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| 1. Record Nr. | UNINA9910820395703321 |
| Autore | Menon Jisha <1972-> |
| Titolo | The performance of nationalism : India, Pakistan, and the memory of partition // Jisha Menon |
| Pubbl/distr/stampa | Cambridge : , : Cambridge University Press, , 2013 ©2013 |
| ISBN | 1-139-85368-6 1-107-23391-7 1-139-84460-1 1-139-84105-X 1-283-94295-X 1-139-83986-1 1-139-84566-7 1-139-84224-2 0-511-68690-0 |
| Descrizione fisica | 1 online resource (xii, 260 pages) : digital, PDF file(s) |
| Collana | Cambridge studies in modern theatre. |
| Disciplina | 891/.1 |
| Soggetti | Indic drama - 20th century - History and criticism Nationalism in literature Partition, Territorial, in literature Motion pictures, Indic Nationalism in motion pictures India History Partition, 1947 Influence India In literature Pakistan In literature India In motion pictures Pakistan In motion pictures |
| Lingua di pubblicazione | Inglese |
| Formato | Materiale a stampa |
| Livello bibliografico | Monografia |
| Nota di bibliografia | Includes bibliographical references and index. |
| Nota di contenuto | Introduction -- Bordering on drama: the performance of politics and the politics of performance -- Ghatak's cinema and the dis coherence of the Bengal partition -- The poetics and politics of accommodation -- |

Somatic texts and the gender of partition -- Kashmir: hospitality and the "unfinished business" of partition.

Sommario/riassunto

Imagine the patriotic camaraderie of national day parades. How crucial is performance for the sustenance of the nation? *The Performance of Nationalism* considers the formation of the Indian and Pakistani nation, in the wake of the most violent chapter of its history: the partition of the subcontinent. In the process, Jisha Menon offers a fresh analysis of nationalism from the perspective of performance. Menon recuperates the manifold valences of 'mimesis' as aesthetic representation, as the constitution of a community of witnesses, and as the mimetic relationality that underlies the encounter between India and Pakistan. The particular performances considered here range from Wagah border ceremonies, to the partition theatre of Asghar Wajahat, Kirti Jain, M. K. Raina, and the cinema of Ritwik Ghatak and M. S. Sathyu. By pointing to the tropes of twins, doubles, and doppelgangers that suffuse these performances, this study troubles the idea of two insular, autonomous nation-states of India and Pakistan. In the process, Menon recovers mimetic modes of thinking that unsettle the reified categories of identity politics.
