinent.

'*A'ida* Hayfa or *Returning to Haifa* (1969) by

<http://lib.aucegypt.edu/search~S2?/aKanaf%7bu0101%7dn%7bu012B%7d%2C+Ghass%7bu0101%7dn./akanafani+ghassan/-3,-1,0,B/browse>Ghassan

Kanafani, *Bab el-Shams* or *Gate of the Sun* (1998) by Elias Khoury and al-

Tantourya or *The Woman from Tantoura* [2010] by Radwa Ashour are the

main body of literature used to analyse Palestine's partition i.e. *Nakba*.

**Keywords:** *Partition, Nakba, common genres, critical cartography and, narrative mapping*

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Thank you

## **Chapter One**

### **Partition: Old History, New Historiography**

“All forms of knowledge about human history are forms of engagement in it”

- Edward Said, “The Burden of Interpretation and the Question of Palestine” (29)

## **Chapter Two**

### **Common Leitmotifs and Genres in Partition Literature**

Narrative . . . [can be] considered a solution to a problem of general human concern . . . the problem of fashioning human experience into a form assimilable to structures of meaning that are generally human rather than culture-specific (Hayden White, *Content of Form* 1)

## Chapter Three

### Cartography and Narrative-map in Partition Literature

Maps are neither mirrors of nature nor neutral transmitters of universal truths. They are narratives with a purpose, stories with an agenda. They contain silences as well as articulations, secrets as well as knowledge, lies as well as truth. They are biased, partial, and selective. (John Short 24)

In the history of colonial invasion, maps are always first drawn by the victors, since maps are instruments of conquest. Geography is therefore the art of war but can also be the art of resistance if there is a counter-map and a counter strategy. (Edward Said, *Peace and its Discontents* 27)

## **Conclusion**

## **Works Cited**



## Notes

## **Introduction**

On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 the world awoke to the heart-aching photos of the young Ilan Kurdi, a Syrian refugee toddler who was found dead on the shores of the Greek island of Kos. His body was washed ashore when the inflatable boat that carried him, his parents, and his elder brother, capsized. The Kurdis escaped to Turkey in fear of the escalating violence in Syria; then they fled to Greece where they hoped for a better life. Kurdi's half buried face in the sand and his small body, dressed in a red T-shirt and dark blue shorts, forced the international community to respond to the escalating Syrian refugee crisis that had been overlooked by many, including some of the defendants of human rights.

Kurdi's story stands as a poignant reminder of the continuing refugee crises around the world and not only the Syrian one. His photos, thus, symbolize the continuing human suffering of victims of internal conflicts and civil wars. The photos were not less shocking than those of the Indian and Pakistani refugees in 1947-8 packed onto the ghost trains; an image that is engraved in the hearts and minds of the Subcontinent's citizens. Kurdi's photos are also reminiscent of those of the Palestinian refugees who were expelled from their land in long caravans and their search for a haven in the neighbouring countries away from the destruction, rape, and the killings by the Zionists. Unfortunately, some of

those Palestinians- already in refugee status,were forced again to leave their refugee camps in Syria because of the brutality of the war there.Indeed, Kurdi is a recurring symbol of Syrian, Palestinian, Pakistani, Indian, Sudanese citizens who turn a substantial part of the world into a kind of refugeedom.

However, Kurdi's photos do not only bring to mind recollections of similar forms of human sufferings: what was exasperating was the fact that Kurdi, as well as many others, will be treated as a number in the statistics about Syrian refugees since 2011, much like the 750,000 Palestinians who were forced to leave their homes in 1948, or the estimated one million Indians and Pakistanis who lost their lives in the communal fights and killings in the wake of the Subcontinent's partition. Such realization was and is still morally disturbing. Therefore, I felt the necessity for an analysis that investigates the personal stories of refugees like Kurdi, Palestinians, Indians, and Pakistanis rather than seeing them collectively. This realization was the motivation behind this research; so, in addition to reading the collective history of refugees in historical records, I decided to read, analyse, and evaluate literature about the partition of the Indian Subcontinent and Palestine as two different, yet relevant, partitions that happened in the same year i.e. 1947. Moreover, I

examine the cartographic elements in partition literature to glean the differences and similarities in the cases of the Subcontinent and Palestine.

To elaborate, the year 1947 in history marks some severe changes that altered the cartography, demography, and political conditions of both the Indian Subcontinent and Palestine. On August 14, 1947, the Indian Subcontinent, commonly called India, witnessed its division into two independent states, namely, the Dominion of Pakistan (later the Islamic Republic of Pakistan) and The Union of India (later the Republic of India). In the same year and exactly on November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) passed on Resolution 181 *recommending* the termination of the British Mandate over Palestine and the partition of the land between the Jews and the Palestinians. This resulted in the gradual withdrawal of the British Armed Forces, partitioning the land between Arabs and Jewish settlers (on paper); thus, paving the way for the official formation of the Jewish State of Israel, which existed *de facto* in May 1948 and the subsequent exodus of 750,000 Palestinian turning them into refugees in the neighbouring countries.

Strictly speaking, Palestine's partition never materialized since the UN Partition Resolution was never put into practice. The years of

negotiations to implement the ‘two-state’ solution seek to officially enforce the 1947 Partition Resolution. In his view, Salah D. Hassan indicates that the idea of partition is cardinal to two main vital narratives. Firstly, the Palestinian “partition-to-occupation” narrative in which the decision to divide historic Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab one is synonymous with the *Nakba*. The other narrative is of “a doomed peace” which gives legitimacy to partition (41). In that case, the idea of partition is even more central and relevant to Palestine than the Subcontinent where the latter is seen as a finished partition. It is in place to mention the Syrian intellectual Constantin Zureiq is the one who used the word ‘*Nakba*’ i.e. disaster to describe Palestine’s partition 1947-1948 in his book *Ma’na al-Nakba (The Meaning of the Disaster)* (1948).

Though some like Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal, and Rashid Khalidi use the word *al-Nakba* to refer to the UN Partition Resolution and the Palestinian exodus, more comprehensive definitions are present. For example, Joseph Farag offers a definition that is not time-bound, but one that encompasses both the event and its social as well as political repercussions. Farag assesses: “The *Nakba* ultimately refers to Palestinians’ loss of their homeland, their decimation as a cohesive and contiguous community, and the dispersal of their overwhelming majority

into an exile which has now lasted nearly seven decades” (18). In that sense, *Nakba* is not simply a historical moment or event, but it is a process of international denial: denial of the right to the land, the right to self-determination and a denial to the lives and even the very existence of the Palestinians. Markedly, the word ‘*Nakba*’ is used as it is without a substitution in other languages. If a translation is given, such as a catastrophe or a disaster, the translation never substitutes the word since there is no lexicon in other languages that can bear the significance of the word *Nakba* with all its history, pain, struggle and the physical as well as the psychological trauma that befell the many generations of Palestinians. Thus, this dissertation will refer to Palestine’s partition as *Nakba* in accordance with the sum of scholarly work that tackles the question of Palestine.

If we turn now to the background of the political changes that occurred in the 1940s and accelerated the decision-making process of partition, it becomes evident that the Subcontinent and Palestine were not the only countries that witnessed parallel changes. Yasmin Khan notes that the 1940s were predominantly characterized by refugees and the change in political structures around the world; in the wake of WWII and after its end many people were displaced that it seemed that no one was