INTRODUCTION

Religion, Politics, and Development — Mapping the Sites and Domains of Indo-American Exchange, *c.* 1850–1970[1]

Harald Fischer-Tiné, Sujeet George and Nico Slate

The election of Kamala Harris as the first South Asian American Vice President of the United States has expanded interest in the long history of connections between the United States and South Asia. Harris joins an impressive roster of Indian American politicians—a roster that spans the political spectrum from conservative Republican governors like Nikki Haley and Bobby Jindal to progressive Democratic members of congress like Ro Khanna and Pramila Jayapal. It would be a mistake to see the growing political prominence of the South Asian American community as a clear marker of the unity or visibility of that community. Indeed, questions of identity and authenticity mark many of the most prominent Indian American politicians—including Harris, Haley, and Jindal. What it means to be South Asian American—or Indian American—has long been bound up with complex and ever-shifting boundaries of race, nation, and religion.[2] Those boundaries were in turn linked to larger and longer histories of mutual perception, multifaceted entanglements and concrete interactions between the United States and South Asia.

For decades, the historiography on modern South Asia has been tethered to the signposts of Empire and the nation-state as its recurrent referents. Even as postcolonial theory, Subaltern studies and feminist theory sought to expand the intellectual terrain, the dominance of the nation-Empire dyad has continued more or less unabated. The gradual waning of the Cold War, concurrent with the rise of Global History, has, however, brought into sharper focus the methodological limitations and shortcomings of both Imperial history and Area Studies. This edited volume offers a fresh approach to the intellectual, cultural, economic and literary histories that have "entangled" the United States of America and the Indian subcontinent. After global history had been initially dominated by transregional comparisons and the study of (unilateral) long-distance transfers, the more dynamic and process-oriented concept of "entanglement" became increasingly prominent in the field from the late 1990s onwards, producing myriad studies on the "back and forth of people ideas and things across boundaries".[3] The shift toward interactive "transnational" histories at times risked an uncritical celebration of connections

and entanglements of various kinds, as if such histories could themselves usher in a new and more just way of looking at the human past. A "breathless sense of freedom," to use the words of historian Paul Kramer, tinged even many of the richest transnational histories.[4] Cutting against such enthusiasm, Indrani Chatterjee has argued for the impossibility of "connected histories across spaces shaped by war and the partitions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries," and Kris Manjapra has reminded us that entanglements, albeit implying "some degree of interdependence", can also be highly asymmetrical, because they "exist within larger systems of power, discourse and economy".[5] It is important to keep these caveats in mind when looking at the multifaceted exchanges between North America and South Asia that are under scrutiny in this book.

The hegemonic role of the USA in the post-World War II global order has led to a proliferation of research examining diplomatic contacts and the exchange of ideas, and flows of material aid, knowledge and expert personnel between India and the USA from the 1950s to the 2000s.[6] A few exceptions aside,[7] it was only recently that this 'presentist' approach was challenged by research that has examined the network of interconnections over a wider time frame stretching into the early decades of the American republic and has hinted at a longer history of connections going beyond the registers of what has alternatively been described as 'Americanization', US-cultural Imperialism' or 'the American century' of globalization.[8] Since the global ascent of the United States and the increasing US presence in Asia during the Cold War are often seen as the seemingly natural starting points for the study of Indo-US entanglements, the long prehistory of such exchanges is often overlooked. Precisely for the same reason the bulk of existing scholarship is devoted to official contacts and diplomatic history. To correct this bias, the editors deemed it particularly important to select the contributions to this anthology in a way that allowed for a special emphasis on non-state actors and also prominently included the pre-independence era.

By bringing together academics working across disciplines ranging from history and ethnomusicology to cultural and literary studies, political science and sociology, this volume thus foregrounds and historicizes the multi-sited, polyvalent nature of the protracted Indo-US encounter. At the same time, the volume will inspect the possibilities of methodologically engaging with categories—such as the nation, the 'imperial' and Empire—and explore alternative typologies to better understand the various forms of this transregional and transcultural interaction. The contributions assembled in this book reconstruct the myriad ways in which Americans and Indians have engaged with each other through trade, diplomacy, intellectual comradeship, missionary evangelism and revolutionary (or developmentalist) fervor.

