

**Borders and Partitions
in South Asia**

**Editor
Jayita Sengupta**



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The book is an anthology of creative and critical responses to the many partitions of India within and across borders. By widening and reframing the question of partition in the subcontinent from one event in 1947 to a larger series of partitions, the book presents a deeper perspective on partition as a concept in understanding South Asia, and its implications on survivors, victims and others. The imagery of the barbed wire in the title is used precisely to confront the jaggedness of experiencing and surviving partition that still haunts the national, literary, religious and political matrices of India.

The volume is a compilation of short stories, poems, articles, news reports and memoirs, with each contributor bringing forth their perception of partition and its effects on their life and identity. The many narratives amplify the human cost of partitions, examining the complexities of a bruised nation at the social, psychological and religious levels of consciousness.

The book will appeal to anyone interested in literary studies, history, politics, sociology, cultural studies, and comparative literature.

Jayita Sengupta is Reader and Head of the Department of English, South Calcutta Girls' College, University of Calcutta; and a member of the guest faculty, postgraduate courses, Lady Brabourne College, Kolkata.

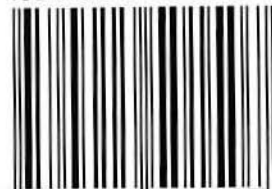
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BARBED WIRE
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Glossary

<i>Abbu</i>	father
<i>alpana</i>	decorative designs on the floors or walls of a house or temple with liquefied pigment of rice powder or zinc oxide
<i>basti</i>	shanty
<i>Beji</i>	loving address to the grandmother
<i>Bhabiji</i>	sister-in-law
<i>bhog</i>	food offering to a deity in Hindu custom
<i>bidis</i>	small hand-rolled cigarettes made in India
<i>chaprassi</i>	office servant, attendant or messenger
<i>chullah</i>	to make fire in an oven
<i>desh</i>	hometown
<i>Devi</i>	goddess
<i>dhak</i>	the drums used during Puja celebrations
<i>dhok</i>	mud house
<i>dhoop</i>	incense stick
<i>Draupadi</i>	A character in Mahabharata; wife of the Pandavas
<i>Durgabari</i>	Durga temple
<i>ghat</i>	a quay/moorage
<i>Gurupurubs</i>	Guru Nanak's or Guru Govind Singh's birthday celebrations in Punjab
<i>haveli</i>	private mansion
<i>hijal</i>	the Indian oak
<i>Indraprastha</i>	Indra's kingdom in Hindu mythology
<i>Ishwar Briti</i>	the tax levied by the feudal landlords on their farmers which were used for constructing Hindu shrines and became a preferred target of Muslim iconoclasts in the twentieth-century Bengal
<i>tehsildar</i>	land revenue functionary in northern India
<i>tilak</i>	a sectarian mark painted or impressed on the forehead
<i>Kali</i>	a Hindu Mother goddess signifying the deconstructive forces in Nature

<i>karsevaks</i>	someone who offers voluntary services for a religious cause
<i>kavi darbar</i>	public poetry recital
<i>kirpan</i>	the ceremonial sword or dagger carried by the Sikhs
<i>Lakshmibilash</i>	a particular variety of the rice grain
<i>mama</i>	maternal uncle
<i>mandir</i>	temple
<i>mashi</i>	aunt (mother's sister)
<i>mayurpankshi</i>	a peacock-shaped boat
<i>miyan</i>	friend
<i>mohalla</i>	neighbourhood
<i>mehfils</i>	gathering or a congregation
<i>nani</i>	maternal grandmother
<i>natmandir</i>	a hall within or in front of a temple for devotional dancing and musical performances
<i>Panditmoshai</i>	teacher in a rural school
<i>pathshala</i>	a rural primary school
<i>Phuphi</i>	aunt (father's sister)
<i>prasad</i>	to partake of the food offering to a deity in the Hindu custom
<i>pukur</i>	pond
<i>thana</i>	a station or outpost
<i>tongawallah</i>	someone who 'drives' the horse-ridden cart
<i>watan</i>	homeland/hometown
<i>yudhistir</i>	the eldest brother of the Pandavas in Hindu mythology

Preface

This anthology includes historical reformulations of the experience of the Partition of India in 1947 and its repercussions in the present times. Memory is a very complex phenomenon. It reaches out to dimensions beyond historians' archives and poses ethical choices and challenges in a manner that invites constant re-visioning and retelling, not only to understand the past but how that past has shaped the experiential reality of the present. As any work of research is triggered off or incited by some personal choice or decision, this book had its inception in my paternal grandmother's personal accounts of Partition stories to me, when I was just a child. Her rejection of faith in Hindu gods and goddesses, after the family had crossed the border in the wake of the impending holocaust, had often intrigued me as a child. Moreover, there was no Hindu rage against the Muslims in her, only a sense of an irreparable loss and agony. Her urgency to narrate her past, her voice echoing her dumb sorrow and anguish, kept drumming in my brain, long after she passed away, to haunt me in my idle hours and sometimes even interceded my dreams.

As Indians of the post-Partition generation, we live in a strange historical and political space. When borders were drawn on religious lines in 1947, the country had gone through a bloody amputation, which created an irrevocable scab in the history of South Asia. Like Somnath Hore's engravings of wounds on white hand-made paper, the historical wound has been passed on to the following generations imperceptibly and has affected the psychic dimension of India and the new nations: Pakistan and Bangladesh. This has further complicated the Hindu-Muslim relationships within and across borders in such a manner that love is often inseparable from hatred, and trust from distrust. Yet, the history and culture of the two communities are so inextricably related that it is not surprising that through the realm of music and scholarship, these religious differences have often been transcended. Some of the renowned Hindustani classical musicians have been from the Muslim community. Ustad Alauddin Khan, for

example, was a devout Muslim and yet he worshipped the Hindu goddess, *Kali*. His gesture of the acceptance of the two cultures was to possibly move beyond the patriarchal barriers in order to suggest that music is divine. Similarly, we have several Hindu scholars in India who have considerable expertise in Urdu literature and culture. Moreover, creative responses to the Hindu-Muslim relationship are to appeal to the instinctual understanding of human behaviour. Such individual efforts at reconciliation through human understanding however, are often undone by political manipulations, government policies and measures. So blood is shed over the Babri Masjid and Ramjanambhumi issue. Ironically, if the past had reconciled the two cultures together in one place, the memory of the Partition of 1947 hinders that reconciliation. The continuous malaise of infiltration of Bangladeshi Muslims across the Eastern border, unsettling the economic and social fabric of the country, has given impetus to the ULFA activists in Assam. The debacle over Kashmir since Partition has ruined the peace of the valley. Instead of learning lessons from the pain and anguish of 1947, the politicians have constantly nurtured the scab and probed it further to allow the cancer to spread all over the nation and across the borders.

Very recently, on my way home from college, a taxi driver, one Hemant Patnaik, told me a strange personal story. According to his narrative, his father had worked as a driver to Mujibur Rahman and was a member of the Awami League. He had died in an encounter with the Pakistani army in 1971. The Patnaiks, originally hailing from Orissa, were settled for four generations in Narayangunj and had dabbled in all sorts of business and cultivation, which included the export of *segun* variety of wood and best quality rice, and smuggling of various items across the border. They were pretty well off and Hemant's father had willingly donated some two lakhs of rupees to the League in the wake of the war in 1971. But as Hemant informed me, the same League, for which his father had sacrificed his life, had spurned the family after Bangladesh was formed, as they were Hindus or '*neres*'. Some Awami League members had set their house and fields on fire. Absolutely devastated, the family had crossed the border in 1975 and had taken refuge in Rahara Ramakrishna Mission in West Bengal. Hemant's son later joined the Indian army and fought at Kargil. He has survived three bullets in his head and

now is mentally maimed. A seventy-four year old Hemant, the only earning member of the family, wiped his tears with the back of his hand as the taxi reached my destination. It is not unlikely that there are many such Hemants, scattered all over Kolkata and other metro cities in India, who have a similar story to tell, which provides us with stray information which would be otherwise ignored by the grand narratives of history. For example, I did not know that the much-hailed Mujibur Rahman was a fundamentalist — a Hindu-hater. I did not know that, born into a privileged Muslim family, he had the habit of insulting the Brahmin *pandits* of the *pathshala* even as a young boy. Such details, gathered from Hemant's narrative, surely incite the mind to probe beyond the existing meta-narratives of history and look for authenticity from other supporting resources or personal accounts.

Urvashi Butalia had once been reproachful at a seminar held in New Delhi, in August 1994 that the human history of Partition had a lesser status than political history. However, her own research on oral narratives and several other edited volumes by scholars like Alok Bhalla, Sukrita Paul Kumar, Jasbir Jain, Tarun K. Saint and Ravi Kumar and Partition fiction by writers in Eastern and North-western India, have only illuminated the fact that the 'underside' of history is as significant as the grand narratives. Creative writing or literature has the power to stir the imagination of the post-Partition generation in such a way that it asks for a constant validation of the present. It is possibly this realization, which has made a historian like Mushirul Hasan to move away from the mere 'meta narratives of nationalism and communalism', and to take into account the 'voice of the silent majority' or 'the feelings and interests of the ordinary folks' in his later research.

