Text “An old fable”: issues and comments

By Tabish Khair (narrative) and Priya Kuriyan (pictures)

**Text**: Written by Tabish Khair and illustrated by Priya Kuriyan, this story is contained in *This Side, That Side. Restorying Partition: An Anthology of Graphic Narratives* (2013), a graphic project devoted to the theme of the Indian Partition, which divided the Indian subcontinent in two separate states (India and Pakistan), after the end of the Raj in 1947, and which led to the eruption of extreme violence on both sides.

**Context:** the Indian Partition: the breaking-up of the British colony of India into two separate states (the Indian Union and Pakistan), which took place in 1947. This is a very dramatic moment in history with massive genocides, intensive migrations and violent impact on society and local communities (‘communal’ riots between Muslims and Hindus). It was a phenomenon of large-scale ferocity, with estimates of the loss of life accompanying or preceding the partition disputed and varying between several hundred thousand and two million. The fierce nature of the partition created an atmosphere of hostility and suspicion between India and Pakistan that affects their relationship to this day.

Note: kalapani (Hindi: कालापानी, kālāpānī) meaning ‘Black Water’, i.e. the sea around the Indian subcontinent. It thus refers to the idea of diaspora (leaving the country) but it can also be seen as a taboo of the sea in Indian culture.

Analyse the extract by applying tools and frames from contemporary stylistics – you have to use correct descriptive terminology, focusing on 1) the devices employed in the text and 2) the effect these produce in readers. Your investigation could include, but should not be limited to items such as:

* Title
* Combination of words and pictures (level of vocabulary / type of images)
* Icons, indexes, symbols
* Use of panel, gutter, balloon, caption
* Schemata
* Deixis
* Graphical representation
* Intertextuality
* Irony
* Ideology
* Metaphor