Contribution to the literature

The story of American Exceptionalism has tended to have a self-evident tone in much mainstream as well as historical understanding of twentieth-century American history. Recent scholarship has, however, sought to temper the 'Manifest Destiny' rhetoric and highlighted the fissures and fault lines that punctuate this grand narrative. In his recently published magnum opus *American Empire: A Global History*, the British historian Anthony G. Hopkins offers a challenging revaluation of the conventional understanding of American Exceptionalism.[9] He places the rising global influence of nineteenth and early-twentieth-century United States within the existing, in-flux networks of other imperial empires, thus charting a history of an intensely globalized, interconnected world. Along similar lines, Daniel Immerwahr has made a powerful plea for the (re-) discovery of the United States' imperial past, pointing to the striking parallels with Britain, France and the other usual suspects of imperialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[10]

Seen in this light, the volume seeks to investigate the ways in which the British imperial networks intermingled and mediated with American experiences in late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century colonial India. In addition, it becomes imperative to ask anew how to conceptualize the Indo-US encounter over a longer temporal scale. As American notions of mass consumerism, including Hollywood and Jazz, seeped into the everyday imaginings of early twentieth-century Indians under British rule,[11] there was a coincident renegotiation of the relationship between the colonized natives and their British rulers. Following the pioneering forays by scholars such as Mrinalini Sinha and David Arnold, the volume at hand pursues this triangulated nature of identity-making and societal reframing and thus recasts the positioning of the USA within global narratives of the twentieth century.[12]

As indicated above, historiography on modern South Asia has suffered from a fixation on the Empire and the nation-state as its recurrent referents. An engagement with the nature of Indo-US interactions makes possible a re-examination of some of the core ideas and concepts associated with Imperial history by expanding the frames of reference within which histories of Empire could be situated.[13] At the same time, the flowering of the sub-discipline of Global History since the early 2000s has left in its wake critical questions crucial to our understanding of the impulses of Western modernity and the stratified histories of globalization.[14] Methodologically, the volume seeks to explore the potentials of better engaging with the developing paradigm of global history by looking at the multi-layered, multi-spatial nature of interactions between the United States and South Asia, and contextualizing it within narratives that potentially frame out on a canvas wider than hitherto imagined.

Much before the United States, as a hegemon of the post-World War II global order, sought to influence the ideological moorings of the newly independent Indian state, there had been sustained interactions between the American republic and the Indian subcontinent on a variety of levels. Recent scholarship has highlighted the longer-term series of interconnections that spanned multiple domains, including the trade of Indian commodities and curiosities, the transfer and adoption of philosophical Indic ideas by varied groups of American intellectuals, artists and the broader public, as well as an abiding sense of morbid curiosity about the strange mores of South Asian societies.[15]

The "Orient" and India in particular was part of a rich tapestry of visual, textual and material imaginations in the nineteenth-century United States. While trade between the USA and British India dominated the early decades of the republic,[16] the work of American missionaries, which started as early as 1812,[17] came to be a significant connection in the subsequent decades of the nineteenth century. The caste question and its relation to a highly racialized American society was a persistent theme in accounts of the Indian social system that were circulated through travelogues, pamphlets and newspaper reports.[18] With its structural hierarchies and modes of social exclusion, the caste system served as an easy reference for the inherent backwardness of the people as imagined in the American Gilded and Progressive Ages respectively. The juxtaposition between the question of race in the American context, and its echoes with the Indian caste system has emerged in diverse circumstances, as evident in its abiding relevance in contexts that have moved well into the twentieth century.[19] Our volume will grapple with the heterogeneity of these narratives by placing emphasis on the diversity of the actors who were involved, and the varied routes and contexts through which these actors engaged with each other.

Arguably the most enduring, widespread and sustained set of interactions between the USA and South Asia have been directed by the hundreds of Christian missionaries who sought to redeem and uplift the 'heathen masses' in the Indian subcontinent. As Protestant notions of the 'Social Gospel' gained an increasingly international character from the 1890s,[20] American missionary work in the Indian subcontinent had an impact on a diverse range of fields including health, education, sports and rural reconstruction.[21]

