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International Student Orientations: Indian Students at American Universities Around the Turn of the Twentieth Century

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATIONS:

INDIAN STUDENTS AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES AROUND THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

by

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Abstract

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Advisor: Duncan Faherty

This dissertation examines the writings and experiences of five Indian international students in the United States during late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By drawing attention to these students, I attend to the ways in which notions of freedom, progress, and inclusivity associated with American higher education, and liberalism more generally, are related to structures of racialized and colonial dispossession in India. I build these arguments by reading archival sources such as university administrative records, student publications, personal and official correspondence, as well as understudied aesthetic works, such as memoirs, travel narratives, essays, doctoral dissertations, and public lectures. These historical materials show us how Indian international students oriented themselves amidst the shifting power relations between British colonialism, Indian anticolonial nationalism, and American higher education. I explore how the American university became a site that both encouraged Indian international students' anticolonial political work, while simultaneously managing and curtailing their sense of political possibility. I discuss how some Indian international students were drawn to the emancipatory tendencies of liberalism that they encountered on campus, but they never pushed their analysis to probe the ways in which racism and colonialism created the material conditions that guaranteed rights, liberties, and economic prosperity only for some sections of society. Conducting a historical analysis of the Indian international student therefore reveals the

American university to be a paradoxical space. On the one hand, we find ample evidence that suggests that international students were welcomed into the campus community and supported in their educational and political endeavors by their alma mater. On the other hand, the international student's experiences also reveal how racism operated both within and outside the university. Furthermore, the international student draws attention towards how the larger context of British colonialism in India pushed students to attend American universities, and correspondingly, how the American exceptionalist nationalist ideology functioning on campuses pulled Indian students into their orbit of influence.

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Introduction

Indian Students Abroad

The July 1911 issue of *The Modern Review*, colonial India's most influential left-liberal monthly, carried an article by Sarangdhar Das, an Indian international student at the University of California, Berkeley.[1] Das titled his article "Why Must We Emigrate to the United States of America?" and made an enthusiastic case for young Indians to study abroad in the US. Das highlighted several positive features of an American education, including the relative ease of gaining admission to universities, a familiar language of instruction, the freedom to study any discipline, as well as a generally low cost of attendance. Furthermore, Das emphasized that it was easy to work part-time in a factory, farm, or boarding house during the semester and through the summer break, which not only provided a means to financing the entire venture of studying abroad, but also represented an opportunity to learn "a good deal more than any university education can give."[2] Das argued that studying abroad wasn't merely an act of selfish individualism, but that it held the potential to change the fundamental socio-politics of colonial India at large. "You must change the conditions that surround you," Das advised, "To do this you have to have the right kind of education before you try to educate the masses. This education is available nowhere except in this country. Come here annually by hundreds, whether you have any money or not."[3]

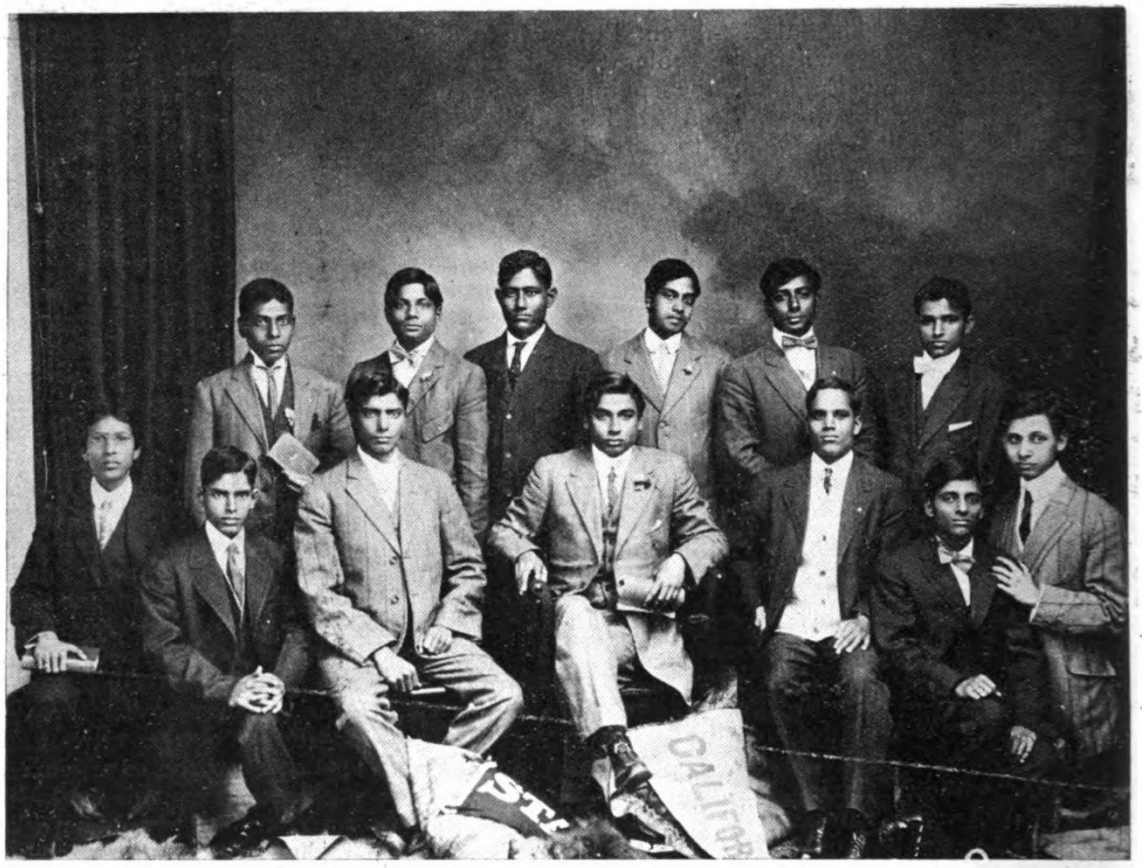


Figure 0.1: Photograph (circa 1907) of Indian international students attending the University of California, Berkeley as well as Stanford University. Sarangdhar Das is the second person standing on the left. Image from The Modern Review, *courtesy of the HathiTrust Digital Library.*

This dissertation shines a light on the experiences, writings, and contexts of five Indian international students who joined US colleges and universities around the turn of the twentieth century. Attending to the lives of these international students provides an insight into ties between American higher educational institutions and the British colonial occupation of South Asia. This temporal framing also allows us to situate these international students within the American context of racism and xenophobia that flourished at the time. As students voyaged to and studied at US universities, they encountered firsthand experiences of racial discrimination and violence within the United States as well as across the globe-spanning British empire. These students also came in contact with revolutionary movements erupting across Europe and the

Pacific at the time. The historian Seema Sohi writes that it was through these experiences juxtaposing oppression with emancipation that "Indians came to see themselves not simply as migrants seeking economic opportunity, but as politicized workers who understood the transnational dimensions of racial subjugation."[4] I focus on the experiences of five Indian international students at American universities to study the performances and infrastructure out of which this radical commitment was forged. How did these international students upset the status quo? What were their frustrations with and attachments to the American university? How do their writings and experiences trouble notions of freedom, progress, and inclusivity that are often associated with higher education?

There was a general uptick in Indian students' desire to study abroad over the turn of the twentieth century because the higher educational system in India at this time was deeply compromised. Not only weren't there enough colleges and universities to serve a region of its size and population, but the few universities that did exist functioned as one of the strongest pillars supporting the Raj. Gauri Viswanathan calls the dynamic between education and English rule in India a "mask of conquest," and stresses that the purpose of all state-sponsored education in India was to create a general consent to colonial domination.[5] This colonial atmosphere was deeply antagonistic to the growing anticolonial nationalist movements at the time. The rise of the anticolonial Swadeshi movement in particular, which emphasized industrial self-sufficiency and halting the importation of manufactured goods from England, raised the need for a highly skilled workforce who could build and run a modern mechanized economy. After getting barred from attending English universities based on race restrictions in the early twentieth century, and after having difficulties with crossing the language barrier at universities in Japan and Germany, Indian students increasingly started attending American universities in order to receive a modern

higher education. Students like Sarangdhar Das, who were inspired by the strengthening wave of anticolonial nationalism in India, started viewing the American university as holding the essential tools to help India gain its independence and build a prosperous new nation.

These students found a particularly welcoming environment in American universities. Sarangdhar Das noted in his article that Indian international students "do not know of any prejudice within the college campus. On the other hand, the Professors and the American students alike are very friendly to us, and their lack of aristocratic spirit draws us nearer to them."[6] Indian students found many American professors, university administrators, and fellow students who sympathized with their struggle against the British empire and their fight to create a new democratic republic in India. The shared narrative of India's struggle against British colonialism and the United States' own anticolonial revolutionary origins brought Indian students closer to students and faculty on campus. Overall, these Indian international students encountered a liberal social and pedagogical milieu on campus that nurtured many of their anticolonial politics. This discourse of liberalism was grounded in concepts of individual freedom, equal rights, and democratic national governance, which upheld the US national project as the definitive manifestation of these notions. Indian international students who were critical of the Raj found that these liberal ideals gave them the epistemological framework to critique colonialism and imagine a new national project based on representative government, equal opportunity, and cosmopolitanism.