This book, too, contains some of the various creative and critical responses to partition(s) within and across borders. It has been my endeavour to locate these narratives in the context of the continuous history of abject relationship between Hindus and Muslims and Hindustan and 'Pakistans' since 1947. The introduction, together with the critical articles and translations in this volume I hope, will offer new avenues of re-thinking Partition, not as a one-time event but as a metaphor of difference, marking off borders, both at the geo-political and personal planes, between the two religious communities.

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Introduction

Jayita Sengupta



'For God's sake stop playing cheap games with history!' Mountbatten answered agitatedly.

'Mountbatten Sahib, real history is not written by the imperialist powers', was Kabir's stinging retort. 'It is which has come to be engraved down the years on the souls of oppressed nations. Our history courses down the centuries like mighty rivers. Yours flows like canals . . . canals you have dug with spades of distorted logic and self interest. So, don't you sermonize to us about history. You have written your history and we have lived it!' (Kamaleshwar 2006: 286)

India's Partition of 1947 is now three generations old. Sixty years have gone by, yet the holocaust which accompanied the Indian Independence continues to haunt the psyche of the nation. The burden of the historical and geographical disjunction has not lessened with the passage of time; rather it has gathered momentum with new geo-political complications. Though the map of India was redrawn, the borders, as barbed wires, continue to wound the Indian consciousness. Far from settling disputes or revealing any signs of healing, the new borders have created a divide within and outside the country, which has developed into a psychic sore born of repulsion as well as attraction. The Partition of India beginning with the Partition of Bengal in 1905 is a continuous saga of abjections, which has turned cancerous, spreading all over the body of the nation and the new nations born from it. The official history of South Asia records the events, the socio-economic and political causes which have led India, Pakistan and Bangladesh to share such a painfully entangled relationship. 'Peace', in this context is a word riddled with contradictions. India-Pakistan 'Peace Talks' since 1947, have only led to dialectics

of difference often resulting in border skirmishes, wars and more recently terrorism.

Genuine historicity, as Linda Hutcheon observes, 'openly acknowledges its own discursive contingent identity'. 'It teaches and enacts the recognition of the fact that the social, historical and existential "reality" of the past is *discursive* reality' (Hutcheon 1988: 24). When the past is inextricably incipient in the existential present and looks ahead into a more complex future, the discursive nature of such reality is inexhaustible and inexplicably contradictory. This possibly explains the rich treasury of Partition narratives and volumes of research in this area. It has not been possible to adequately and sufficiently historicize Partition, as the disjunction in 1947 has dug its bloody tentacles deep into the present and future history. This is why the process of continuous 're-membering' or 'projective past'¹ is important (Bhaba 1994). It empowers the post-Partition generation to listen and re-tell difficult stories and to have a meaningful existence, individual as well as collective. As Jasbir Jain in her essay in this book has analyzed, narratives as artistic representations never really answer or attempt to answer what actually happened but what that happening did to us, or continues to do to us as individuals, or members of a community, or as a nation. The narratives of post-Partition realities continue to be haunted by feelings of abjection in their exchanges across and within the geo-political borders.² As forms of artistic representation of the holocaust and its aftermath, short stories, novels, poems, paintings, films, etc., attempt to articulate the emotional and the psychological nexus of the collective/individual anguish. In sum, they create a 'monumental history' through the 'revolutionary language'³ of semiotics, where sounds, images and language surpass the speech to render 'unspeakable thoughts, unspoken' (Morrison 1987) through a realm of significations.⁴

Bearing the burden of this 'semiotic history' which many of our families have passed on to us and, in our attempt to understand the 'neurosis', which our parents and theirs have never been able to come to terms with, we are continuously going through the process of re-membering and experiencing a 'belatedness'.⁵ Even as post-post midnight's generation of men and women, we find borders to be ever-elusive, ever-overlapping, ever-confusing — where love is mingled with hatred and understanding

with misunderstanding.⁶ Hence the dialectics of Partition, which began as early as 1905 and resulted in the amputation of India in 1947, haunts the cultural, religious and political memory of the collective unconscious of the mother nation and the new nations. As the inheritors of the Partition reality we are like Lenny — the Parsee child-protagonist of the film, *Earth*, based on Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* (1989) — who rips apart her favourite doll to feel the acute anguish and pain that followed such amputation. Lenny, as an insider and outsider to the historical disjunction, witnessed the 1947 Partition; we witness the routine abjection between the two cultural communities within and across borders. All our attempts to seam up the neurosis are like the vain efforts of Lenny's ayah to seam up the doll that Lenny tears apart. The idea of this book is to record and contextualize creative as well as critical responses to this experiential reality of suffering at the time of the 1947 Partition and its continuous impact on our lives in contemporary history. The gruesome reality of the 1947 Partition has been recorded in diaries, memoirs, literary and visual representations as well as historical and official documentations. It has not been an easy task for any writer to map out the complex nature and range of the ruptured consciousness of a nation split into three, across borders and suffering multiple fragmentations within. If the division of India and Pakistan had been on religious lines, it has sparked off further divisions based on ethnicity, language, caste, class, etc. 'Pakistan' in contemporary history has become a metaphor of difference. Even at the time of conception, 'Pakistan', as Yasmin Khan, (2007: 67) points out, 'meant myriad things to different people. The call for Pakistan could be equated with all manner of ambiguous hopes and dreams.' Conversely, it was feared that 'allowing Pakistan to be created was akin to dismantling the promise of a free India altogether, and risked opening the floodgates to further national disintegration and secession movements' (ibid.). Yasmin Khan quotes Saumya Gupta aptly to suggest that 'giving in to Pakistan's demand would only lead to endless partitions' (ibid.). Gupta's angst has been a prophesy of sorts artistically emulated in the works of writers like Kamalleshwar in *Kitne Pakistan* (2006).

Though Tarun K. Saint (2010:11–17) reflects that there has been a shift in Partition historiography away from the archival materials relating to the transfer of power and the dialectics of

Partition, to the trauma of the suffering itself in recent times, he also points out the importance of Gyanendra Pandey's suggestion to reconsider the *concepts and ideas* which formulated Partition(s).⁷ It is not possible to discuss at length the old and the new historiography of Partition in the context of this work, but certain political thoughts and proliferation of ideas on the marking and remarking of borders, could be briefly reviewed for a proper understanding of the 'underside' of history or the contemporary historiography of Partition, dealing with human suffering and the fragmented consciousness of the nation today.

The Concept of the Nation and Dialectics of Partition(s): A Very Brief Overview

Benedict Anderson has argued that the historical experience of nationalism in western Europe, in all Americas, and in Russia, had supplied for all subsequent nationalisms, a set of modular forms from which nationalist elites in Asia and Africa had chosen the one that suited their native conditions (P. Chatterjee 1994: 5). But the feelings and sentiments associated with this notion or the western modular forms were not quite new and could be traced back to antiquity. Hemchandra Raychaudhuri's theory of the *Jambudwipa* and *Chakravarti-Kshetra* (Ray Chaudhuri 1950: 185) may have been considered controversial and inviable by certain historians, but it could be said that despite the plethora of pluralisms, Indians in pre-colonial phase of history were not deprived of a sense of attachment to their territory, culture, language or region which C. A. Bayly has termed as 'traditional patriotism'. (Bandyopadhyay 2004: 206). R. K. Ray (2003: 5) too, supports this view and comments that these feelings were also nurtured in the Mughal period, and this 'traditional patriotism' had actually manifested itself in the sporadic outbursts against the East India Company administration, which culminated in the Revolt of 1857. The rise of new intelligentsia and the emergence of modern politics was a post-1857 phenomenon. H. G. Gelber subscribes to the Fanonian concepts of 'imitation', 'resistance' and 'appropriation', (Fanon 1952), as he writes that the assertive nationalism between roughly 1930s and 1960s was a movement in Western political idioms and forms but against the alien rule. (2001: 150–51). Partha Chatterjee too analyzes that the growth

of nationalism in India cannot be attributed in its entirety to an imitation of modular forms in the West. He postulates that Indians accepted and replicated the West in matters of economy, statecraft, science and technology, but there was a consciousness of an 'inner domain' or the indigenous cultural identity. According to Chatterjee (1994: 6), there was a tendency to 'mould' a modern national culture that was not purely Western. Though the mainstream leaders of the national movement envisaged an overarching notion of homogeneous nationalism, there were several contradictory notions and divergent voices which contested the homogeneity from within. Western modernity was evaluated, selectively appropriated and manipulated by divergent groups in their own way in their imaginings of the 'nation'. The contradictions on religious lines, however, were surely a nineteenth-century phenomenon. Romila Thapar points out that Indians gave precedence to caste among other markers of identity such as occupation, language, religion and location, as late as the eighteenth century (2002: 20). Shailesh Kumar Bandyopadhyay, too, records that there are several evidences of Brahmanical exploitation and attempt to demolish Buddhist *stupas*, etc. in the past, but no significant evidence of collision between Hindus and Muslims. He points out that there was a British plan to demolish the Jama Masjid in order to punish the Muslims for taking part in the Sepoy Mutiny. The plan was not carried out precisely because Lord Canning, in clear terms, carved out the 'divide and rule' policy which would disallow any united attempt as in 1857, by the two communities in the future (Bandyopadhyay 1981: 37).