Belying notions of a unidirectional flow of ideas are accounts of the impact of nineteenth century Indic ideals on the American imagination. Swami Vivekananda's address at the 1893 Chicago World Parliament of religions has attained a certain mythical quality often associated with originary moments of wonderment. Seen as heralding America's initiation into the realm of Indian spiritual cosmos, Vivekananda's visit to the USA has, perhaps unfairly, overshadowed the multiple nodes of linkages that ushered in ideas of Hindu philosophy to the American society of the late nineteenth century.[22] Vivekananda was but one of

a steady line of monks, sadhus—and occasionally, plain opportunists seeking a captive audience—who strove to bring Hindu philosophy as well as yoga to a rapidly expanding American middle class.[23] The mostly positive attitude that had shaped many of the intellectual engagements of Americans with the subcontinent and its cultures and religions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had largely evaporated by the Interwar years. The fact that the widespread Indophilia in the United States had given way to Indophobia became tangible in the widely debated publication of the book *Mother India* by social commentator and white supremacist Katherine Mayo in 1927. Mayo's book portrayed India and especially Hindu culture in an exceedingly negative light as cruel, backward and irrational, while hailing British colonial rule as beneficial for the subcontinental population. A rich body of research has recently analyzed the ensuing '*Mother India* debate' from various angles, often placing emphasis on its enmeshment with contemporaneous xenophobia and anti-immigration discourses in Jazz Age America.[24]

While the realm of the metaphysical highlights the co-constitutive nature of the Indo-American encounter, the domain of the revolutionary-political emerged at a specific moment of global anti-imperialism and 'transnational nationalism'.[25] The interwar period saw the emergence of a transnational Indian diaspora that was inculcated an American ethos through their exposure to education opportunities in American universities. These revolutionaries collaborated with their fellow countrymen in an attempt to overthrow an imperial rule through networks across continents and empires. Their narratives highlight the transnational frames within which the anti-imperial rhetoric was articulated in lands and contexts far away from India. The multiplicity of meanings that could be, and were, sustained by the Indian revolutionaries abroad hints at the fecundity of the ideas that were grappled with. At the same time, it points to the sheer promiscuity of ideas drawn from diverse global contexts and experiences. Here was an instance of thought and action that imbibed ideals from the American experience, as evidenced among members of the *Ghadar* party who found common ground on the Pacific coast.[26]

The rather spectacular story of the tiny Indian student community's revolutionary activities in North America has opened the door for a scholarly engagement with other, more pedestrian, segments of the South Asian immigrant population in the first half of the twentieth century. There is by now a rich body of literature on the subcontinental diaspora in the United States — ranging from low caste labor migrants to religious missionaries and high-profile South Asian entrepreneurs living in the US who became active in the India Lobby during the interwar years and the Second World War — and the multidirectional cultural flows their presence has triggered.[27]

Such variegated interconnections were redrawn by the 1940s. The Second World War and its aftermath — which also brought about entirely new and

hitherto barely studied cultural Indo-US entanglements through the presence of 250,000 GIs in South Asia —[28] is conventionally regarded as the commencement of the global 'age of development' spearheaded by the United States. Even prior to this moment, the early decades of the twentieth century saw a redefinition of the "civilizing mission" whereby the missionary enterprise sought to engage with alien cultures in a language of mutual comprehensibility rather than external, hierarchical superimposition of ideas and precepts. Such a realignment involved as much grappling with questions of a practical nature as with transcendental ones. Focusing on rural reconstruction projects, notions of physical health and well-being, citizenship training and education, the Protestant mission redefined its emancipatory agenda, which segued into the development paradigm of the post-World War II global order.

A combination of the Marshall Plan and the Point Four Program sought to restructure both Europe and the decolonizing nation-states in Asia, Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean in the decades after 1945.[29] Recent scholarship has highlighted the variegated histories of this period, and has attempted to divert the focus from diplomatic squabbles and foreign aid policy, to examine community development projects at the ground level, as well as exchange of technical expertise through philanthropic agencies such as the Ford and Rockefeller foundations.[30] Although this aspect is barely covered in the present volume, it should not be forgotten that a seamless continuity of US influences in the Indian subcontinent after 1947 was severely challenged by the partition of British India and the subsequent existence of two (from 1971 on: three) very different states in the region. Thus far, the history of Pakistani-US relations has mostly been covered with a focus on the diplomatic, developmental, military and geostrategic dimensions.[31] A more thorough exploration of social and cultural aspects remains an important desideratum for future historical research.