This close proximity to the academy and the resulting embeddedness in a liberal political setting also reveals the limits of these students' understanding of political possibility. We gain a sense of these limits in Sarangdhar Das's article when he quotes another unnamed Indian international student as saying,

> So intense and vital is the spirit of democracy in the American universities that anyone, having a strong desire but without means of confidence in his powers, in a short time is sure to be inspired by their many life-giving impulses and can start with a new lease on his capacities … Let only those come who can do and dare, suffer and achieve. In short America is par excellence the place for a thorough training both technical and in manliness, and no other country can give this in a more efficient way.[7]

The anonymous student's representation of the US as the paradigmatic space where hard work is bountifully rewarded is recognizable as the "American exceptionalist" national mythology. American exceptionalism is a strain of framing the United States' history, political economy, and national identity in terms that emphasizes romantic notions of individual freedom, justice, equality, and progress in order to shore up the notion that there is something uniquely special about the United States. American exceptionalism names an indescribable quality that explains the United States' hegemonic position over other nations, as well as obscures the structural work of oppressive forces like racism, settler colonialism, and patriarchy in shaping the American national project. American exceptionalism, therefore, operates both as a justifying logic that validates any action in service of the national interest, as well as a cover-up that draws attention away from the state's imbrication with racism, dispossession, and genocide. We can see these operations at play in the anonymous student's description of the American university as the exemplar institution that embodies liberal notions of democracy, freedom, inclusion, and socio-economic progress. The anonymous student's remarks on the American university present it as being open to all who are willing to put in the work, which completely occludes the fact that American universities at the time were, for the most part, exclusively serving middle and upper-

class white men. One wonders what this student thought of the structural racial exclusions that barred Black, Indigenous, Latino, Jewish, and Irish students from enrolling at universities at the time. This inability to grasp the structural operation of racism in scenes of American exceptionalism reveals the limitations of these international students with their reckoning of the deeper internal contradictions of liberal politics. In serving as mouth pieces for American exceptionalism, these students fell short of imagining a futurity for post-colonial India in terms that exceeded the racist, patriarchal, and colonial underpinnings of liberalism.

Even as these students painted an overtly idealistic and utopian picture of the American university, their writings and experiences nonetheless betray the impact of racism on Indian international students. It must be emphasized that there were a variety of white supremacist organizations, like the Ku Klux Klan and the Asiatic Exclusion League, operating in the US at the time. These groups were ascendent and mobilizing to ban and deport Indian migrant laborers, who were arriving in increasing numbers in the Pacific coast states at the dawn of the twentieth century. The Bellingham and Vancouver race riots of 1907, which I discuss in my third chapter, attest to the xenophobic virulence with which Indian migrants were met. During these riots, Indian laborers were specifically targeted and violently attacked by large mobs of angry white men, who believed that they were driving down wages and stealing jobs. In addition to propagating these hateful and untrue allegations against Indian laborers, Nayan Shah notes that American politicians and newspapers also routinely spread rumors that Indian men would indecently harass white women and children.[8]

Indian international students were also attacked as part of this larger campaign of anti-Indian racism. Sarangdhar Das's article, for example, addressed the fact of racism in the United States in the following way,

> Outside the college there is a section among the general public who are totally ignorant of our social life and our modes of living; and they have a sort of prejudice which is of very little harm to us. Some of them take us for Negroes at the first sight; but when they come to know our nationality, they don't show any hatred. [9]

Das's remarks downplayed the effects of racism in the US by (mis)characterizing it as something that happens outside academic spaces, as something that primarily affects Black people, and as a cultural misconception that can be remedied through conversation. In the chapters that follow I demonstrate how these claims were patently false, but more importantly, I discuss why Indian international students felt the pressing need to convince more students to come to the United States, despite the racism that they encountered. We see shades of this contradiction in Sarangdhar Das's article, which largely trumpeted the United States' brilliance, but where Das nonetheless conceded that some elements of American society did indeed "hate and despise" Indians.[10] However, he also stressed that these sentiments were "born of total misunderstanding," which the international student could rectify through a cross-cultural dialogue. [11] These views attempted to walk a tightrope between recognizing the xenophobic and racist sentiments in American life, but still encouraging prospective students to come. Anticolonial nationalist students like Sarangdhar Das believed that the risk of racialized violence was miniscule compared to the rewards of studying in the United States, where they imagined the sheer force of hard work tilting the historical arc of fate in favor of freedom and justice. These students recognized the untapped agency of the international student in not only correcting the racist preconceptions about Indians in the United States, but also in gaining the technical skills as well as developing the liberal American common sense that could win India's freedom. As they

optimistically imagined a progressive and democratic post-colonial India, they also remained inured to the fact of racism and the lingering effects of colonialism in structuring the new nation.

Such views highlight how the international student can be understood as a figure that brings out the disavowed links connecting liberalism, racism, British colonialism, American higher education, and the emergence of Indian nationalism. In her book *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, Lisa Lowe also draws relationships between these seemingly antagonistic formations of power. Lowe writes that liberalism is a "project that includes at once both the universal promises of rights, emancipation, wage labor, and free trade, as well as the global divisions and asymmetries on which the liberal tradition depends, and according to which such liberties are reserved for some and wholly denied to others."[12] Lowe theorizes that this framing of liberalism, as a philosophical impulse that includes both discourses of freedom as well as a naturalization of oppression, has been deliberately obscured by different modes of hegemonic power, and in particular, through the modern formation of academic disciplines.[13] Academic disciplines, Lowe posits, have long upheld a façade of liberalism that proposes a "narrative of freedom overcoming enslavement that at once denies colonial slavery, erases the seizure of lands from native peoples, displaces migrations and connections across continents, and internalizes these processes in a national struggle of history and consciousness."[14] The international students that I discuss in this chapter were products of this academic system. They provide a point of insight into the concealed intimacies between freedom and subjection, racism and emancipation, as well as higher education and colonialism, allowing us to continue to chart the operations of power in modernity.

My dissertation expands on Lowe's theorizations through its heightened focus on universities and international students. I explore how the university became a site that both

encouraged Indian international students' anticolonial political work, while simultaneously managing and curtailing their sense of political possibility. I discuss how some Indian international students were drawn to the emancipatory tendencies of liberalism that they encountered on campus, but they never pushed their analysis to probe the ways in which racism and colonialism created the material conditions that guaranteed rights, liberties, and economic prosperity for some sections of society. Conducting a historical analysis of the Indian international student therefore reveals the American university to be a paradoxical space. On the one hand, we find ample evidence that suggests that international students were welcomed into the campus community and supported in their educational and political endeavors by their alma mater. On the other hand, the international student's experiences also reveal how racism operated both within and outside the university. Furthermore, the international student draws attention towards how the larger context of British colonialism in India pushed students to attend American universities, and correspondingly, how the American exceptionalist nationalist ideology functioning on campuses pulled Indian students into their orbit of influence.

The specific form of the relationality that emerges between Indian international students and American university that I outline is deeply indebted to Roderick A. Ferguson's theorizations in his book *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (2012).[15] Ferguson studies the post-World War II context of radical minority movements in the American academy to argue that "systems of power responded to these protests by attempting to manage that transition in an attempt to prevent economic, epistemological, and political crises from achieving revolutions that could redistribute social and material relations."[16] In addition to violently crushing student protests by calling in the National Guard, Ferguson highlights that universities also deployed "affirmative modes of power" that could curtail demands for structural

changes through a normalizing process of "courtship, invitation, and acknowledgement."[17] By bringing previously excluded minoritarian groups into the academy, the American university was able to "redirect originally insurgent formations and deliver them to the normative ideals and protocols of state, capital, and academy."[18] I want to suggest that this same process of recognition and inclusion was deployed on Indian international students in the early twentieth century. Indian students excluded from British and Indian universities found their beliefs welcomed and supported at American institutions, which tempered their revolutionary demands and exported the hegemonic ideology of American exceptionalism to South Asia.