However there are divergent points of view regarding the actual explanation of Partition. While some attribute it to the 'Two-nation theory' of the British, the others refuse to abide by this simplistic notion. Contemporary historians are of the opinion that a mere debate over the political manipulations of the British, and the notions of Nehru, Patel, Gandhi and Jinnah would not suffice and that a multi-causal dimension of processes leading to Partition need to be reviewed. Abiding by this notion that the socio-cultural history with multiple identities, multiple notions of the common masses on 1947 Partition have to be reviewed along with archival sources, it may be worthwhile here to have a cursory glance at certain ideas on the concept of Partition and

the nation in the wake of the historical disjunction. In David Page's opinion, the imperial power had a major role to play in the con-solidation of political interests around communal issues.⁸ Kazi Said-Ud-Din-Ahmad, Jamal-Ud-Din-Ahmad, Dr Ambedkar's ideas in favour of Pakistan have been best compiled in Mushirul Hasan's volumes on Partition (Hasan 2000). While Ahmad's contention was that the two-nation theory 'is not merely religious but is also social, cultural, and to a certain extent, linguistic,' B. R. Ambedkar contends that Partition was unavoidable, for the abject relationship between the two religious communities did not allow for any social assimilation (ibid.: 48). He points out that despite the efforts of reformers such as Akbar and Kabir to bring the creeds together 'the ethical realities' had remained unchanged. So Jinnah's ideological transformation did not appear strange to him. Ambedkar observes that the idea of a separate nation for the Muslims was already expressed in very clear terms by Mr N. M. Samarth in 1923 in his Minority Report of the North-West Frontier Inquiry Committee (ibid.: 50–51). Referring further to Mr Mohammad Ali's observations on the Resolution on the extension of the Montague–Chelmsford Reforms to the North West Frontier Province and his disclosing of the British idea of a cartographic line from Constantinople to Delhi — which would ultimately link Pakistan to Afghanistan, Ambedkar confirms that the scheme of a separatist Muslim nation — had its inception some time before 1923. Even if the Muslims were aware of such a scheme, Ambedkar contends that nothing was done about it till the 1930s, as it might have seemed to them 'just a dream of incapable realization', or that the Muslim leaders were not sure of the philosophical justification for Pakistan. From the beginning till the end, Ambedkar was irreconcilably averse to the idea of a Hindu–Muslim political unity and interrogated its very desirability for the country's political advancement. By the 1920s he had contentiously begun to argue that the Depressed Classes would continue to be powerless unless they were empowered politically to offer a challenge to the Hindu hegemony. If he argued in support of the Muslim demand for Pakistan, he 'drew on a generic theory of representative government based on adult franchise in order to make demands on behalf of an emergent political community, the depressed masses' (D. Chakrabarty 2007: 142).

Dr Mohammad Shah (2003: 3), professor of History in the University of Chittagong, subscribes to a similar discontent when he writes: 'Militant nationalism in the Colonial Bengal in early twentieth century that took the forms of assassinations, dacoities, and militant conspiracies, by and large, was an upper caste Hindu movement. The organizers of the movement ignored the Muslims and the low caste Hindus'. Dr Shah traces the origin of terrorism to Hindu Revivalism, which alienated the Muslims from the nationalist struggle for freedom. He further analyzes the reasons for the growing divide between the Hindu landlords or the Hindu gentry and the Muslim peasants in Bengal. With the proliferation of ideas through Muslim newspapers in undivided Bengal, there was a growing assertiveness of the Muslim identity, which made the collection of rent difficult. The economic distress in some cases provoked the Hindu gentry to clandestine violence. Besides, there was a lot of Muslim resentment against the nationalist ideas of Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's *Anandamath* (1882), which linked the nationalist struggle with the Hindu cult of Shakti personified in the goddess Kali, and the song *Bande Mataram*, which according to Dr Shah, became 'virtually a Hindu Bengali national anthem' (ibid.: 9).

Tagore's novel, *Ghare Baire* [Home and the World], beautifully portrays the political setting in Colonial Bengal on the eve of the 1905 Partition and subtly subscribes to Dr Shah's analysis. According to Sumit Sarkar:

Rabindrannath's *Ghare Baire* would later vividly portray the oppressive zamindar turned Swadeshi hero in Harish Kundu, and that this is not sheer invention is indicated by a November 1907 case in Tangail (Mymensingh district) where a Muslim sharecropper charged his Hindu landlord of having burnt his Manchester cloth in order to terrorize him into relinquishing his lease (Sarkar 1983: 121).

Sarkar continues that the 'situation was almost tailor-made for British divide-and-rule methods' (ibid.). Swadeshi sympathizers in Calcutta were beaten up by police backed by urban poor and, in spite of the sincere involvement of a group of Muslim Swadeshi agitators like Ghaznavi, Rasul, Din Mahomed, Dedar Bux, Moniruzzaman and others, there was a rapid growth of Muslim separatism. The 'British propaganda that the new province would mean more jobs for Muslims did achieve considerable success in

swaying upper and middle class Muslims against the Swadeshi movement' (ibid.: 121–22). There were riots in Ishwarganj in Mymensingh district, in May, 1906, Comilla in March 1907, Jamalpur, Dewanganj and Bakshiganj in Mymensingh again in April–May 1907. Hindu zamindars, some of whom had started levying taxes for *Ishwar britti* for maintaining Hindu images, were often the targeted ones. Debt bonds were torn in many places, and the Maulavis, who had strong connections with the peasants made prosperous by the jute, spread the rumour that the British were handing over the charge to Nawab Salimulla of Dhaka, who was hailed as a messiah in a communal leaflet called *Nawab Saheb-er Subichar*. Muslim propaganda through leaflets like this one and others like the *Red Pamphlet*, *Krishakbandhu*, etc. identified the *kulak*, or the capitalist farmer development or the zamindar-mahajan with the Hindu. Sarkar refers to Tagore's own experience as a zamindar in his estates, where he had wanted to do constructive work in the villages and hoped that the other zamindars too would follow his lead. The futility of his endeavours is recognized implicitly in Nikhilesh's failure in *Ghare Baire*.⁹

Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani's political vision, in direct contrast to those mentioned earlier, was singularly secular. He strongly identified the British as the architects of the Partition (Madani 2004).¹⁰ Barbara Metcalf points out, 'His arguments were not implausible: he saw Partition as a way to allow for Western intervention and preservation of Western interests in a weakened subcontinent, especially in what he called "Muslim India", that is Pakistan. His predictions, given Cold War alignments, were prescient' (Chakraborty 2007: 110).

Quite contrary to Madani's political ideas, and his futuristic vision, were the opinions of the convener of the Committee of Writers of the All India Muslim League, according to whom 'the term India' was 'a mere Congress euphemism' for the Hindu majority which could 'easily afford to assume a non-communal label and mask its communal designs under a national garb' (ibid.: 83). Faisal Devji, in his article on 'The Minority as Political Form', ironically asks what the 'notion of an unprecedented beginning' meant for the Muslim League after all. He quotes Jinnah saying it was 'faith: faith in Almighty God, in ourselves and our destiny' and comments further in an angry, sarcastic vein,

'But what could faith mean, coming as it did from the lips of a wine-drinking, sausage-eating Muslim of a decidedly secular attitude?' (ibid.: 85). Devji's article exposes Jinnah's hypocrisy as a politician who had juggled with Muslim sentiments for power. For Jinnah and the Muslim League, 'politics defined as faith' meant transcending the traditions that was given to people by nature or history. It was the exercise of the personal or political will over the 'faith' that was given to the Muslims in Hindu India. Devji observes that it was precisely this recognition of Madani's secular ideal or Gandhian idea of 'making Muslim politics out of some half-forgotten patchwork of popular religiosity' (ibid.: 87), which made Jinnah reject the Khilafat movement. Yet in his Presidential address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan in 1947, Jinnah had reverted to 'what was essentially the creed of the Indian National Congress':

in course of time all these angularities of the majority and minority communities, the Hindu community and the Muslim community; because even as regards Muslims you have Pathanans, Punjabis, Shias, Sunnies, and so on and among Hindus you have Brahmins, Vaishnavas, Khattris, also Bengalees, Madrasis, and so on – will vanish. Indeed if you ask me this has been the biggest hindrance in the way of India to attain freedom and independence and but for this we would have been free peoples long ago ... Now, I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the state.¹¹

The Hindus and the Muslims were no longer national groups, since Pakistan was achieved. So the Congress ideal of a universal citizenship could be fulfilled in Pakistan as India with the Partition had supposedly solved its communal problem. Devji in his essay, further comments on the map of Pakistan, for it was possibly the Cold War world of frontier-less politics rather than pan-Islamism, which gave the fragmented geography of the new nation its meaning. Jinnah was rather ruthless in his defence of the new country's frontiers: 'But we know that, as a matter of fact, modern warfare knows no frontiers. The decisive weapon of modern war is the air arm' (Ahmad 1942: 229). Abjecting itself thus from the cultural history of India and dismissing patriotism — abandoning natural unities and historical continuities — Pakistan

was founded on sheer political rationality. Though Devji's essay makes an incisive analysis of Jinnah's political intentions, it does not comment on Jinnah's change in his secular ideas soon enough, with the declaration that the 'Two States' in the original Lahore Proposal was a printing error. So in 1971, borders were defined again between Pakistan and newly-formed Bangladesh — between the Urdu speaking Muslims and Bengali-speaking Muslims and Hindus.