The intellectual legacy of the American influence on postcolonial India has been varied—on the one hand, the growth of the Area Studies paradigm had its very specific "Indian" component that had an impact on the development of South Asian Studies in some of the premier American universities.[32] As several scholars have recently argued, the area studies idea can also be traced back to American missionaries, who often possessed unique regional expertise and language skills and became important pioneers and hinge figures when the American "bid for world knowledge" began to take shape after the Second World War.[33] At the same time, concepts resulting from the disciplines of social psychology as well as management training were sold to the Indian elite as a panacea for the adolescent nation's slow growth pangs.[34]

There were more cross-fertilizations. As Nico Slate has recently argued, the political traditions of both the nation-states exemplify the ways in which the

democratic ideal can be enriched by the social diversity intrinsic to both countries.[35] Yet expressions of such diversities, as well as the longer-term legacies of the Indo-US encounter, necessarily slip "beyond nationalist frames." This volume aims to foreground these variegated histories by considering sites and intellectual domains that are yet underexplored and thus examine the international ramifications of what has hitherto been understood as purely international endeavors.

Chapter Previews

While all of the chapters in this volume speak to each other, we have divided the volume into three sections: "Literature, Religion & Culture," "Revolutionaries and Missionaries," and "Social Sciences, Development & Technocracy." The section on literary, religious and cultural exchanges kicks off with a contribution by ethnomusicologist Bradley Shope, who examines some of the earliest musical and theatrical exchanges between North America and South Asia. In his chapter *A Goldrush, Steamships, and Blackface: The New York Serenaders in India, early-1850s* Shope reconstructs the arrival of an American minstrelsy troupe in the subcontinent while adroitly placing their South Asian tour in the broader context of the dramatically intensifying global communication and mobility in mid-nineteenth century. Between 1851 and 1853, the New York Serenaders toured cities and towns across India, performing both minstrel songs and English traditional music. Enthusiastic audiences of English-speakers considered the group to be authentic curators of contemporary United States performance culture. Steamships facilitated their travel within the subcontinent and made available to the group shipments of the most up-to-date printed music of minstrel songs from the U.S., which was important to their reputation as leading-edge performers. The group traveled from the Atlantic seaboard of the United States to San Francisco during the gold rush era in 1849, but they left the city soon after to pursue performance opportunities at destinations in the Pacific, and eventually in India. Shope's chapter puts the technological, cultural, and commercial circumstances that made possible their travel from San Francisco to India in stark relief. Simultaneously, it examines the impact of racism that was partly responsible for the success of blackface minstrelsy in India, the availability of printed music on the subcontinent, the expansion of steamship transportation within and beyond the British Empire, and the role of San Francisco as a blossoming Pacific port powerhouse. It ultimately suggests that the confluence of these determinants enabled (for the first time) an organized group of American blackface musicians to travel to India and successfully perform popular music from the U.S.

Next is Susan M. Ryan's chapter *Imagining Empire*, which examines American reactions to the Great Indian Rebellion, 1857–58, by analyzing reports and comments

in the US press and reflections in contemporary American literature. Ryan starts her investigation on *The Sepoy Rebellion and American Global Ambition* with Walt Whitman's 1871 poem "Passage to India". This poem, often invoked in scholarly conversations on the nineteenth-century United States' global turn, celebrates three of the era's most impressive engineering feats — the laying of the transatlantic telegraph cable in 1858, the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, and the opening of the Suez Canal later that year. These infrastructural advances obviously accelerated the pace of travel and communication, but for Whitman they also subtended an expansive American presence abroad, one that revivifies the Columbian project that the poem repeatedly invokes. Whitman here heralds the United States' international emergence with an exuberance that mirrors his expressed faith in human beings' capacity to control and reshape the earth itself. If "Passage to India" stands as a monument to imperial optimism, a lesser-known American conversation on India, which took place nearly fifteen years earlier, evinced a great deal more ambivalence. In the summer and fall of 1857, American magazines and newspapers began printing details of a widespread rebellion among native Indian soldiers (called sepoys) against British rule. News of the uprising and of British reprisals shocked American readers not just in terms of their staggering violence, but also insofar as supposed inferiors had managed to carry out an elaborate and at least temporarily successful conspiracy against a European power. As Ryan persuasively argues, American commentators confronted two downsides of imperial ambition: first, that the colonized could not be so easily dominated as some had assumed; and second, that efforts at reasserting such elusive control could cost an imperial power in moral or reputational terms. According to Ryan, US writings on India in 1857–1858, then, represent a crucial if understudied moment of dissent in the nation's own shift toward imperialism, as British blunders and atrocities dimmed Americans' own luminous fantasies of global power.