My analysis diverges from Ferguson's theorization through my focus on an earlier historical period. Ferguson stresses that the specific global political conjuncture of the post-World War II period created the conditions for higher education to adopt affirmative modes of power in its bid to regulate and discipline insurgent minoritarian movements. He writes, "Not until the years after World War II would 'yes' become a word attached to minority difference. Prior to that minorities would be most familiar with 'no' and its many lacerations. In the decade of the sixties, however, new technologies would arise for saying 'yes.'"[19] Ferguson elaborates on this point by highlighting numerous landmark insurgent student movements that took place in this period, all of which pushed for objectives centered around recognition, inclusion, and diversity. He discusses the fight to secure open admissions in the late 1960s at City College in New York, which paved the way for more African American and Puerto Rican students to enroll at CUNY; he studies the Lumumba-Zapata movement at the University of California at San Diego from 1969 to 1972, which fought for changes in admission and curriculum to better represent the interests of African American and Chicano students; he also attends to the rise of the ethnic studies and women's studies movements in the 1950s and 1960s, which sought to

challenge the white patriarchal canon by bringing in more works from minority traditions. Ferguson stresses that the specific historical conjuncture represented by these overlapping insurgent minority student movement compelled higher education to change its earlier stance in relation to minority cultures. No longer could they uphold their earlier policies of outright exclusion and discrimination. Consequently, Ferguson argues, an alternative mode of administering difference emerged, which was composed of management techniques that "incorporated difference for the good rather than disruption of hegemony."[20]

My own analysis suggests that this pattern of addressing minority culture within the academy actually predates the post-World War II period that Ferguson considers crucial. The history of the Indian international student in the United States highlights the fact that the academy had already refined its affirmative technologies of power five decades earlier, at the turn of the twentieth century, when increasing numbers of international students started attending US colleges and universities. By turning to an earlier period of higher education's interest in regulating minority cultures, we see that inclusion and normalization were already within academia's ideological toolkit. Affirmative power, in other words, was not a new innovation, but rather, it was a tried and tested method that was later deployed on a much vaster scale in response to the larger insurgent student movements of the post-World War II era. If we understand affirmative power as a strategy that predates the post-World War II rise of insurgent minority movements, we come to see its embeddedness with an earlier structure of colonial power that governs the very foundations of Western modernity.

I make these arguments by focusing on the experiences of individual students. Each of my chapters curates how particular Indian international students navigated through their American academic experiences, with the larger intention of bringing out the relationships

between liberalism, racism, colonialism, nationalism, and higher education. I use the term "curation" to characterize the methodology and organization of this dissertation because it stems from the phrase "to care for." This is an approach similar to Gayatri Gopinath's in her book *Unruly Visions: The Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora* (2018).[21] Here Gopinath writes that curation isn't simply a matter of juxtaposition and display, but that it also entails engaging the past in a careful manner that "seeks to reveal not coevalness or sameness but rather the co-implication and radical relationality of seemingly disparate racial formations, geographies, temporalities, and colonial and postcolonial histories of displacement and dwelling."[22] My chapters aspire towards these objectives by focusing on individual students in order to curate their writings and experiences in ways that lay out previously undiscussed relations between the United States, the British Empire, and India. By adopting a biographical approach that centers the individual student, cares about their personal experiences, and counters the violence of abstraction, I am able to draw attention towards the imbrication of seemingly incommensurate historical contexts, cultural traditions, and political beliefs. In the pages that follow, I direct attention towards how international students demonstrate the ways in which notions of freedom, progress, and inclusivity associated with American higher education, and liberalism more generally, are deeply related to structures of racialized and colonial dispossession.

My first chapter "Anandibai Joshee and the Insurgence of International Students," draws attention towards the first Indian woman to receive a degree in medicine and to study abroad in the US. Here I discuss Anandibai Joshee's experiences in the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia between 1883 and 1886. This chapter reads Joshee's personal correspondence, her biographies, and her records from the Woman's Medical College to excavate the precipitating factors leading her to study abroad and to shed light on her experiences as an

international student. I discuss how Joshee used her position as the first female Indian international student in the United States to build a meaningful transnational solidarity for the empowerment of women in India. I argue that the significance of attending to Anandibai Joshee's experiences lies in the remarkable agency that she was able to exercise as an international student, which had been previously withheld from her by the Hindu patriarchy. She shows us how international students were able to use their institutional affiliation to build political power, as well as highlights the ways in which the university would use international students to bolster their reputation and export the virtues of American exceptionalism.

My second chapter, "Sudhindra Bose's International Student Orientations," explores how Sudhindra Bose navigated through the racism and xenophobia that he encountered in the US during first decades of the twentieth century. Bose came to the United States from Bengal in 1904. He received his B.A. in English from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 1907 and his Ph.D. in Political Science in 1913 from the State University of Iowa. Immediately following his doctoral studies, he continued teaching Oriental Studies at Iowa as an adjunct lecturer until his demise in 1946. I discuss how Bose used the platform and connections provided by his lifelong connections to academia to challenge racism against Indians in the US and build public sympathy for the decolonization of India. This chapter draws on archival sources such as campus publications, student organization records, as well as Bose's memoirs, essays, and his testimony in front of the Congressional Committee on Immigration and Naturalization to shed light on his experiences as an international student, community organizer, professor, and public intellectual. Bose's writings and experiences highlight how international students with anticolonial perspectives were welcomed and supported at American universities, as well as uncovers the ways in which internal structures of racism within the university administration

mistreated scholars of color. Bose allows us to see how international students were able to use their location within academia to exercise an oversized amount of influence on public discourse, impacting discussions on immigration, citizenship, as well as anticolonial solidarity.

My third chapter, "Taraknath Das and the Cosmopolitics of International Education," turns to the one of the most radical international students in the early twentieth century. Taraknath Das was an exiled anticolonial revolutionary. He was the first Indian to seek political asylum in the US from Great Britain in 1906. Das enrolled at a number of different universities, including Norwich University (Vermont), the University of Washington in Seattle, the University of California at Berkeley, and Georgetown University's School of Foreign Services, between 1906 and 1923. Das was heavily involved with the Berlin-India Conspiracy, a plot to covertly use German support to arm hundreds of disaffected Indian laborers in Washington and California and violently overthrow the British in South Asia as they were militarily weakened during the First World War. Das's experiences bring out the many conflicting interests operating in American universities. For example, I discuss how certain American professors collaborated with British spies to have Das deported, and how other American professors testified in court and attested to his strong moral character in order help him secure American citizenship. Taraknath Das's ability to leverage campus resources to fight British colonialism highlights the global political stakes of international education. His writings and experiences bring out the agency of international students to attack colonial superpowers, as well as provides insight into how the university's technologies of affirmative power work to temper these insurgent movements over time.

My final chapter "Orientalism and the Quotidian Life of International Students" strikes a different tone from the previous chapters by shifting attention to the international student

experiences of two pro-colonial aristocratic international students. In this chapter I discuss *America Through Hindu Eyes*, a memoiristic work written by Indu Bhushan de Majumdar and Prince Victor N. Narayan about their experiences at Yale and Cornell between 1905 and 1909. Whereas my earlier chapters focused on students who sought to use their affiliation with American universities to counter colonialism and patriarchy in India, this chapter studies the cozy relationship between certain elite universities and the Indian aristocracy, who supported the British regime. What is particularly striking about Majumdar and Narayan's recollection of their collegiate days is their focus on the everyday aspects of student life. *America Through Hindu Eyes* provides rich details about common events in the campus milieu such as college parties, meals at the dining hall, excursions with friends, etc. This chapter analyzes these quotidian scenes to discuss the prevalence of Orientalism and patriarchy in structuring campus life. I argue that Majumdar and Narayan disclose the links between elite American institutions and British colonialism in India.

Recent work on the origins of the South Asian American diaspora has uncovered detailed accounts of the experiences, politics, and aesthetics of migrants during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Manan Desai's *The United States of India: Anticolonial Literature and Transnational Refraction* (2020), for example, focuses on the first decades of the twentieth century and conducts archival research to uncover the interactions between Indian anticolonial exiles like Lajpat Rai, who came to the United States to escape British persecution, and American radicals like W. E. B. DuBois and Agnes Smedley.[23] These interactions, Desai argues, allowed both the Indians and the Americans to develop a nuanced critique of racism, classism, and colonialism that grasped the interconnectedness of modern systems of power. In a similar vein, Vivek Bald's, *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America* (2015) has

recovered the largely forgotten story of Bengali seamen who arrived around the time of the First World War and jumped ship at the New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia waterfronts to escape brutal maritime labor.[24] Bald's research has revealed that the greatest number of these Bengali migrants lived in Harlem, where they became a part of the Black, Puerto Rican, and West Indian communities. While Desai's and Bald's books reveal the pathways to migration as well as the political and intellectual engagements of the Indians in the US in the early twentieth century, Seema Sohi's *Echoes of Mutiny: Race, Surveillance, and Indian Anticolonialism in North America* (2014) examines this same historical period to study how the increased migration of Indians to the United States was leveraged by white supremacists to implement restrictive immigration laws as well as expand the surveillance state.[25] Sohi's research outlines the diverse political and rhetorical strategies used by Indians to counter the racism and xenophobia that characterized American culture and politics during this period. It would also be remiss to not include Nayan Shah's *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (2011) in this scholarly overview of recent works in the cultural history of South Asian America.[26] Here, Shah turns to the initial decades of the twentieth century to recover the violent tension between the queer sociality cultivated by working class Indian men, on the one hand, and the heteronormative and racializing operations the state, on the other. Shah discusses how this tension shaped the very meaning of liberty, citizenship, sexuality, and the legal structure in the United States and Canada at this time.

