



**Ain Shams University**  
**Faculty of Arts**  
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**Cartographies of Remembrance: The Partition of India  
and Palestine in Selected Novels**

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Thank you

## **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'idila 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-

Tantoryya 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*

## **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**

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## 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