The subsequent chapter in this section is by Philip Deslippe, a scholar of religious studies. His contribution *Stage Magicians, Sidewalk Salesmen, Con Artists, and Yogis in American Popular Culture* focuses on the hitherto unduly neglected role of South Asian *Fakirs* in the United States. While Swami Vivekananda's 1893 address to the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago is often perceived as the first significant introduction of Hinduism to the American public, tour guides advised visitors to the much larger Columbian Exposition that hosted the Parliament that many of the streets at the fair would be filled with fakirs. But these fakirs were not religious renunciants, but rather men making a brisk trade selling cheap novelties to visitors. As Deslippe's study demonstrates, through nearly a century of popular usage in America that started just after the Civil War, the term "fakir" acquired numerous successive meanings in the United States as it moved from India to a description of magicians in Orientalist costumes on the vaudeville stage, then a

term for ostentatious salesmen on American sidewalks, then to duplicitous con artists and criminals, and finally to the yogis and swamis from India who travelled to the United States and were labelled with the various meanings of the term. More than a simple loanword, the word *fakir* is one of the earliest, long-running, and perhaps most influential ways in which American popular culture has engaged with ideas of India, and through a large cache of newspaper and magazine articles, this chapter will trace its history for the first time.

The subsequent section zooms in on the activities of two groups of historical actors that became particularly conspicuous in pushing the boundaries of Indo-U.S. relations, namely American Missionaries on the one hand and Indian 'revolutionaries' and politicians on the other. Joanna Simonow's contribution examines the key role of missionaries from the United States in organizing famine relief in late colonial India. Her chapter *American Humanitarianism in colonial South Asia* embeds a case study on famine relief in Bombay organized by the Marathi Mission during the late 1890s in the wider context of the creation of an American 'moral Empire' that took shape roughly at the same time. As Simonow reminds us, the year 1896 marked the beginning of a prolonged period of amplified hunger in British India, which historians commonly divide into the famines of 1896–97 and 1899–1900. Although Americans had shown interest in alleviating social ills in South Asia before, the responses of missionary societies, philanthropists and the religious press in North America to these famines were unprecedented in many ways. The heightened interest of Americans to share their wealth to relieve famine India emerged against the background of U.S. imperialism, changing Anglo-American relations and the growing influence of foreign missionaries on American perceptions of India. The chapter examines the surge of US-sponsored famine relief in India in the late 1890s as a defining moment in the larger history of the encounter between South Asia and the United States, and explores some of the multidirectional engagements of both societies that emerged against this background.

An utterly different facet of American missionary engagement in South Asia is put under scrutiny in historian Harald Fischer-Tiné's chapter on *American 'Boyology' and the YMCA's work with early adolescents in India (c. 1900–1950).* As the author compellingly demonstrates, American and Canadian volunteers working for the largely US-led and financed Indian YMCA (or simply Y) in South Asia were key in developing sophisticated programs to save the subcontinental adolescents from the perceived danger of moral corruption. Their 'boys' work' schemes attempted to inculcate 'modern' norms and values with a view of preparing potential future Indian leaders for political autonomy. The Y's Boys' Department was founded in 1901 and it reached the peak of its influence during the two-and-a-half decades preceding Indian independence in 1947. The chapter not only discusses concrete

elements of the program, such as sport, camping and scouting, it also reconstructs the wider transnational trends that led to the new attention to “one fifth of the world’s boyhood”. A particular focus lies on the medico-sociological American discourse of ‘boyology’, which can be discerned in contemporary manuals designed for the YMCA workers and educators involved as well as in their practical schemes. The unique, quasi-scientific approach to boys’ work adopted by the Y was regularly marketed as being distinctly ‘American’ and superior to British colonial schemes, because it allegedly fostered the Indian boys’ capacity for ‘self-government’ and democracy. In sum, Fischer-Tiné’s case study allows to grasp how both global currents in the perception of boyhood and adolescence as well as transnationally circulating American models of character building, habit formation and citizenship training played out in the Indian subcontinent, leaving many legacies in the post-colonial societies of the region.