Among the contemporary historians, Ayesha Jalal (2001) problematizes the conventional role of Jinnah and the monolithic construction of the Muslim community. S. D. Muni's volume (2006) also is a re-thinking of some of the attitudes of national leaders which led to the current problems in the North-East and Kashmir. All these volumes of research, along with news articles, offer valuable resources for understanding that separatist politics, or sub-nationalisms and terrorism in India now, had its seeds sown in the decisions preceding and following the 1947 Partition.

The other contemporary volumes focusing on the impact of Partition, or the 'underside' of history include, Vazira Fazila Yacoobali Zamindar's sensitive documentation (2007) of the implications of Partition for the divided Muslim families, Yasmin Khan's analysis (2007) of the sufferings of divided families across borders, Urvashi Butalia's documentation of the sufferings of the abducted and widowed women on the Eastern border and in Kashmir (1988, 2002), etc. Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin (1988), Veena Das (1993, 2001) and Ian Talbot's perspectives (2009) offer avenues of re-thinking Partition.¹² Both Vazira Zamindar and Yasmin Khan address the issue of permit across borders. As Vazira writes, the difference between permit for permanent return to India, and permit for permanent resettlement, reflected different treatment by the Indian state for Muslim refugees and Hindu or Sikh ones. She observes that 'the families became divided because of the way the Indo-Pak border came to be constructed as an outcome of a long, drawn-out process of Partition' (2007: 234). The notion of choice, that north Indians were faced with, were complex and she cites the case of one Ghulam Ali, whose choice of identity between the two modern nation states depended on the state machinery and control and ultimately rendered him 'stateless' (ibid.: 230–34). The case in the Eastern border was different. The geographical conditions

made it harder for the state machinery to control, thus making the borders here more porous than in the north.

Creative and Critical Responses to Partitions in History

Both Sukrita Paul Kumar and Yasmin Khan agree with what has been discussed earlier that 'Partition is not a "past" or rather, the "past" has been perpetually digging into the present (Kumar 2002: 228; Khan 2007: 202). Creative literature focusing on the theme of Partition presents the underside of history and the creative writer has been working and reworking Partition in fiction, only to come to grips with the dynamic thrust of human consciousness struck by both the collective as well as the individual tragedy. Tarun K. Saint in *Witnessing Partition* argues that 'submerged archive is often reconstituted and reinterpreted through literary modes of remembrance' (2010: 47). His earlier volumes too stand testimony to this argument (Ravikant and Saint 2001; Saint 2002).

Jasbir Jain (2007) quotes Ashis Nandy, suggesting the need to 'talk' about traumatic happenings of Partition so that the memories do not sink into aphasia and return as 'fantasies of orgiastic violence'. Like Toni Morrison justifying the need to rewrite Black history of the 'slave body in pain', Jasbir Jain too comments that Partition raises very significant questions about 'sleep' and 'forgetting' and contends that possibly it is the nature of trauma which allows for a loss of memory but surely not a discourse of guilt. According to her the question of creative writing or literature offering a counter discourse to political history and the destructive nature of violence remains unresolved, but the appreciation of artistic representations surely comes from a concern for humanity.¹³ Symbolic, mythological and imagistic renderings of traumatic memory in the case of many writers like Intizar Husain, Manto, Ismat Chughtai, Krishan Chander, Krishna Sobti, Krishna Baldev Vaid, Bhasham Sahni, Attia Hosain, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Qurratulain Hyder, Amrita Pritam, Sayed Mustafa Siraj, Manik Bandyopadhyay, Prafulla Roy, Abdus Samad — more recently, Kamalleshwar, Purabi Bormodoi, Pratibha Ray, Imdadul Haque Milan, Salam Azad, Rahat Khan, Abhra Roy, Dibyendu Palit, etc., highlight the difficulties of creative rendering. The images

however transcend the temporal space to engage the reader in a dialogical conversation through reading, understanding and negotiating the past and reconstructing his identity. The critical essays on narratives, creative writings, and memoirs in this volume are to be read in the light of these perceptions. The news reports, fresh perspectives on the formation of the Eastern Border as contemporary histories, do not run counter to the literary discourse here, but serve to allow the reader a better understanding of his present in the light of these reflections, and enables him to achieve a qualitative appreciation of the creative representations.

As the nature of the disruptive experience is rather varied, it has been thought necessary to identify the various emotions and themes related to the Partition reality in this volume. While Part One of the volume engages in reviewing the impact of the 1947 Partition, Part Two focuses on the post-1947 phase in history and creative and critical responses to the fractured consciousness of the nation(s), with borders being marked internally, and externally, over again. The metaphor of the 'barbed wire' is to signify the divide within and without as the feelings of segregation, separatism in the political (collective) and individual consciousness appear to raise their ugly head from time to time. The case of Babri Masjid, the Godhra carnage, the riots, terrorist attacks constantly dig up the ghost of Partition.

The first section in this volume termed 'Crossings Over: Rememory(ing) the Loss' includes reflections of the lost homeland following the exodus across borders in 1947. As Alok Bhalla (2006: 4) reminisces, millions of people were forced to leave their homes, *bastis*, *watans*, their *desh*, and undertake a sorrowful journey across the newly marked Radcliffian line much against their wishes and instincts. These Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs were hardly concerned about their religious identities then, as problems of survival seemed to be uppermost in their mind. Migration coerced or self-willed creates a diasporic consciousness which struggles to construct homelands. For those who have willingly crossed the border, the diasporic vision of their homeland is myopic. It is gradually reduced to a series of objects, fragments of narratives, a photograph, an old film or such stuff which the nostalgia weaves into a kind of fading dream. For those who were compelled to cross the border, 'motherland' is that lost stretch of

life or the 'no man's land' in the disjunctions of historical time, and is to be differentiated from 'homeland' as a marker of their sanity and identity. Any negotiation with this sense of 'loss' of a motherland is only possible through a creative memory, through the process of retelling or writing. As Bhalla sums up, 'Those characters who refuse to migrate are forced to live in communities of memories and images' (ibid.: 45). The pieces in this section of the volume could be best understood with this phenomenon of migration.

Achintyo Kumar Sengupta's long narrative poem creatively records what Yasmin Khan would call 'ambiguous hopes and dreams' mingled with nostalgia, of a family in its ruthless, yet compulsive hurry for a new homeland. The poem attempts to analyze the definition of the 'uprooted' as the poet points out that one could be torn apart, not just from one's homeland, but also from one's idealism. The poet in the last two sections of the poem takes a dig at the national leaders and their changed stances once the freedom was bought at such a price. The poem engages us in a qualitative analysis which expands into a mythological dimension to contrast the sacrifice of the Pandavas with the greed of the architects of Partition. It creates an awareness of living in different times and understanding of different values across temporality. Krishna Sobti's *Zindaginama*, (1979) Kamaleshwar's novel *Partitions* (2006) which use mythological constructs may relate to such perception of reality of a mythological past and the past of contemporary history.