While these and other studies have facilitated a richly layered understanding of the experiences, beliefs, and actions at the initial formation of the South Asian American diaspora, they have all treated the Indian international student as a marginal figure in the diaspora's larger history.[27] Building on these projects' invaluable insight, my dissertation turns to largely

undiscussed archival materials in order to shift the Indian international student from the periphery to the center of analysis. I contend that focusing on individual international students brings to light an alternative understanding of the formation of the South Asian American diaspora, which discloses understudied relationships between colonialism, racism, higher education, human migration, and radical political movements. This emphasis on Indian international students during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries allows me to situate them both within and in tension with hegemonic powers.

The critical-theoretical potential of my dissertation inheres in its interdisciplinarity, bringing together conversations in Asian American Studies, South Asian Studies, American Studies, and Critical University Studies. Drawing on archival sources such as university administrative records, campus publications, student organization records, correspondence, as well as largely unread aesthetic works, such as memoirs, essays, doctoral dissertations, scholarly lectures, and stump-speeches, I explore the influence that the American university – and its structuring conditions of racial capitalism and settler colonialism – exerted on the Indian international student. Moreover, I am keen to learn how the Indian international student troubled and provoked the communities that they found themselves in. I inquire into the networks of allies, the spaces of refuge, and the insurgent desires that made it possible for Indian international students to survive the virulent racism that they encountered.

As I look to expand our understanding of the early formation of South Asian America, I must address related questions about the provenance of my primary sources and my methodological approach to the interpretation of archival sources more generally. My research on the writings and experiences of Indian international students has drawn deeply from university special collections as well as digital archives whose contents originate from

governmental and higher educational institutions. These institutional ties carry a politics that sets the terms of inclusion into and exclusion from these depositories, which in turn shapes the technologies that organize archival materials and make them available for scrutiny. The sources that I analyze are therefore not transparent reflections of the past, but rather, they are the products of complex processes. Vincent Brown, drawing on Michel-Rolph Trouillot, notes that these processes involve "the creation of sources, the making of archives, the retrieval of events as moments of importance, and the interpretation of retrospective significance."[28] Brown and Trouillot stress that these processes produce historical knowledge as an "artifact of power." [29] In order to read and recover historical materials without reproducing the hegemonic logics on which they are predicated, I am guided by Lisa Lowe's injunctions in her article "History Hesitant" to pay extremely thoughtful attention to the ways in the archive is being read and represented in my analysis. [30] Lowe writes that the impulse to recover forgotten narratives from the archive (such as my project's) often reproduces progressive teleologies that obscures the conditions of violence, terror, and unfreedom that persist under the very sign of their abolition. Rather than repeating reductive narratives that go from erasure to representation, or simplistic narratives that go from domination to resistance, Lowe calls on scholars to "pause to reflect on what it means to supplement forgetting with new narratives of affirmation or presence." [31] Building on Lowe's injunction, my study relates narratives of freedom, equality, and progress associated with higher education, and liberalism more generally, to the structuring conditions of racialized dispossession that remains fundamental to modernity itself. In so doing, my dissertation proceeds with a heightened attention to archival evidence, while preserving a sense of hesitation towards any chronology that reproduces the "model minority" narratives of social progress and individual autonomy with which international students have been predominantly

associated. Whereas the international students I study maintain feminist, anticaste, and decolonial perspectives, their imaginative horizons reflect the limitations of their time, often leading them to support extractive and hierarchal ideologies (like nationalism and authoritarianism) that continue to haunt us today. My project takes root within these contradictions to triangulate between the experiences of individual Indian international students, their historical and social context within American universities, and their visions of radical change.

Ultimately, this dissertation presents a cultural study that uncovers a past that was no less contentious than the situation faced by international students today. Issues like racist violence and prejudice, visa troubles, and transnational political activism were of major concern to Indian international students over a hundred years ago, just as they remain in the present. By highlighting how these earliest cohorts of Indian international students confronted these difficulties, my dissertation aims to provide a study of how Indian international students used their university for purposes that go above and beyond the mere acquisition of codified knowledge and credentials.

Chapter 1

Anandibai Joshee and the Instrumentalization of International Students

> I fear no miseries. I shrink not at the recollection of dangers, nor do I fear them. – Anandibai Joshee [1]

On the 11th of March 1886, Philadelphia's Academy of Music hosted a celebratory occasion – the thirty-fourth graduation ceremony of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania. What had usually been an annual ritual of local importance had received international attention this year, because on this occasion, Anandibai Joshee became the first Indian woman to earn a medical degree and made news across the world. Queen Victoria, who had openly held "opinions unfavorable to the recognition of medical women in her dominions,"[2] changed her mind upon hearing of Anandibai's graduation, and issued a statement expressing her "interest and appreciation" for Anandibai's achievement.[3] Such a shift in perspective was also visible in Maharashtra, Anandibai's native province in India, where many prominent newspapers, such as the *Maharatta* and the *Kesari*, lionized her and started to adopt a progressive stance on the question of women's education.[4] Anandibai's achievement broke through the longstanding Hindu patriarchal and British colonial tradition of denying educating to women, and started to change the conversation regarding women's social and economic role in India.

Figure 1.2: Anandibai Joshee with her degree from Meera Kosambi et al, A Fragmented Feminist.

In a little less than a year from her graduation, on February 26th 1887, Anandibai succumbed to a protracted struggle with tuberculosis, after having returned to her childhood home in Poona. She had been prone to recurring bouts of sickness throughout her time in the United States, whose weather didn't suit Anandibai at all. In her very first winter in Philadelphia, she contracted diphtheria and almost lost her life, if not for the personal attention and care from her college's Dean and professor of chemistry, Dr. Rachel Bodley.[5] Anandibai's final bout of sickness can be traced to the months following her graduation, when she had to cut her internship short at the New England Hospital in Roxbury, Massachusetts, because of her deteriorating health.[6]

Following her cremation, in a most inexplicable act, Anandibai's husband sent her ashes back to the Carpenter family in Roselle, New Jersey, instead of customarily immersing her remains in a holy river. The Carpenters, and Mrs. Theodocia Carpenter in particular, had been essential to helping Anandibai. Mrs. Theodocia Carpenter had been regularly corresponding with Anandibai for three years prior to her visit to the United States. Mrs. Carpenter encouraged Anandibai to study in the U.S. and helped by providing valuable books and advice. When Anandibai finally arrived in New York City in 1883, Mrs. Carpenter greeted her and took her home. During her three years in the U.S., Anandibai spent most of her holidays with the Carpenters in New Jersey. Anandibai would refer to Mrs. Carpenter as her "aunt" and Mrs. Carpenter reciprocated with a maternal attitude towards her. Upon receiving Anandibai's ashes, the Carpenters then buried her in their ancestral plot in the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery, along the Hudson river, where her gravestone still stands.

Figure 1.3: Anandibai's gravestone. Courtesy of the South Asian American Digital Archive.

Anandibai's epitaph reads, "First Brahmin woman to leave India to obtain an education," and inscribes in stone one beginning of the continuing history of Indian international students in the United States. Whereas the epitaph draws attention to her high caste and her most publicly reported achievement, it remains silent on her life-long struggle against patriarchy and colonialism, which prompted her to embark on her studies in the first place. Anandibai's journey to college was marked by the repeating painful experiences that encompassed the experience of being a woman in late nineteenth-century India. In an environment where women were denied education, married as children, and made to suffer unspeakable traumas, Anandibai's quest to study abroad must be read as an attempt to change the very fabric of social relations in India. Anandibai hoped to use her American education to build women's hospitals and schools in India. She wanted to fundamentally shift the position of women in Indian society by making a new ideal of femininity – grounded in access to formal education and professional jobs – imaginable and desirable.

This chapter draws on the writings and performances of Anandibai Joshee to explore the form and phenomenology of international students. One of the contentions of this dissertation is that focusing on international students in the United States draws attention to the ways in which the narratives of freedom and progress associated with American higher education, and liberalism more generally, are deeply related to the structures of racialized and gendered dispossession that remain fundamental to modernity itself. By centering attention on Anandibai, I explore the ways in which her life relates Hindu patriarchy, British colonialism, and American higher education, thereby disclosing the intersection of a variety of different power interests. In writing about Anandibai, I seek to theorize the kinds of influence that international students bear on their campuses and in their home communities, as well as excavate the ways in which

international students are themselves formed through the impressions they receive in their educational experiences. I enter Anandibai's archive attempting to think through the contradictions of the international student as she embodied them. On the one hand, Anandibai's life allows us to consider the international student as opening possibilities of creating transnational solidarities that sustain insurgent movements. On the other hand, her experiences also attest to the depth of international students' imbrication with the university, which was then, as it is today, a mechanism for reproducing racial, classed, and gendered hegemony.[7]

The international student, as exemplified by Anandibai, emerges as a colonial subject with startling political and aesthetic capacity, yet whose agency was circumscribed by the epistemological limitations and material realities of the time. Not only was Anandibai able to fundamentally shift the conversation about the education of women in India, but she also levelled a courageous public critique of both Hindu patriarchy as well as British colonialism. And yet, even as Anandibai struggled against these systems of oppression, her vision of an alternative way forward was grounded in discourses of Hindu nationalism and American exceptionalism which delimited the boundaries of her own radical perspective.