The next two chapters in this section shift camps, as it were, putting the spotlight on Indian political activists that became active in the United States. Neilesh Bose’s contribution explores *India and the US in Entangled Histories* through the lens of the illustrious Indian Revolutionary Taraknath Das. Das (1884–1958), an itinerant nationalist and anti-colonial activist who spent considerable time in the United States through educational and activist networks, remains a relatively under-studied figure in both North American and South Asian histories. Given his centrality to the revolutionary *Ghadar* movement, educational training in the USA, and his role in North American and European interwar anti-colonial organizations, his peripatetic life and many writings, serve as a window into braided histories of race and citizenship between the United States of America and British India in the late colonial era. Seen alongside other “expatriate patriots” such as Mohandas Gandhi and Shyamji Krishnavarma, Das is a central figure in the history of overseas nationalism in the early to mid-twentieth century. Bose’s chapter focus on his relationship with the United States of America, as the space provided a fertile ground for his activism, his relationship to citizenship, and overall politics of nationalism. In addition to offering a coherent picture of his activities as an Indian nationalist, Neilesh Bose presents Taraknath Das’s life as a layer of American history, discussing why and how his struggles with citizenship flow from a longer history of citizenship in the United States of America.

The much shorter, though equally fascinating American experiences of another illustrious Indian political leader are discussed in Nico Slate’s essay. *The American Journeys of Rammanohar Lohia* concentrates on events that took place in the spring of 1964, when Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, a prominent socialist member of the Indian Parliament, was arrested in Jackson, Mississippi, for attempting to enter

a "whites only" restaurant. Slate's skillful and fine-grained reconstruction of the subsequent events is most illuminating: The US State Department quickly sent a formal apology to the Indian Ambassador. In response, Lohia informed reporters that both the State Department and the Indian Embassy "may go to hell." When told that the American Ambassador to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson, would offer his apologies, Lohia replied that Stevenson should apologize to the Statue of Liberty. Lohia was not new to the United States, nor to being arrested while fighting injustice. In the summer of 1951, he spent over a month traveling across the United States, encouraging a range of audiences to take up civil disobedience in the struggle against American racism. Interestingly, the Indian socialist used his sojourn to meet with dozens of activists, intellectuals, and political figures, including Walter Reuther, Pearl S. Buck, Norman Thomas, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Albert Einstein. By examining Lohia's American excursions, Slate's chapter thus manages to shed new light on the larger intersection of socialism and civil rights within and between the United States and India.

The third and final part of this anthology eventually moves from the realm of missionary and political intervention and politics to the fields of Science, Development and Technocracy. The contributions assembled in this section leave no doubt that these were equally important sites in the wider scheme of Indo-US interactions, particularly during the twentieth century.

Sujeet George's contribution to *U.S Missionary Ethnography and the Indian Social Anthropological Tradition* dovetails nicely with the chapter on the YMCA's boyology in the previous section, in that it confirms that the boundaries between missionary and academic projects conducted by Americans in South Asia could be rather porous. By the middle of the twentieth century, the 'village' had come to be regarded both as a signifier and as an object of enquiry in the Cold War era of developmental modernization. While development experts charted a specific trajectory of comprehending the village in the Global South, the social anthropological tradition of early postcolonial India offered granular case studies of specific villages, such as M. N. Srinivas' 'Rampura'. They have come to occupy a significant intellectual place for their detailed representations of social relations in a moment of transition immediately after the end of colonial rule. Karimpur—the fictive name given to a village in North India by the American missionaries William and Charlotte Wiser—was chronicled by the couple for over a decade from 1925 onward. The major publication emerging from this fieldwork, a monograph titled *Behind Mud Walls*, is now widely regarded as a benchmark for the village studies that emerged thereafter. In the later decades, however, Karimpur's status as an exemplar of 'the little community' was usurped by scholarship produced within the developing area studies paradigm. George interprets the representation of 'Karimpur' as a moment of transition from a framework of missionary ethnography

to Cold War-era Area Studies. Even as the Wisers charted a different trajectory in the succeeding years through their establishment of the Indian Village Studies, the tales of 'Karimpur' were revived in the 1960s by the anthropologist Susan Wadley. By looking at the continuities as well as divergences in 'Karimpur' as the object of enquiry over a period of almost half a century, the article attempts to chronicle a facet of the early history of Area Studies.