Indrani Sen's 'Hello Khuku' is a sensitive rendering of a daughter who travels back to her mother's homeland, now Bangladesh. She tries to relate to the memory of her mother's dreamy narrative of her younger days in Noyona. The personalized title of the memoir is the post-Partition generation's touching endeavour to relate to one's ancestral history, where the individual memory coalesces with the collective. While Anita Das Tandon's poem weaves a feeling of nostalgia and sorrow through the images of a dying day, 'tumultuous' wind and a 'flickering lantern', to reinforce the idea of the 'cold' 'intense' and 'powerful chill' of present living in comparison to the memory of the 'other side' left far behind, Surjit Sarna's journey back to Lahore, reinforces the sense of what 'was' and 'is'. Both the narratives create a painful awareness that distances across time cannot be crossed geographically, but

only through memory. Sarna's account relates closely to Kavita Panjabi's memoir (2004). One is also reminded of the grandmother's refusal to admit 'Dhaka' as *her* 'Dhaka' in the new glass-and-linoleum Dhaka Airport, in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*, when the narrator takes her to visit her home town. Homelands remain sacrosanct in memory, and the narrator reflects, people 'who have no home but in memory, learn to be skilled in the art of recollection' (1988: 194). The very recent 'Bengali Juvenile collection of short stories and novels in four volumes' by Adhir Biswas, titled as *Udojahaj (Aeroplane, May 2011)*, meant for children, is indeed a 'skilful recollection' of the author's life in his younger days in the *other* Bengal. Biswas uses memory as a reservoir for his creative understanding and rendering of his life in East Bengal. The narrative weaves a myth of a location, time and place which can only occur in mindscape and in the futurity's imaginative space. The river Naboganga, flowing past the author's home, his mother's weary eyes, Nomani Maidan — various images of his childhood at Magura village in Jessore — haunt his dreams. Time's aeroplane has flown him away from that life of yore, yet old, familiar sounds, smells and broken images offer him the creative inspiration to narrate his past through many — Ratan, Kala Sadhu, Gyandabala, Dulal Kuri, Cheniraddi, Nakcha Daktar, etc. The inclusion of the memoirs and the poems in this section relate to such creative rememory(ing), of the loss.

The two critical essays by Ashes Gupta and Jasbir Jain, in this section attempt to analyze how memory and creativity enable us to understand the Partition reality. Gupta's analysis delineates how the oral narratives of his grandmother relating to the pre-partitioned land, could be read as attempts of reclaiming the lost land and landscape at a metaphorical level through the very act of narration itself. Jain analyzes the sense of dislocation, geographical as well as psychological in two of Intizar Husain's stories. She contends that both history and literature have the power to reconstruct locations and perspectives. But even when located in empirical realities, literature, unlike history, attempts to reach the individual and collective unconscious that governs human responses. Memory in this context, according to Jain, is not a mere recreation of the past, but an attempt at increasing the understanding of it.

The second section in this volume, termed 'Bruised Nation: Tropes of Violence', contains essays which offer different perspectives on artistic representations of violence. Sreemati Mukherjee's essay takes up Saádat Hasan Manto's stories and critically analyzes how Partition provoked the instinctual evil in man and led him on to acts of violence. Mukherjee analyses the tropes of 'madness' and 'dislocation', in Manto's works as she attempts to understand Manto's artistic consciousness, comparing him with Gogol and other writers of modern short fiction. Himadri Lahiri and Nibir Kumar Ghosh's essays are on the representation of the body of the abducted women in the Partition narratives of Bapsi Sidhwa, Shauna Singh Baldwin and Rajinder Singh Bedi. Tutun Mukherjee's comparative study of three narratives by Salil Choudhury, Manas Ray and H el ene Cixous offers three different perspectives of history and violence. While Choudhury's and Ray's narratives are based on violence and rehabilitation in Kolkata after 1946, Cixous's French play caricatures the fidelities of the national leaders in the wake of India's freedom, and offers an outsider's perspective of Indian history.

The section 'Reconstructing Identities: Strategies of Survival', contains two essays which analyze artistic representations of survival strategies in Bengal. Somdatta Mandal's essay looks at the visual representations of refugee living in Bengal while Naina Dey's is a critical analysis of Sunil Gangopadhyay's *Arjun*. These critical essays relate to the experiential reality documented in the memoirs by Sunanda Sikdar, in *Dayamayi-r Katha* (2010), Mihir Sengupta's *Bishad Briksha* (2005), Shantikana Sen's *Phire Dekha* (2002) and Ashoka Gupta's recollections of her engagement in the relief work after Noakhali riots in 1946 in *In the Path of Service: Memories of a Changing Century* (2004). Ajoy Sinha Roy's *Kalpurush-er Darpan-e: Purbo-Banglar Unchango Sangeet* (2007), also records some valuable historical details of the riots before and after Partition and the relief work in which the author's mother had taken a leading role.

Part Two is an endeavour to understand the impact of Partition in contemporary reality. The section on 'Of Borders, Barbed Wires and the Unending Trail...' attempts to address the complexities of east India in some measure, chiefly because this has not been addressed in new historiography as the west has been. My endeavour here is to fill this gap or to address this 'silence',

within the constraints of a work such as this one, to allow for a comparative re-thinking of the after-effects of Partition in the post-colonial phase, in the north or North-West and east and North-East India. Except for anthologies by Debjani Sengupta (2003) and Bashabi Fraser (2006), along with some stories in Alok Bhalla's volumes on Partition (1999), there are no collections of Partition narratives based on east India in English translation. Possibly, *Trauma and the Triumph* (2003) and Butalia's *The Other side of Silence* (1998) are the only well-known critical volumes on Partition in the east, which relate history with experiential reality. Even the very recent work on Partition narratives by Tarun K. Saint (2010), referred to earlier in this discussion, sparingly discusses the narratives from east India. It is with this objective, of contributing to the historiography of the eastern border, that this section offers poems, critical essays, stories focusing on Assam, Tripura, Bengal and Bangladesh in the post-colonial phase. For proper understanding of the disparate nature of the experiential reality here since 1947, it is necessary to contextualize the fictional representations within the framework of history.

Migration, as Urvashi Butalia (1998) has pointed out, continues on the eastern border even now, which has made the evidence of partitions in the lives of the people here a reality which cannot be glossed over, or ignored. Mostly a mountainous region, North-Eastern region now consists of seven states, namely Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. In 1975, Sikkim has been added as the eighth state, through an amendment in the North-Eastern Council Act. The story of insurgency in this region begins with Nagaland. The British had exercised 'Indirect Rule' in these hilly areas and had promoted a separate religious, social and national identity which ran counter to the growth of the pan-Indian nationalism in the rest of the country. As a result there was a systematic exclusion of these north-eastern hill tribal states from the administration and socio-cultural growth in the rest of the country. The creation of an 'Inner Line', through the East Bengal Frontier Regulations of 1873, created a barrier between the rest of the country and these states.

There was a controlled environment in these states which allowed for an unhindered opportunity to the Christian missionaries to proselytize. The Government of India Acts of 1915

and 1919 declared these states as 'Backward tracts' which required special administrative control, and further excluded them from the political and judicial affairs of the country. Finally, the Government of India Act of 1935, by excluding these states fully from the federal and provincial legislatures and the High Court, deprived the area from participating in the new democratic processes in the rest of the country. These North-Eastern states thus became a separate country ruled by the Viceroy through the governor. Even after Independence, these states were accorded step-motherly treatment in the Constitution of India. Interesting in this context is Gandhi's attitude towards these North-Eastern hilly areas. When asked by Phizo and Sakhrie in July 1947, about his stand on these areas, Gandhi had stated: 'Nagas have every right to be independent . . . Personally I believe you all belong to me, to India. But if you say you won't, no one can force you' (Nibedon 1978: 31–35).¹⁴ Ambedkar too, somewhat ridiculously, compared the status of these states to the Red Indians in the United States in the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Such flippant gestures of the Indian bureaucrats toeing the line with the British administrators, are largely responsible for the discord and disharmony in these areas today. Further, the Nehruvian integration through the Assam model was another historic blunder as it considered Assam to be the last outpost of the Indian civilization in the east, entrusted with the responsibility to complete the unfinished task of integrating the tribal entities in the North-East. As Gurucharan Das points out:

'The addition of tribal entities to Assam made her an ethnic cauldron . . . The inter-ethnic competition for power and state privileges in such a segmented society not only gave birth to a complicated cleavage structure, but also formed the social base for a perpetual source of conflicts (2002: 92).

The strong recommendation to the Governor of Assam, stating that the hill areas were not happy to include Assam in 1948 and would prefer to be administered on the pattern of North-East Frontier Agency, were not heeded. Instead, the imposition of Assamese as the official language of the state ultimately led to the political break-up of Assam and prepared the ground for insurgencies in Mizoram and Meghalaya.

Moushumi Dutta Pathak's incisive analysis in this volume, on marking and re-marking of the borders of Assam in various phases of colonial history, endorses this view and provides us with avenues of re-thinking the separatist or the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) movement in Assam. The essay also explains the concept of the diverse 'nation' in Assam in Debashish Tarafdar's poem. The Assamese writer Indira Goswami's personal memoir gives us a further insight to the ULFA's demand for a separate state. Bibhash Choudhury's article is a critique on the literary representations of post-colonial violence in Assam.