In discussing these contradictions, which situates international students both within and in tension with hegemonic powers, I elaborate on the international student as an instrument that operates in a variety of modalities. The *Oxford English Dictionary* has a lengthy entry on the word "instrument," situating it variously as an apparatus designed to carry out tasks, as a legal document entailing certain rights and obligations that brings people into relation, or even as a person or as a bodily organ that conducts a given function.[8] The instrument, in other words, roams the borderlands between the subject and the object, between the material and the abstract, as well as between the aesthetic and the political.[9] Indeed it is the international students' very

location in between these dichotomies that endows them with the capacity to engage in practices that are normally foreclosed and withheld. We might understand international students' instrumentality as being created through their embodied practices like traveling to and dwelling in a foreign place, as well as through their legal identity as it is established by material objects like passports and visas. The ways in which international students become both subjects of power as well as objects of desire speaks towards a form of identity that unsettles received notions of performativity, race, and agency.

This notion of international students as an instrument is also evoked in Roderick Ferguson's *The Reorder of Things: The University and its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (2012). Here Ferguson writes in the context of post-World War II American higher education and characterizes international students as,

> a tool to foster U.S. dominance, that is, as an alibi for the racial benevolence of a U.S. nation-state that knows how to develop and recognize immigrant subjects. As such, elite students from foreign countries would study at U.S. universities in order to assist in the redevelopment of their own countries after graduation. For American colleges and universities, those students would be trained to export liberal capitalist ideologies to their communities abroad. Through its training of foreign students, the American academy would become a principal author of the meanings and directions of the international, working with state and capital to articulate the international as a safe haven for capitalist property relations.[10]

Ferguson is quite apposite in placing the international student at the very center of the ideological state apparatus as an essential agent that extends the U.S. imperial mission's global ambitions. In Ferguson's theorization, the international student becomes instrumentalized as a multifarious tool

that carries out a number of different functions: the international student upholds a violent fantasy of racial progressivism by emphasizing the "benevolence" of the nation-state that allowed the colored immigrant student inside its borders; the international student also exports U.S. ideology abroad through their transnational social worlds; moreover, and perhaps, primarily, the international student becomes an agent of capital that extends property relations to new horizons, literally shaping the direction of capital by opening new markets and innovating new logistics of management and control for diverse contexts. At best, the international student evokes a well-intentioned cosmopolite, and at worst, the international student comes across as a member of ruling class openly safeguarding racialized capital's interests.

This framing of international students generally, and Indian international students in particular, as instruments aligned with the hegemonic order also bears out in Vijay Prashad's landmark study *The Karma of Brown Folk* (2000). Here, Prashad takes a sweeping critical look at the South Asian American diaspora at the close of the twentieth century, and asks "How does it feel to be a solution?"[11] Prashad's point is to think about the legacy and the future of the South Asian American community as a "weapon against Black folk" in the United States.[12] This kind of instrumentality, Prashad writes, was embodied by the generations of technocratic Indian international students who became identified as "model minorities" that scaled the heights of the academy, of industry, and of the arts. These "model minority" South Asian migrants' consent to living up to the standards established by whiteness made them a bulwark that evidenced a kind of relative racial inferiority of Black people.[13] Prashad righteously calls out the South Asian American community for participating in the ongoing attack on Black people by celebrating the false notion of "Asian intelligence" that lends credence towards belief in a natural racial hierarchy that perpetuates antiBlackness.

As a tool, as a solution, or as a weapon, the international student surfaces in the critical lexicon as a powerful agent sharing an infelicitous complicity with white supremacy. Whereas both Prashad's and Ferguson's framing of the international student are focused on the post-World War II period, Anandibai's life belongs to an earlier chapter in history, when the material conditions and epistemological horizons took a different shape. Unlike the international student conjured by Prashad and Ferguson, who studied abroad with some mixture of family or governmental backing, Anandibai's decision to study abroad came as a last recourse and incited sharp ire from the Hindu gentry who opposed the very idea of women's education. Anandibai's context in late nineteenth-century colonial India represented a political field that created a very different model of the international student than is familiar to us today.

I want to argue that by going further back in the history of international students, we might see their instrumentality perform in ways that rest uneasily with power. "Instrumentality" connotes a much more capacious range of activities than, say, tools that serve specific purposes or weapons that kill. By studying the ways in which Anandibai exercised her own instrumentality, a more complex relationship towards power surfaces. We notice the ways in which Anandibai used the resources offered by her university to build support and sympathy for Indian women. I find it very strange to imagine that in the late nineteenth century, Indian femininity was being reinvented at the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania by a single international student. How was Anandibai able to build the solidarity needed for this immense task? What forms of sanctuary did she find in her institution? To what extent was Anandibai able to upend and/or transform hegemonic structures?

Instrument of Solidarity

Chandra Talpade Mohanty identifies "mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests" as the underlying basis of solidarity.[14] These precursors to solidarity recognize the shared humanity that transcends differences of race, culture, and national identity, and they underscore each person's obligation to care for and be responsible to others. But the question remains: How do we establish the common ground on which solidarity, mutuality, and accountability can be built? What forges the sensibility amongst people from different cultures to care for those with whom they have little in common?

This section addresses these questions by studying Anandibai's relationship with Mrs. Carpenter. I have already alluded to the depth of their relationship when discussing Anandibai's demise. In this section I provide more details regarding the nature and context of their kinship. By studying Anandibai and Mrs. Carpenter's letters, I theorize Anandibai as an instrument of solidarity.

Mrs. Carpenter's first encounter with Anandibai was a chance occurrence. In 1880, while seated in her dentist's waiting room in New Jersey, Mrs. Carpenter came across a two-year-old issue of *The Missionary Review* and happened to read its "Letters from Missionaries and Native Friends" section.[15] It is here that she read a letter written by Gopalrao Venayak Joshee, Anandibai's husband, regarding the prospect of traveling with his fourteen-year-old wife from India to the U.S., where she could receive a modern formal higher education.

Gopalrao's letter recognized the "growing want" of women's education that was impeding India's rise to "eminence among civilized countries."[16] Gopalrao even went as far as squarely blaming the elite Brahman caste for the undereducation of women in India, writing in a

most despondent tone, “My attempts have been frustrated, my object universally condemned by own people. I have difficulties to encounter and no hopes to entertain in India.” Under these circumstances, Gopalrao made a display of his virtuosity and stressed, “I cannot give up … I will try to the last, there being nothing so important as female education for our elevation, morally and spiritually.” He then presented a proposition: would it be possible to go to the United States with his wife where she could get an education? Gopalrao’s letter sought financial support to help defray the cost of this project.[17]

It is the manner with which Gopalrao represents himself in this letter that I find most disturbing. Gopalrao comes across as the quintessential modern progressive crusader at odds with tradition and power. Furthermore, the emotional quality of his language situates him as a man of feeling, who is prompted by suffering and injustice to act. Such a performance effectively conceals the nastier details about Gopalrao and Anandibai’s marriage, such as the fact that she was married at the age of nine, when he was twenty-sex, as well as her history of sexual assault and physical abuse at his hands. Anandibai even suffered through a miscarriage when she was twelve years old. The feminist scholar Meera Kosambi has written that Gopalrao supported Anandibai’s education because he sought to use her to advance his own public image. Gopalrao hoped to secure a reputation of himself in the public eye as a progressive and modern husband by positioning Anandibai as a pathbreaking educated and working woman.[18]

Gopalrao’s interlocutor, Rev. Royal G. Wilder, was among the most prominent American missionaries at the time. Wilder had recently returned to the United States following three decades as a missionary in Anandibai’s native province, Maharashtra, and he became the founding editor of *The Missionary Review*.[19] Despite Gopalrao’s show of earnestness, Wilder discouraged the entire project. Instead, Wilder argued for Gopalrao to convert to Christianity,

which he believed provided the truest pathway towards civilizational progress, and he also suggested that Anandibai might cobble together an education from the existing missionary network in India. By converting and remaining India, Wilder argued that Gopalrao and Anandibai would execute an immense service in helping bring their "dear friends into the same blessed faith of the Gospel."[20] Anandibai and Gopalrao were useful to Wilder only as vehicles for spreading Christianity; he was unable to think of women's empowerment as an end in itself. For all intents and purposes, it seemed that Anandibai's quest for higher education had arrived at an end.

Mrs. Carpenter later recalled her initial reaction to reading this exchange and emphasized her surprise that "so called heathen Gopal should be able to write such beautiful letters, and that his wife should be hindered in an enterprise so laudable for her young age!"[21] Although Gopalrao's letter failed to have an impact on Royal G. Wilder, it made a deep impression on Mrs. Carpenter, who wrote to Anandibai the very next day. Mrs. Carpenter's initial letter to Anandibai opened with an extraordinary gesture of kinship. "Dear Sister," she wrote, "I do indeed think of you as a sister, which is why I have addressed you thus."[22] It is important to underscore that at this point, Mrs. Carpenter did not even know Anandibai's name. Having only read the exchange between Gopalrao and Wilder, which never explicitly named Anandibai and only mentioned her age, Mrs. Carpenter didn't have much concrete information at hand. But she still felt comfortable with the thought of bringing Anandibai into her family. Mrs. Carpenter's letter sought to build a relationship based on intimate concern and a desire to learn from cultural difference.