The democratic and modernist messianism that, as we have seen, characterized already early twentieth initiatives launched by American missionaries, continued to shape purportedly secular US development projects implemented in India after the country had become independent in 1947. This is marvelously illustrated in Prakash Kumar's chapter on *the Development of Uttar Pradesh Agricultural University.* Postcolonial India's tryst with higher education came in the shape of Radhakrishnan Commission Report of 1949, that proffered setting up a network of "rural universities" in India. The commission spoke of the ills of political democracy and liberal regime that might encumber these universities to erode villages in a wave of commodification, industrialization and urbanization. Rural universities were called upon to bring expertise that would not estrange rural people from village life but rather would be bound to rural India's "great traditions." After all, "[n]o man who is cut off from that tradition becomes a good farmer," the commission said. A decade later, the USAID became involved in the establishment of a network of twelve state agricultural universities in India between 1960 and 1971. The advocacy for a technocratic, productivist "land grant" vision in India through these institutions marked a different stage in the evolution of pedagogy, science, and expertise in India's extended postcolonial moment. The questions of freedom and democracy remained pertinent in a new climate of meritocracy as India embarked on a path of agricultural development through the green revolution. These institutions were embedded in a new context of youth culture and politics. The reproduction of caste-based hierarchies in an expanding agrarian economy, youth migration out of agriculture due to aspirational reasons, and the engagement of social groups and epistemic communities with agrarian technologies to both cement and question existing identity was implicated in possibilities of democratic transformation. In a broader sense, Prakash's chapter thus sheds new light on the entanglement of Americanist technocratic visions with democratic possibilities in postcolonial India before 1971.

The third section and the book close with Nicole Sackley's pioneering exploration of *Women's Work and the Indo-American Roots of the Global Handicraft Trade.* Scholarship on development in Nehru's India, and US participation in these projects, has focused largely on agriculture and the emergence of the Green Revolution, population control, or on various schemes for "village uplift." Nehruvian-era interest in "traditional" handicrafts has been largely ignored, positioned either as a concession

to Gandhian cottage industry or as an effort to delineate the ancient roots of the new nation. Yet, handicrafts were also an important realm of employment and seen as valuable export for India in the 1950s and early 1960s. Unlike agriculture, handicraft development offered a realm where women actors could carve out significant niches for themselves. Sackley's essay focuses on the Indo-American alliances that built the Central Cottage Industries Emporium in New Delhi, a centre of a global handicraft trade. The Central Cottage Industries Emporium brought together the socialist- and Gandhian-inspired Indian Cooperative Union, Rockefeller and Ford philanthropy, the Government of India, the Museum of Modern Art, diplomatic culture, and New York department stores. At the heart of the story are women as development agents, both well-known figures such as Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Fori Nehru, and Pupul Jayakar, but also a lesser-known cast of American diplomatic wives, Indian women salespeople and traveling agents, and female artisans. Exploring these connections, Sackley's essay provides a new perspective on the role of women in development, Gandhians in Indo-US encounters, and handicrafts in crossing boundaries of art, commercial culture, and economic development.

Taken together, the eleven studies assembled in this volume provide fascinating new insights into the long trajectories and multifaceted character of Indo-American interactions. They will hopefully stimulate more research in this rewarding field of historical inquiry.

Notes

1 Thanks are due to Sujeet George, for his efforts in organizing a workshop on Indo-US Entanglements at ETH Zurich in January 2020. It was out of that memorable event that most contributions to this edited volume have grown. We also thank Amanda Katz for preparing the index and Denise Lim for helping to compile the bibliography.

2 It is revealing that the Berkeley City Council in California recently renamed a street after Kala Bagai, a female South Asian immigrant, not on account of her lifetime achievements, but because "the racism she experienced at the hands of Berkeley homeowners is a history all residents should know". https://scroll.in/global/973377/a-century-after-she-was-pushed-out-of-her-home-by-racists-a-us-city-is-honouring-mother-india, accessed 27 February 2021.

3 Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 42.

4 Paul Kramer, "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (December 2011), 1348–91.

5 Kris Manjapra, "Transnational Approaches to the Study of Global History: A view from the Study of German-Indian Entanglement," *German History* 32, no. 2 (2014), 288; Indrani Chatterjee, "Connected Histories and the Dream of Decolonial History," *South Asia* 41, no. 1 (2018), 69–86. Also see C. A. Bayly et al., "On Transnational History," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (December 2006), 1441–1464; Ian Tyrrell, "Reflections on the Transnational Turn in United States History: Theory and Practice," *Journal of Global History* 4, no. 3 (2009), 453–74.