'Locatings', a poem by Dilipkanti Laskar, subtly brings out the divide between an Assamese Bengali and a Kolkata intellectual and the latter's insensitivity to the former's cultural complexity and identity. Karimganj in Sylhet, originally a part of Assam in 1874, was handed over in 1905 to East Bengal, which became a part of East Pakistan in 1947 and Bangladesh in 1971. So the narrator of the poem has dual identities, of which a complacent Kolkattan appears to be blissfully unaware. The poem very subtly indicates the barbed wire between an Assamese or Bangladeshi Bengali and the so-called elitist Bengali of Kolkata and emulates the pain of the former's marginalization and dislocated experience.

The two essays on the Bangladesh language movement and the narratives of post-colonial migration in 'Greater Bengal' indicate phases in history — when the two religious communities share a 'Bengali Brotherhood' in East Pakistan during the formation of Bangladesh and their points of departure. Despite the divide between the Hindus and Muslims, the movement claimed martyrs from both the religions, men and women who laid down their lives for the cause of their mother tongue. The critical analysis of *Jamshedji-r Mrittdarshan*, the short story, foregrounds the ghastly nature of violence by the West-Pakistani army on the Bengali-speaking common folk, as it illustrates the nature of 'Bengali Brotherhood', in that phase of border-making. Yet, the 'barbed wires of religious difference could not be overruled, once Bangladesh was formed. The essay discusses the continuous flow of immigrants prior to 1971 and after, through an analysis of fictional representations. The summary of the news articles enclosed with this essay, offers an insight to the complex nature of the porous borders across the Bengal, North-Eastern and Bangladesh borders.

The two creative responses to the continuous process of migration on the eastern border, in this section, illustrate the various compulsions in contemporary history which allow for such moving borders. The stories prompt a reflection that the imperialists had done their bit, but the state machineries in the two countries today are equally insensitive and manipulative.

The last two sections in this volume briefly negotiate with the nature of violence in Kashmir since 1989, and the post-colonial fear of repeated partitions in our lives. A brief overview of the case of Kashmir contextualizes the two articles in the section on this territory of desire. The excerpts from the diary of an unknown Kashmiri, is a reworked memoir of the day-to-day events of violence and trauma in the wake of the evacuation of the pundits. This, along with Kavita Suri's news reports, provide us with the chronicles of violence and cross-border terrorism prevailing in the valley today. Though it has not been possible in this volume to incorporate the various complexities which go into the making of this valley of paradise and desire into that of terror, I hope the accounts here would contribute to the larger body of new historiography on Kashmir in volumes by Ananya Jahanara Kabir (2009) and Victoria Schofield (2010) and Urvashi Butalia (2002) among other works. While Ananya Jahanara Kabir's volume beautifully contextualizes the culture of Kashmir through its handicrafts, artifacts, tourism, literature, fantasies projected through visual representations, and tells us the reason for it being a contested terrain, Schofield's is a re-writing of the history of Kashmir. Butalia's volume (2002) voices the pain and suffering of the Kashmiri women in post-colonial Kashmir.

The last section of this book contains creative and critical responses to the fear and anxiety of partitions in the lives of the people in India, suffering so often from riots and carnage following the Babri Masjid issue, the Godhra carnage cross-border terrorism and India-Pakistan relations culminating in the Kargil war. Keki N. Daruwalla's *Partition Ghazal* (2000), movingly reminds us of the pace of history, of 1947 intermittently creeping into our present through the powerful image of journeying through the years in a caravan. The metaphor of the caravan reinforces the continued loss of identity and a sense of exile or not 'belonging'. The *kar sevaks* have kept alive the communal feelings and the poet fears that a territory so fraught with the effects of one colonial rule could be subject to neo-colonial powers again.

Jilani Bano's short story powerfully depicts the feelings of distrust among two friends, belonging to the two religious communities, in the wake of a riot. The story reminds one of another one by Ramesh Dave (2000), where a Muslim doctor suffers from temporary insanity when riots occur in Gujarat. A name is enough to signify him as a Hindu or Muslim and thus pin down his humanity and identity, in spite of the fact that he is married to a Hindu. The doctor's paranoia reveals his comprehension of himself as the 'abject subject' in others' eyes. He loses interest in his profession, when relatives of a Hindu victim refuse his blood — Muslim blood. Again while operating on another patient whose relatives had claimed to be Muslims, he finds out that the man is not circumcized and has just faked the Muslim identity for protection. Circumcision here in the story becomes the sign for the edge of psychosis in the doctor; it signifies his castration from the secular society which had earlier given him a human identity and respect for his profession to serve humanity. As he realizes the danger he might pose for his patients in such mental condition, he pleads with his boss to release him from his service in the hospital. In *Criminal*, the behaviour of the two boyhood friends, Nisar and Venkat, is marked with paranoia in the backdrop of a riot. Each feels like a criminal for the occurrences taking place. The story ironically depicts the fear, the anguish, and the sickness which prompts the two friends to consult doctors who prescribe the same medicine as a remedy for their illness. Their identities as 'Hindu' or 'Muslim' become interchangeable as they replicate or mirror the fear, the anxiety and the distrust in each other and yet care for one another.

Ameena Kazi Ansari's critical essay on Kamaleswar's *Partitions*, analyzes how the writer uses the metaphor of 'Pakistan' imaginatively to conjure up images of many fragmented realities and perceptions that dot the landscape of human memory. She points out that the work transcends the Partition of 1947 by underscoring a multiplicity of divides and divisiveness that have plagued the human psyche. The essay beautifully winds up the keynote of the volume: 'Many Borders, Many Partitions', which began with the creative and critical responses to the sense of loss and dislocation following the geo-political boundaries in 1947. The boundary that marked the nations has created irrevocable barbed wires of borders within and across, with the 'swift and

slow of human doing'. Understanding the implications of the 1947 Partition in our lives is a constant re-living of the horror across temporal space, in our attempt to negotiate the fractured consciousness of our nation. The creation of one Pakistan has led to many such Pakistans of not only religious, but social, caste, class, linguistic, cultural divides and new nationalities and separatist tendencies, constantly yielding to fragmentations. The newspeak as an 'Afterword' to this work is intended to expand the vision of messy borders and futuristic horrors that the 1947 Partition has impacted on the history of South Asia.

A Note on Translations Used in this Volume

Contributors, especially the ones who have used Urdu narratives in English translation, have referred to either Oxford or Penguin editions with the hope that these standard publishers surely will not produce any faulty works of translation. In spite of Jason Francisco's laudable review of Alok Bhalla's volumes on Partition narratives, there is a controversy regarding the appropriateness of certain words and phrases in these translations. Ameena Kazi Ansari, a translator herself, who has very competently translated Kamaleshwar's novel, feels that these lapses are bound to occur as knowing the language, 'Urdu', is not sufficient unless one is an insider to this culture. She has pointed out certain discrepancies in the translation of the short story 'A Letter from India' (Husain 1999b), which I enumerate below:

A. Incorrect translation:

- p. 82 – *Marhoom* — serious error — this word in Urdu means 'deceased/departed soul' and can never be a proper noun as given in the text.
- p. 84 – *Saheehul Aqeeda Hanafi Muslims* — as Urdu has no capital letters, *Saheehul Aqeeda* simply means people of the right faith; it is not the name of any sect as the translation seems to suggest; rather, the narrative voice asserts very clearly that his own sect, the 'Hanafi Muslims, is the *Saheehul Aqeeda* or community subscribing to the right faith.
- p. 86 – *Motrima* – the Urdu word is *Mohtarma* which is used as a term of respect for women; means 'Lady' or 'Begum' – has very needlessly and incorrectly been anglicized by the translators.
- p. 87 – *teetars and batters* – the Urdu words are *teetar* and *bateir* which mean 'partridge' and 'quail' respectively – the reference

to *teetars and batters* leaves a reader totally foxed, especially as to how children have become 'batters'.

- p. 88 – *Azeez* – an Urdu word which means 'dear'; by using it as a proper noun, the translators seem to introduce another character into the narrative which is very confusing.

B. Absence of essential annotations/inclusions run on in the text:

- p. 79 – *haraamzada* – meaning 'bastard,' finds no mention in glossary and could very well have been woven into the translated text.
- p. 81 – *Congressee* – written and pronounced as 'Caangressee' in Urdu – definitely requires an annotation/gloss.
- p. 82 – *Wahabi* – this is a very orthodox sect of Islam and its reference definitely requires an annotation/gloss.
- p. 87 – *niaz* and *azadari* – these are words which have very specific meanings in the context of Mohurram, the event that commemorates martyrdom in Islam.