Meera Kosambi writes that there are many personal reasons why Mrs. Carpenter would have been so affected by Anandibai's struggles. She had lost four of her own children in the past eight years, which may have made her particularly attuned to the difficulties faced by children.

Moreover, the morning after her dentist visit, Mrs. Carpenter's eight-year-old daughter Eighmie woke up and mentioned a dream where her mother wrote to a person in "Hindustan." Mrs. Carpenter had superstitious inclinations, and she mentions this dream as being the definitive sign she needed to write to Anandibai.[23]

By the late nineteenth century, when Anandibai and Mrs. Carpenter started their correspondence, a variety of contradictory visions of India were circulating within the American imaginary. India came to be represented as primordial and uncivilized among the missionary community, or as timeless and great as seen in the works of the Transcendentalists, or as a cultural encounter that shaped the meaning of racial and gender identity.[24] Anandibai's position within this larger cross-cultural imaginary was anchored to the prevalent belief that entrenched Hindu patriarchal structures had created a generalized condition of misery for Indian women. Mrs. Carpenter was sympathetic to Anandibai's mission to gain a formal education because she had in all probability come across the what was then discussed as the "plight of the Indian woman," a trope which had long been a staple of American public discourse. As early as 1790, theater-goers in Philadelphia and New York could have attended a performance of *The Widow of Malabar*, which was set in southern India and whose plot revolved around the infamous Hindu practice of *sati*, the ritual immolation of a woman on her husband's pyre.[25] Over the nineteenth century, representations and discussions of *sati* had become commonplace in the United States, especially among the evangelical community, who saw it as encapsulating the primitiveness and barbarity of Indian culture.[26] Even beyond *sati*, Indian women were broadly referred to in the most degrading of contexts such as child marriage, harems and sexual depravity, as well as *purdah* or the restriction of women from public observation.[27] Under Western eyes, the Indian woman aroused a call to action prompted by a recognition of her suffering.

Anandibai herself was very forthright about her views on Indian women. In her letters she confirmed that the "plight of the Indian woman" was, in fact, true. Replying to Mrs. Carpenter's first letter, Anandibai described the village that she had recently moved to as "an abode of superstition and orthodoxy where women are but … birds in a cage. *You may easily imagine to what degeneracy India has been reduced*" (emphasis mine).[28] Anandibai's descriptions of the lives of women in India reproduced racist tropes that situated Indian culture as being backward and violent. However, her account of the condition of women also interrupted the liberal fantasy that held that India would progress into modernity under the guidance of British colonial rule. Through her insistence on her lived reality of subjection, Anandibai stressed the continued willful failure of both Hindu patriarchy and British colonialism in creating the conditions for women to live full and flourishing lives.

Even as her intentions were liberatory, the specific language used by Anandibai in her letters to Mrs. Carpenter represented Indian women as ornamental beings, or as "a subject who lives as an object," to borrow Anne Annlin Cheng's theoretical terminology.[29] Cheng situates ornamental femininity as emerging not only from the racialized flesh of Oriental women's bodies, but also from the aesthetical and material "supraflesh" – clothing and accoutrement, hair and make-up, styles of speaking, walking and sitting, among many other embodied and aesthetic practices – that surrounds the interpretations and representations of Asian women.[30] Ornamentalism, then, opens a conceptual framework for thinking through gendered racialization, with specific attention to the Orient and the mélange of people, objects, and aesthetics associated with it. Crucially for Cheng, ornamentalism insists on the ways in which race is assembled "not through organic flesh but instead through synthetic inventions and designs, not through corporeal embodiment but rather through attachments that are metonymic and hence superficial,

detachable, and migratory."[31] Situated amidst the unresolved dichotomies of the subject / object, interiority / exteriority and agency / oppression, ornamental personhood exposes the limits of thinking race solely as colored flesh, thereby creating the possibility of envisioning a form of identity that is "not undone by objectness but endure[s] as object."[32]

This sense of ornamental personhood manifests in Anandibai's letters to Mrs. Carpenter through her descriptions of Indian femininity, as well as via the photographs and trinkets that often accompanied her correspondence. For example, in a letter dated November 1st, 1880, Anandibai sent Mrs. Carpenter her portrait photo (Figure 3),[33] alongside an overview of the violence inflicted on widows and wrote:

> A young girl when widowed before she attains puberty must only wipe away the red mark on her forehead, which you will notice in my picture. But when she comes of age she is given a peculiar dress to put on; her head is shaved against her will and desire; and the glass bangles and wreathes of beads are broken; she is in fact deformed and reduced to a state horrible to look at; she is not allowed to move in society, especially when marriage and other ceremonies are performed; her face if first seen in the morning before [that of] anybody else is a bad omen for the day; if a traveler meets a widow on his first setting out, it is ten to one but he will return home, and sit a while before he resumes his journey, but at home she is bitterly cursed by her parents-in-law; she is not given enough to eat; she must not eat twice a day; in short religion enjoins her not to enjoy life.[34]

Figure 1.4: Engraving based on Anandibai's portrait photograph. Image from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly, *courtesy of the HathiTrust Digital Library.*

Anandibai's description of widowhood and her portrait photograph disclose the two political aesthetic poles of Hindu women's ornamentation. On the one hand, Anandibai's description of Hindu widowhood outlined the ways in which abjection was performed by society at large through restrictions on what widows could wear, how much they could eat, and their access to communal spaces. This was a theologically managed mode of abandonment that was materialized and policed through ornamental markers: cheap and plain clothes, a shaved head, a malnourished body. On the other hand, Anandibai's portrait called to attention a sense of abundance that marked the upper-caste married Hindu woman. This portrait – ostensibly taken in a professional studio – featured Anandibai as being seated on a pouffe chair next to a closed book

that rested on an elaborately carved table. Anandibai herself is decked out in jewelry – she wears a prominent nose ring, multiple ear rings, bracelets and bangles, as well as anklets on both feet - and she is draped in a tastefully designed sari that wraps around her body with many elegant folds.

The seemingly contradictory senses of abjection and abundance associated with Indian women in Anandibai and Mrs. Carpenter's letters synthetically created a human figure that "emerges *as* and *through* ornament."[35] Reflecting on her initial correspondence of Anandibai, Mrs. Carpenter noted the deep impression made by Anandibai's portrait photo and wrote, "How strange seemed the bare arms with many bracelets, the bare space under one arm, the bare feet with their anklets and toe-rings, and the mark on the forehead!"[36] Anandibai's ornamentalization allowed her to enter Mrs. Carpenter's sensibility and build a "vibrant presence."[37] This sustained exchange gave both Anandibai and Mrs. Carpenter a space to develop a more refined sense of each other's personal context and cultural background. Alongside photographs, they exchanged books, periodicals, flowers, seeds, local bric-a-brac, and even locks of hair.[38] Over the three years of their regular correspondence, Mrs. Carpenter came to know Anandibai in a capacity that far exceeded the crudely reductionist tendencies of the public discourse on Indian women, and she displayed a heightened sentiment of care towards Anandibai by personally guiding and encouraging her through the difficult process of studying abroad. Through their exchange, Anandibai and Mrs. Carpenter were able to negotiate their differences and establish a common framework of understanding each other's context and perspective.

Solidarity, writes Chandra Talpade Mohanty, is a form of relationality that requires diversity and difference to be core values that are recognized and respected.[39] It is important to underscore the fact that unlike the American and British missionaries that Anandibai had come

across in person, Mrs. Carpenter was the first white person who made no attempt to convert her, and who clearly demonstrated a caring sentiment towards her as well as a respectful curiosity about her cultural background. Anandibai came to rely on Mrs. Carpenter as an essential pillar of support, and she expressed the depth of her gratitude to Mrs. Carpenter by writing,

> We are day by day being tied closely and firmly, and I have no doubt that in a short time we shall [become] one in feeling and dealing. I already wish and feel that I should call you my aunt. There is a saying among us, 'it does not matter much if a mother dies, but let not an aunt die.' This expression will show you in what respect and estimation a maternal aunt is held among us. If you allow me, I wish to look upon you as such.[40]

The sense of kinship articulated by Anandibai here signifies a coming together across geographical and cultural divides, as well as builds a familial relationship that bridges racial differences. Anandibai's ornamentalized personhood instrumentalized her to become sensible to Mrs. Carpenter, and it allowed a relationship between them to grow.