[6] For typical examples see Meenakshi Ahamed, *A Matter Of Trust : India-US Relations from Truman to Trump* (New Noida: HarperCollins India, 2022); Thomas William Shillam, "Shattering the 'looking-glass world': the Congress for Cultural Freedom in South Asia, 1951–55," *Cold War History* 20, no. 4 (2020), 441–59; Atul Bhardwaj, *India-America Relations 1942–62: Rooted in the International Order* (London and New York: Routledge, 2019); Pallavi Raghavan, "Journeys of Discovery: The State Visits of Jawaharlal Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan to the United States", in Manu Bhagavan (ed), *India and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 19–35; David C. Engerman, *The Price of Aid: The Economic Cold War in India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, *2018);* Rudra Chaudhuri, *Forged in Crisis*: *India and the United States since 1947* (Noida: HarperCollins India, 2014); Ashok Kapur et al. (eds), *India and the United States in a Changing World* (New Delhi etc.: Sage, 2002); Andrew J. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds: The United States and India, 1947–1964* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); and Dennis Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot: the United States and India's Economic Development* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

[7] The only comprehensive recent account of Indo US-interactions that covers a longer historical period — predominantly, though not exclusively, from a diplomatic history perspective — is Srinath Raghavan, *Fierce Enigmas: A History of the United States in South Asia* (New York: Basic Books, 2018). Most of the few other existing studies taking a *longue durée* approach are either slightly outdated or of a rather uncritical nature. See, for instance, M.V. Kamath, *The United States and India, 1776–1996: the Bridge over the River Time* (New Delhi: Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 1998); and R. K. Gupta, *The Great Encounter: A Study of Indo-American Literary and Cultural Relations* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1986).

[8] See, for instance, Petra Goedde, "US Mass Culture and Consumption in a Global Context," in David C. Engerman, Max Paul Friedman and Melani McAlister (eds) *America in the World, Volume IV, 1945 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 281–303; Ludovic Tournès, *Américanisation: une histoire mondiale, XVIII-XXI siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2020); Robert W. Rydell and Rob Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna: The Americanization of the World, 1869–1922* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2005); and Susantah Goonatilake, "*Cultural Imperialism*: A Short History, Future, and a Postscript from the Present," in Bernd Hamm and Russell Smandych (eds), *Cultural Imperialism: Essays on the Political Economy of Cultural Domination* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 32–51.

[9] Anthony Hopkins, *American Empire: A Global History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018). See also Kristin L. Hoganson and Jay Sexton (eds), *Crossing Empires: Taking U.S. History in Transimperial Terrain* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020).

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[11] Rini Bhattacharya Mehta, "Screening/Meaning: Hollywood's Long Career in India," *Comparative American Studies An International Journal* 12, no. 1–2 (2014), 93–98; Nikhil Govil and Eric Hoyt, "Thieves of Bombay: United Artists, Colonial Copyright, and Film Piracy in the 1920s," *BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies* 5, no. 1 (2014), 5–27; Babli Sinha, *Cinema, Transnationalism, and Colonial India: Entertaining the Raj* (London and New York, Routledge, 2013); Bradley Shope, *American Popular Music in Britain's Raj* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2016) and Stéphane Dorin, "'*Swingin' India*: Circulations coloniales et postcoloniales du Jazz en Inde," *L'Homme* 202 (2012), 169–192.

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(2018), 193–234; Mrinalini Sinha, *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

[13] Durba Ghosh, "Another Set of *Imperial Turns*?" *The American Historical Review* 117, no. 3, (2012), 772–793.

[14] Harald Fischer-Tïné, "Marrying Global History with South Asian History: Potential and Limits of Global Microhistory in a Regional Inflection," *Comparativ* 29, no. 2 (2019), 52–77.

[15] See, for instance, Michael J. Altman, *Heathen, Hindoo, Hindu: American Representations of India, 1721–1893* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Gwilym Beckerlegge, "The Early Spread of Vedanta Societies: An Example of 'Imported Localism'," *Numen* 51, no. 3 (2004), 296–320; Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 11–45; Carl Jackson, *Vedanta for the West: The Ramakrishna Movement in the United States* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); and Alan D. Hodder, "'Ex Oriente Lux': Thoreau's Ecstasies and the Hindu Texts," *Harvard Theological Review* 86, no. 4 (1993), 430–438. For a somewhat more popular account see also Philip Goldberg, *American Veda: From Emerson and the Beatles to Yoga and Meditation—How Indian Spirituality Changed the West* (New York: Harmony Books, 2010).

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[28] Suchintan Das, “In an Alien City: American Soldiers in Wartime Calcutta (1942–1946),” *Global Histories* 7, no. 1 (2021), 140–67; and Yasmin Khan, “Sex in an Imperial War Zone: Transnational Encounters in Second World War India,” *History Workshop Journal* 73, no. 1 (2012), 240–58.

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