C. Quirky sentence constructions/usage:

- p. 79 – 'Late one night there was a knock on the door. Puzzled and anxious, I wondered who had come knocking at my door at that hour and what he could possibly want?' — In a story like this which has a conversational idiom, repetition detracts from the flow of reading/crispness when phrases like the underlined ones are repeated. The second sentence could well have read 'I wondered who could be knocking at that hour? What could he possibly want?'
- p. 80 – 'Men of weak faith have done such deeds that there is no room left for complaint' – would read better as 'Men of weak faith have committed, such deeds leaving no room left for complaint.'
- p. 81 – 'Over the last twenty-seven years so many trees have fallen, and with them so many memories have been buried, that one should now consider the garden to be an extension of the graveyard' – would read more crisply as 'Over the last twenty-seven years many trees have fallen, many, many memories been buried with them. One now sees the garden as an extension of the graveyard.'
- p. 83 – 'buried under the same soil' – in preferable to under so as to bring out the meaning more precisely.
- p. 85 – there is reference to a 'jealous mother who hugs all her children in her embrace and does not let them out of her sight' – 'possessive' is perhaps a better word to use in place of jealous;

also the words 'hugs' and 'embrace' are synonyms and it is odd to write of 'hug ... in embrace'.

- p. 86 – the reference to India's Partition is often made as 1947 but a landmark year is usually not written in words as done in the translation as 'forty-seven'.
- p. 89 – 'We had spent generations in the land of Hind' – 'spent generations' reads oddly and the sentence could have been made crisper by saying that generations had lived and died in the service to Hindustan; this is the crux of the story, which simultaneously underlines the spirit of the united India/Hindustan and the sense of scattered disintegration in the aftermath of 1947.

I also add Ameena Kazi Ansari's own experience of translating Kamaleshwar's *Kitne Pakistan* (*Partitions*, 2006):

Kitne Pakistan? almost dictated to me that it be translated. It was a novel that evoked personal memories of a family ripped apart by India's Partition, that sensitized me to the violent rifts of human history, that challenged me as an academic to share with the English-speaking world a narrative that offers a turbulent retrospective of history.

There were three main issues that one had addressed in the course of translating the novel. The first one involved the translation of the title. Literally, *Kitne Pakistan* meant 'many Pakistans;' contextually, the novel underscored "Pakistan" as a mindset that had created the countless rifts of history. Added to this were the dynamics of publication which demanded that if the translation was to sell in Pakistan, it could not have a title that suggested the disintegration of that very country. And so, the title in English – *Partitions* – grew out of the compulsions of text, context and publishing.

Another challenge was to avoid any glossary and annotations, as I believe they take away the pleasure of reading. It seemed a tall order but was eventually achieved. *Partitions* has no glossary or annotations; matter that pertains to required information is woven into the body of the text as run-on matter.

Another aspect that one had to grapple with as translator was to capture in English the nuances of multiple idioms that prevailed in the text. These grew out of a complex narrative that swiftly moved between the discourses of gods and goddesses, of kings and consorts, of statesmen and politicians, of peasants and simpletons. I can only say that I have endeavoured hard to interweave all these gradations of idiom into the narrative.

I will end by saying that if readers find *Partitions* a powerful novel, then it is Kamleshwar's imaginative pen which has to be lauded; wherever the translation reads oddly, it is entirely my inadequacies as translator.

The rest of the translations in this volume, from Bangla, Assamese, French, cited in the body of the essays or as translations to be published for the first time, have been individual efforts of the contributors, which surely awaits the reader's judgement.

Notes

1. See Homi K. Bhaba's reading of Fanon in the light of post-colonialist concerns in *Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
2. Abjection in common usage refers to a feeling of unpleasantness and humiliation. It is also associated with rejection (see Oxford English Dictionary). However the theory of Abjection in Kristevian analysis defines the term as 'a desire for separation for becoming autonomous and also the feeling of an impossibility of doing so' (Kristeva 1980: 12). In other words, the abject is what promotes exchanges on the border and yet does not respect borders. It is 'ambiguous', 'in-between', and 'composite'. It is a struggle to separate from the maternal body. The dialectics of nation(s) in the wake of India's Partition and narratives of the 'collective unconscious', on both sides of the border are dialogics of abjection. All exchanges embody 'a terror that dissembles, a hatred that smiles, a passion that uses the body for barter instead of inflaming it, a debtor who sells you up, a friend who stabs you' (ibid.: 4) The abject is a relationship to a boundary that has been 'jettisoned out of that boundary, its other side, a margin'. The abject is what threatens identity; it is neither good nor evil, subject nor object, ego nor unconscious, but something that threatens distinctions themselves (ibid.: 69). Such has been the reality of the "collective unconscious" of Hindus and Muslims with the fragmentation of India as the two leaders, Nehru and Jinnah, split the country for acquiring of two political dominions: Hindustan and Pakistan. As Kamleshwar reflects, '... India witnessed the agony and ecstasy over the massacres and festivities engendered by its partition ... No one knew where exactly Cyril Radcliffe's line had ripped the land in two.... The area littered by the corpses of Hindus and Sikhs was Pakistan; the region strewn with corpses of Muslims was India' (Kamleshwar 2006: 324). Cross-border exchanges ever since have been exchanges of abjection whether in North India or in East India, though in the meantime the history of South Asia witnessed another Partition — Bangladesh separating from Pakistan.
3. History that contemporary language theory leaves out, but semanalysis develops is the history of transformation. Kristeva calls this 'monumental

history' which stands behind linear cursive history and is a history of the processes of signifying production. Words are made up of two heterogenous levels. Semiotic language or the poetic language 'pre-alter' representation even while it exceeds it. It is this double movement or this dialectical oscillation between the symbolic and the semiotic which is revolutionary. (see Kristeva 1984).

4. Bhaba in *Location of Culture* makes frequent references to Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) to explain the power of historical imagination, which he refers to as the time lag or the imaginative space which questions the present identity in the post-colonial reality.
5. Homi K. Bhaba refers to Dubois in his introduction to the above mentioned text where historical imagination is also 'belatedness' or the 'swift and slow of human doing'.
6. The border in Kristevian psychoanalysis is referred to as the 'phobic'. Kristeva explains that the maternal body becomes a *phobic object* in the 'abject subject'. The *phobic* is the borderline. It signifies the edge of psychosis but not madness. It realizes that it can be substituted as a subject only by virtue of the other, that its identity rests on separation even before it undergoes this process (see Kristeva 1980: 12). The Hindu-Muslim relationship has been an abject relationship since 1947. Anisur Rahman in his article, 'Intersection Time, 1947' (Jain 2007) points out, 'An interesting aspect of this phenomenon is that both the informed and uninformed responses to Partition of Hindu-Muslim relations closely bear upon one another and corroborate each other (ibid.: 311).
7. Gyanendra Pandey (2001: 13–14) says that different terms and conceptions which went into the making of Partition need reconsideration for a proper understanding of history.
8. 'By treating the Muslims as a separate group, it divided them from other Indians. By granting them separate electorates, it institutionalized that division ... Muslim politicians did not have to appeal to Muslims. This made it very difficult for a genuine nationalism to emerge ... With each stage of devolution, Indian was set against Indian, caste against caste, community against community. But as each area of government and administration was ceded to Indian control, it was followed by demands for more concessions. Ultimately, even the Raj's closest allies were only allies for a purpose. In 1947, the Raj withdrew, ceding its dominant position to those who had triumphed in the electoral arena. But the final act of devolution was also a final act of division' (Page 2002: 26).
9. Sūmit Sarkar writes that Tagore's 'was increasingly a voice crying in wilderness: as recognized implicitly in *Ghare Baire*, whose noble but quite ineffective and isolated hero Nihilesh stands in significant contrast to the optimistic ending of his earlier novel *Gora*' (1983: 123).
10. According to Madani, 'India's partition has been effected purely to advance British interests because Hindus were boycotting British industrial goods and trade and would have made it more effective after independence... Some

secret pact has been made or was in the offing since 1931 since Muslim representatives went to London or before that when assurance had been sought and given by the Muslim representatives that they would safeguard British industrial and trading interests in Muslim India (Pakistan) with Karachi and Calcutta ports remaining the exclusive preserve of British trade' (Goyal 2004).

11. Government of United Kingdom, 1946, British Library (India Office library) Joyce collection: Cabinet Mission to India, Vol. II.
12. See Bibliography for details.
13. See the Introduction in *Reading Partition and Living Partition* (Jain 2007).
14. This version of the encounter was made available by Gandhi's Secretary Pyarelal to Nirmal Nibedon and was later reproduced in the latter's book, *Nagaland, The Night of the Guerrillas* (1978). It also appeared as Paterson (1962).

A Brief Overview of the Kashmir Issue

Jayita Sengupta



As Radha Kumar (2005) notes, between half-a-million and a million people died in the six months of the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh riots, which commenced with the freedom of India at midnight, and about 15 million people were displaced from their homes. About 12 million people were compelled to cross the new North-Western frontier created by the partition of Punjab and three and half million people in the North-Eastern frontier with the partition of Bengal. Refugees streamed into the major cities of Delhi, Kolkata, Bombay, Dhaka and Karachi. There were hardly any Sikhs and Hindus left in West Pakistan and Hindus became a significant minority in East Pakistan. Even after Radcliffe's line had ripped the nation into two, and Delhi Pact (1950) and Indus Waters Treaty (1960) were signed, abject relationship between the mother nation and the new one only deepened with time.