Instrument of Insurgence

As Anandibai started making her intentions to study abroad public and began raising funds, she provoked a widespread outcry. Her home, above the post office in Serampore, Bengal, was mobbed by dozens of people every day. The fervent excitement of these mobs was often raucous enough to interfere with the operations of the post office below.[41] In deciding to study abroad, Anandibai was breaking Hindu dogma that forbade travel across the seas, as well as restricted the education of women. The chief causes behind the phobic reaction to Anandibai's

desire of studying abroad are rooted in Hindu patriarchy, which had an entrenched tradition of limiting women's freedom and authority by denying them an education. Anandibai distilled the chief concern that she had provoked by writing in a letter to Mrs. Carpenter, "hundreds show their own scruples, by urging that I am liable to go astray, and lead an unchaste life when unprotected by any nearest relative."[42] By studying abroad, Anandibai was risking excommunication, which would cause her to lose her most significant ties and relational networks forever.

A few weeks before embarking on her journey to the United States, Anandibai made a public address at Serampore's College Hall, where she justified the reasons behind her break with religious and gender protocol. Anandibai spoke in English to a large audience full of wealthy and influential people, including Col. Hans Mattison, the American consul general of India.[43] Anandibai began by emphasizing the dire necessity of women's health professionals in India and said,

> I go to America because I wish to study medicine. I now address the ladies present here, who will be the better judges of the importance of female medical assistance in India. I never consider this subject without being surprised that none of those societies so laudably established in India for the promotion of sciences and female education have ever thought of sending one of their female members into the most civilized parts of the world to procure thorough medical knowledge, in order to open here a college for the instruction of women in medicine. There is probably no country so barbarous as India that would not disclose all her wants and try to stand on her own feet. The want of female physicians in India is keenly felt in every quarter. Ladies both European and Native are naturally averse to expose

> themselves in cases of emergency to treatment by doctors of the other sex. There are some female doctors in India from Europe and America, who being foreigners and different in manners, customs, and language, have not been of such use to our women as they might. As it is very natural that Hindu ladies who love their own country and people should not feel at home with natives of other countries, we Indian women absolutely derive no benefit from these foreign ladies.[44]

Anandibai's opening salvo was bold in its critique and insightful in its assessment of the current state of affairs. She called out the hypocrisy of the colonial progressive societies, who purportedly came to do a whole lot of good, but had clearly achieved very little. Keeping note of these realities, Anandibai wanted to make Indian women more reliant on themselves, and certainly not on the male doctors or even the few white female doctors that were present in India at the time. She called for an educational and medical system that was made by and for Indian women.

The nationalist undercurrents of Anandibai's arguments feel rather gauche to readers today. As the speech moves on, however, we realize that couched within Anandibai's neat bifurcation between the native and the foreign, as well as the barbaric and the civilized, is a bold feminist insurgency against British colonialism and the Hindu patriarchy. Her daring erupted at another moment in the speech, when she was unabashed in pinpointing the reason why the educational setup in India had failed its female subjects: "the education imparted is defective and not sufficient as the instructors who teach the classes are conservative, and to some extent jealous. I do not find fault with them. That is the characteristic of the male sex. We must put up with this inconvenience until we have a class of educated ladies to relieve these men."[45] Ronak K. Kapadia describes the insurgent as a figure of "hope, possibility, futurity, and trespass"[46] and

we see Anandibai embodying these ideals in spades throughout her speech, especially in her clear-eyed critique of patriarchy and colonial rule.

Anandibai displayed immense courage in saying the truth in such a publicly incendiary manner. She laid bare the insidiousness of the patriarchal structure behind it all, and even connected the subjection of women to the influence of Hinduism on social relations. When asked if she was troubled by the thought of excommunication, Anandibai was straightforward and strategic in her reply: "I do not fear it in the least. Why should I be cast out, when I have determined to live there exactly as I do here? I propose to myself to make no change in my customs and manners, food or dress. I will go a Hindu and come back here to live as a Hindu."[47] This decision to hold fast to Hinduism is of essential importance to understanding how Anandibai navigated her American experience, and how she hoped to challenge the Hindu customs that forbade travel across oceans and seas. It was vital for Anandibai to maintain her sense of belonging to her people and culture, despite the separation necessitated by studying abroad. Anandibai believed that preserving Hindu customs in the quotidian aspects of life while abroad would allow her to claim that she had resisted devilish Western influences, as a gesture that implicitly asserted traveling abroad does not lead to corruption.

This adherence to Hinduism might call Anandibai's radicalism into question because it displays an affinity with the very hegemony that she was critiquing and trying to structurally alter. Based on her other writings, however, I would suggest that a better way of thinking about Anandibai's relationship with Hinduism as being in the mode of what José Esteban Muñoz has referred to as "disidentification," or a complex vacillation between conformity and disavowal that allows minoritarian subjects to negotiate a "phobic majoritarian public sphere."[48] Whereas Muñoz theorizes disidenfication as a queer modality of performance, I think that it provides a

cogent heuristic to situate Anandibai's relation to Hinduism as well. Her letters and her College Hall speech indicate that she faced an antagonistic social perception when word got out that she was looking for assistance to study in the U.S. and become a doctor. The consequences of the public retaliation for what was perceived as her insolence were quite egregious, and maintaining Hindu values was a survival strategy. In other letters her dissenting spirit comes out much more forcefully. "Our priests are prejudiced and corrupt as are those of other religions," wrote Anandibai in a letter to Mrs. Carpenter, "I dislike them as a class ... if there had been no priesthood this world would have advanced ten thousand times better than it has now. So you need not expect to learn anything from our priests, who are no doubt groping in darkness."[49] Anandibai here presciently critiqued the power of religious conservatism in enforcing sustained states of domination and discrimination, shedding light on her own disidentified relationship with Hinduism.

In order to maintain a connection to her roots, Anandibai took numerous trunks full of saris, jewelry, spices, lentils, and other diverse objects with her to America. This decision to conscientiously hold on to her culture turned Anandibai into a spectacle throughout her time in the United States. When she first arrived, Anandibai was profiled in media outlets like *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly* and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.[50] These articles were then reprinted in newspapers across the United States such as *The Troy Weekly Times*, *The Indianapolis Journal,* the *Dodge City Times, Texas Siftings*, and the *San Francisco Bulletin*.[51] These newspaper articles tended to portray Anandibai as a groundbreaking social reformer. They often drew attention to her young age, her idiosyncratic attire, her intelligence and her command over English, her determination to maintain a Hindu lifestyle while in the U.S., as well as the stiff opposition she faced in her struggle to gain a formal education.

It is very helpful to understand Anandibai's portrayal and circulation in the U.S. media landscape by thinking of her embeddedness in what Lauren Berlant terms the "intimate public of women's culture." Berlant's theorization allows us to understand how Anandibai became instrumental in building sympathy for the cause of Indian women's education among the American public. Berlant writes that the intimate public refers to groups of people who are "emotionally literate in each other's experience of power, intimacy, desire, and discontent."[52] Intimate publics are created and sustained by the circulation of texts and other objects, which expresses the community's shared interests. Women's culture refers to a specific instantiation of intimate publics, and Berlant traces its origins to the U.S. nineteenth century. Crucially for Berlant, the intimate public of women's culture, is a site where "compassionate liberalism" thrives under the guise of "melodramatic conventions that locate the human in a universal capacity to suffer."[53] What Berlant's theorization makes abundantly clear is that sympathy for those who are suffering is an essential component of women's culture, and this feeling of sympathy in turn produces solidarity as well as "white universalist paternalism." The intimate public of women's culture, in other words, reveals the ways in which sympathetic structures of feeling reproduce a "soft supremacy rooted in compassion and coercive identification." [54]

This intimate public of women's culture is abundantly discernable as the audience for Anandibai's profile in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly*, which provided some of the more in-depth coverage on her. Their article was headlined "Mrs. Anandibai Joshee, Leader of the Movement for Woman's Emancipation in India," and it included her portrait photograph (quite likely provided by Mrs. Carpenter) as well as extracts from her speech at the Serampore College Hall. The article began by contextualizing the subjection of women in India and stated in a most authoritative tone:

> We give on this page a portrait of Mrs. Anandibai Joshee, a Brahmin lady of high social standing, who has recently produced a sensation in India by breaking away from the fetters of Hindoo thought and customs, and announcing her determination to secure for herself all the advantages of education which are enjoyed by women in Christian lands. It is of course known to all that the position of woman in India is one of miserable degradation. Ground down by social and religious despotism, every womanly attribute repressed and strangled, her life is one of blank desolation. Here and there voices have been raised, during the last few years, in behalf of the emancipation of the sex from the tyranny of old ideas and superstitions, but no such pronounced action has been taken by any one as by Mrs. Joshee.[55]

Anandibai's public coverage, as exemplified by this *Frank Leslie* article, staged her struggles and aspirations as a melodramatic narrative through its exaggerated and sensational style. Anandibai was showcased as a bold insurgent activist, looking to fundamentally alter the fabric of Indian society by changing its gender relations. In her way stood the most adverse religious traditions and material conditions. Through this representation Anandibai also became objectified as an exotic contrast to white femininity, which the above excerpt characterizes as Christian. Berlant reminds us that in the intimate public of women's culture, bourgeois white women marshalled fantasies of the suffering endured by women of other races in order to find a language for their "own more privileged suffering at the hands of other women, men, and callous institutions."[56] In the excerpt above, Anandibai is described as coming from a dystopic elsewhere, where women live in wretched conditions, where dogma prevails over freedom, and where Anandibai alone fights to secure for her community the "advantages of education which are enjoyed by women in

Christian lands." The layers of fantasy in this description structured expectations of white femininity through its construction of Indian femininity. It articulated a norm of white femininity grounded in access to education that erased the general lack of education available to other races, immigrants, and poor white folk. *Frank Leslie's* profile of Anandibai normalized a "soft supremacy" while also extending concern and recognition.