The princely state of Kashmir posed a distinct problem. It had a Muslim majority and a Hindu ruler. On the eve of Independence, Lord Mountbatten decreed that the princely states, which were otherwise nominally independent, but had accepted the prerogatives of the Crown to determine their policies in matters such as defence, foreign affairs, etc., had the choice to join India or Pakistan. However, Subroto Roy in his article 'Solving Kashmir', points out that originally 'Jammu and Kashmir existed as an entity in international law long before the present Republics of India and Pakistan ever did' (2005). Pakistan was declared an entity on 14 August 1947. India was considered as an entity with its signing of the Treaty of Versailles on 20 June 1918, but Jammu and Kashmir began as an entity on 16 March 1846, when the Treaty

of Amritsar was signed between the British and Gulab Singh Dogra, one week after the Treaty of Lahore between the British and the defeated Sikh Regency of the child Daleep Singh. Both Liaquat Ali and Zafarullah Khan had challenged the legitimacy of the Dogra rule since the Treaty of Amritsar. So did Jawaharlal Nehru, for different reasons. The Pakistanis refused to accept the Dogra rule because it was a *Hindu* dynasty governing a Muslim majority and Nehru and Abdullah were against it as it was a *dynasty*. There were yet two more parties who were, however, in favour of the dynasty rule. These included Non-Muslim minorities like Hindus and Sikhs who saw the Dogra dynasty as a protector against communal tensions evoked by Abdullah's inciting of the Sunni Muslim masses of Srinagar valley during Friday prayers. The communalists of the Muslim Conference, who had broken away from Abdullah's secular National Conference, sought political advantage over him by supporting the dynasty rule. Subroto Roy remarks:

Into this game stumbled the British with all the mix of cunning, indifference, good will, impatience, arrogance and pomposity that marked their rule in India. At the behest of the so-called 'Native Princes', the 1929 Butler Commission had hinted that the relationship of "Indian India" to the British sovereign was conceptually different from that of 'British India' to the British sovereign. This view was adopted in the Cabinet Mission's 12 May 1946 Memorandum which in turn came to be applied by Atlee and Mountbatten in their unseemly rush to "Divide and Quit India" in the summer of 1947 (2005).

This created an illusion of the 'Lapse of Paramountcy' because of which any nation state of 'Indian India' could become sovereign, enjoying a comity of nations. The British here contradicted its own position as it had stated earlier that only two dominions, India and Pakistan, could be members of the UN. Subroto Roy mentions Ambedkar in this connection as the only legal scholar who saw through this 'catastrophic misunderstanding' of the British of their own constitutional law. Ambedkar's technical analysis published on 17 June 1947 stated that no 'Lapse of Paramountcy' over the 'Native Princes' of 'Indian India' could occur in constitutional law. Paramountcy would be automatically inherited by the successor states of British India at the transfer of power. As the British had failed to comprehend this aspect

of their own constitutional law, they created a legal vacuum, between 15 August and 22–26 October 1947. Though both India and Pakistan sought different reasons to incorporate Kashmir within their political dominions, the Hindu monarch, Maharaja Hari Singh, had refused to accede to either of the two dominions. Kashmir became a local and temporary sovereign till 22 October 1947. The Maharaja, however, had signed a Standstill Agreement with Pakistan for the continuation of normal trade relationship. Despite the agreement, there were allegations levelled against the new country for not supplying the kingdom with coal and other essential items. Finally matters worsened, and a tribal rebellion broke out in Poonch in October 1947. Tribal troops, assisted by Pakistani army, reached the outskirts of Srinagar, on 22 October. The strife between Sardar Ibrahim's Muslim communalists backed by the new dominion of Pakistan and Sheikh Abdullah's secularists, supported by India, turned into a civil war within a larger intra-Commonwealth war as there were differences between the forces of the same military. Hari Singh, left with little choice, appealed to India for help. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru agreed to help Hari Singh on two conditions: Kashmir should be acceded to India and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the leader of the most popular political organization, would have to give his imprimatur to the Instrument of Accession (Sisson and Rose 1990). On 26 October, the Instrument of Accession was signed and Indian troops were employed to fight the rebellion only after the rebels had managed to secure about a third of the princely province. The dispute, however, was referred to the UN, which called on Pakistan to withdraw its troops from Kashmir and requested India to minimize its troop presence in the valley. The issue was thwarted temporarily, only to surface again in the aftermath of the Sino-Indian border war of 1962 in 1965.

The British withdrawal from India, and its inability to delineate the cartography in the northern borders of the vast Himalayan range, created disputes between India and China too. In an attempt to defend the northern territory of India, Jawaharlal Nehru had embarked on the 'forward policy'. According to this policy India sent small pickets of lightly armed troops to the areas which were claimed by China. The Chinese regime sharply reacted to this and warned India of its aggressive stance. The Indian political leadership, however, turned a deaf ear to

these warnings and finally when the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) attacked along a number of key Himalayan salients in October 1962, the Indian army, unprepared as it was to face the encounter, was totally devastated. Soon after this setback, there was a change in India's defence policies. India embarked on a significant military modernization programme. As Sumit Ganguly and Devin T. Hagerty observe, 'the Indian effort at military modernization unwittingly created a "security dilemma" for Pakistan ... The perceived threat from India and the closing window of opportunity proved to be important motivations behind Pakistan's politico-military strategy to destabilize the Indian-controlled portions of Jammu and Kashmir, and then to embark on a second war on India in September 1965' (2005: 28). However, just when the second war over Kashmir was rapidly reaching a stalemate in mid-September 1965, India under pressure from the U.N. Security Council accepted the cease-fire resolution. The next Indo-Pak war in 1971 was however not over Kashmir but over the formation of another new nation — Bangladesh. The Kargil war recently in 1999, was another full-scale war over Kashmir. Besides these, three full-scale wars, there have been several smaller ones, and 'proxy wars' along the line of control.

Though the problem of insurgency, coupled with the 'Azad Kashmir' phenomenon, had begun with the partition of India, the current phase of separatist nationalism could be attributed to the close of the 1980s, with the Kashmiri Pandits being forced to leave the state. Over the years however, the nature of the separatist nationalism in the state has changed radically. Paid mercenaries and militants trained across the border have infiltrated into the state, creating terror and havoc on the lives of ordinary men and women. The constant conflict between the militants and the Border Security Forces (BSF) frequently hamper the normal life of the people in the valley. The ordinary men and women of the valley presently, are not only subject to the tyranny of the militants turned terrorists, but also the routine exploitation and torture of the security forces. Urvashi Butalia briefly sums up:

Repression, and counter-insurgency measures, have been swift to follow and it is estimated that between 60,000 to 70,000 people have died, some 4000 are believed to be missing or in illegal detention, more

than a million people have been displaced; the number of widows and half widows is said to be more than 15,000. The presence of the army, para-military forces and police forces is ubiquitous, and fear of violence and arrest has now become part of the daily lives of ordinary people. Kashmir now comes under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act and the Disturbed Areas Act (and more recently the much disputed and Draconian Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance) which means that the constitutionally guaranteed freedoms available to all citizens of India do not obtain here (2002: xi-xii).

The peace talks between the two countries, the road opened for the peace bus and the Hurriyat conference had failed to stop the insurgency in the valley. The recent changes of power and turmoil in Pakistan have only aggravated the wound created by the Partition of 1947. The political complexities of this territory of desire do not allow for any easy solution. Yet a historian like Victoria Schofield, is hopeful, and comments, 'For a solution to be viable, genuine representation from among the inhabitants of the state has to be included and conflicting viewpoints reconciled' (2010 : 259).

Setting aside the geo-political claims of this region, Ananya Jahanara Kabir, in her volume on representation of Kashmir (2009), reviews history from a very different perspective. Her volume articulates the emotional nexus of a Kashmiri, through questions such as, 'who has the right to dream?', or demand that 'another should dream of Kashmir?', or 'who is the lover who asks in vain to be met halfway, and what political shape does the pain of rejection take?' According to Kabir, the roots of the desire of the territory, lie in a distinct relationship between modernity, the valley and the work of art and representation. Her work very sensitively analyzes Kashmir as the subject of desire, through visual representations which include films and literature (poems) artwork, handicrafts and photographs. She points out how often exhibitions, organized by the state, render the territory as a land of fantasy, imbricated in the webs of production and consumption. Her research analyzes the shifting subject and the other positions in such representations, between India and Kashmir. Her work posits a Kashmiri identity which cannot be merely defined by religious and political identities alone. The volume echoes the emotive appeal of mobilizing the artistic dimension of human

experience within State and civil society practices, when any political solution fails. According to Kabir, poetics of dispossession offer aesthetic encounters with the political and challenges our very notion of common sense by enabling us to see what may be obvious but what we may have missed. Rushdie's novels, like *Midnight's Children* (1982) and *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), are ways of emulating the experience of suffering through the aesthetics of representation.

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