Whereas the racism sustained by the intimate public of women's culture is abundantly discernable in Anandibai's coverage in the media, what Anandibai's specific case reveals about it is a surprising level of agency that being the target of sympathy also produces. Indeed, Anandibai's media portrayal does not stop at decrying the multifarious ways in which she was oppressed, it also stages her as a person with the willingness and a growing ability to make big changes. Anandibai's *Frank Leslie* profile figures her as a militant fighter who is unafraid of taking bold decisions. The article continues to shed light on Anandibai's bravery in the face of harsh social punishments and mentions:

> Impressed by a conviction that one of the best methods of helping her sex in India would be the promotion of thorough medical knowledge, she resolved to seek a medical education, and on the 7th of April last left Calcutta for Philadelphia, where she will enter the Female College for a thorough course of medical study. When it is remembered that the Brahmin creed forbids a member of the Order crossing the ocean, eating food other than that prepared by a Brahmin, or drinking water which has come in contact with non-Brahmin vessels, and imposes many other restrictions the violation of which involves the ostracism of the offender, with other severe penalties, the heroism of Mrs. Josheee in determining upon the

> step referred to becomes strikingly apparent, and at the same time appeals strongly to the sympathy of all Christian women the world over.

The ways in which Anandibai was marketed in the intimate public of women's culture depicted Indian femininity as being restricted by strange Brahmanical dogma. However, the article's reference to Anandibai's impending arrival in the United States, despite such massive constraints, spoke to her agency. Furthermore, the article used the very obstacles in Anandibai's path to explicitly call for more sympathy for her cause. Anandibai, then, was not *only* a mere pawn that propped up a notion of the racial superiority of white femininity. In fact, through her embodiment as a real person who was in the act of becoming a Subject, Anandibai was able to command attention on her own right and make demands.

As Anandibai found acceptance within the intimate public of women's culture, she was able to build strong emotional bonds and harness American public sentiment to do the work of changing the structural conditions of women in India. This public attention elevated Anandibai's profile and sparked a competition among other American medical schools that were open to women to recruit her.[57] In her letter formally seeking admission to the Woman's Medical College, which was among the most renowned women's colleges at the time, Anandibai wrote:

> Though I may not meet in all points the requirement for entering College, I trust that as my case is exceptional and peculiar your people will be merciful and obliging. My health is good and this with that determination which has brought me to your country against the combined opposition of friends and caste ought to go a long way towards helping me carry out the purpose for which I came, i.e. to render to my poor suffering countrywomen the true medical aid they so sadly stand in need of and which they would rather die for than accept at the hands of a

> male physician. The voice of humanity is with me and I must not fail. My soul is moved to help the many who cannot help themselves and I feel sure that God Who has me in His care will influence the many that can and should share in this good work, to lend me such aid and assistance as I may need. I ask nothing for myself individually, but all that is necessary to fit me for me work I humbly crave at the door of your College, or any other that shall give me admittance.[58]

There is a confident tone to Anandibai's letter, which made a bold proposition. Not only did Anandibai openly ask the Woman's Medical College to relax some of its admissions qualifications, but she also sought material assistance to secure her course of study. These requests were made on moral grounds that clearly outlined a sharp distinction between good and evil. Either support the "voice of humanity," or stand with the "combined opposition" who perpetuate a regime that willingly authorizes cruelty against women. This kind of a framework left little room for choice, especially for an institution that styled itself as being among the best women's colleges. The final words in the excerpt, hinting towards the likelihood that another offer was forthcoming, seemingly compelled the university administration to act quickly or miss out. The persona that emerges from this letter does not correspond to that of a pitiful object trapped by Hindu patriarchy. On the contrary, we see Anandibai performing a very sophisticated strategy of self-representation that prompts desirable responses from the hegemonic apparatus.

A week before Anandibai dated her admissions letter, Dr. Rachel Bodley, the Dean of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, wrote a letter to her institution's Executive Committee specifically on the importance of recruiting Anandibai, where she said:

> A half-dozen reporters of the city press representing as many city papers have been calling upon me and writing to me in regard to [Anandibai], during the last month, so

remarkable do they regard her coming to be.

> You will observe that Mrs. Joshee is a Hindoo, a member of the Brahmo Samaj, the new Hindoo sect. She brings therefore no testimonial (such as our printed rules require) from any missionary society.
>
> Would it possible for your Committee to perform the graceful act of awarding her a scholarship? This would at once distance all other competing institutions and make her sojourn with us certain. Her talents and learning undoubtedly qualify her for the scholarship. So much interest is felt in her, through the paragraphs of the reporters that doubtless interest for her medical education can be raised. From what Mrs. Carpenter says, I suppose 'half fees' would not be sufficient for her need.[59]

Dr. Bodley's interest in Anandibai is significant because it displays Anandibai's ability to occasion changes in established policies, and how she exerted an influence on institutional operations. To ensure that Anandibai entered the Woman's Medical College, Dr. Bodley was successful in relaxing admission criteria and in making significant financial assistance available that covered almost all the costs of attendance. When Anandibai started school in the fall semester, she was the youngest person in her cohort.

International Student Performance

> Ornamentalism identifies both an epistemology and its fugitive meanings; both instrumentality and *unexpected opportunities*. – Anne Anlin Cheng [60]

> As a force for the conversion of the politically privileged, sentimental politics has had *powerfully transformative effects* on which subordinate populations are recognized as candidates for inclusion in the body politic. – Lauren Berlant [61]

In the previous two sections, I sought to identify solidarity and insurgence as being two features of Anandibai's instrumentality. By examining Anandibai's ornamentalized personhood as well as her circulation in the intimate public of women's culture, I discussed her context as well as the modalities through which her instrumentality was manifested. I now turn to the notion of performance to consider the outcomes of her instrumentalization.

Joseph Roach theorizes performance as being expressed through a variety of forms, such as stage plays, musical acts, funerals, weddings, carnivals, speeches, parades, among other embodied practices. The common thread that identifies a performance according to Roach is its rootedness in the social processes of memory and forgetting, or within the transmission, alteration, and reproduction of the cultural practices around which communities cohere. Crucially for Roach, performance can take contradictory shapes. Performance signifies both the means of continuation of received tradition, as well as an improvisatory space where tradition can be substituted with alternative inventions. In other words, performance can reify hegemonic structures, and it can also yield unexpected opportunities for transformation.[62]

In order to read the university as a performative space, we must attend to its embodied practices. These include quotidian activities like teaching and learning, but they also spectacular

events like graduations. This range of performances reveal the university's role as an arbiter of truth, knowledge, and cultural memory. Whether it is through classroom instruction or by awards ceremonies, university performances shed light on how it goes about its task of regenerating power and hegemony, as well as transforming status quo to better fit the contemporary reality.

Let us turn to the scene of Anandibai's graduation to think her instrumentalization alongside university performances. Anandibai's graduation ceremony was a particularly well-attended affair. Her biographer, Caroline Healey Dall, who was present at the graduation, wrote that over three thousand people showed up. Dall described the auditorium as being totally crowded: "People stood against the walls and under the galleries, sat upon the steps, and filled every aisle and doorway."[63] Flowers, gifts, and banners decorated the auditorium, and Anandibai received "many valuable presents, books, instruments and money, to help carry out her purposes."[64] The *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* reported on the charged moment of Anandibai's graduation, writing that her "appearance on the stage yesterday, as she modestly advanced to receive her diploma, was hailed with repeated rounds of hearty applause from crowded audience, who seemed desirous to add all possible honors to the brave little woman, who has thus far accomplished her remarkable undertaking."[65]

Even as the local Philadelphia papers celebrated Anandibai's intellectual perseverance, it was her beautiful graduation dress that became the talk of the town. According to Caroline Healey Dall, some local media outlets falsely described Anandibai's exuberant sari as being "trimmed with tinsel," implying that her dress was flimsy. Others sought to correct the error, with one claiming, "There was no more 'tinsel' in her robe than there is in her character," and explaining that the shiny border to her sari, initially given to her as a wedding dress by her father, was made with flat drawn pure gold thread.[66] Such newspaper accounts situated Anandibai as an

exemplary figure who combated conservative social norms, and conducted herself in a dignified and exotic manner.

Anandibai's graduation ceremony provides an object lesson of performance as theorized by Roach and applies it to the university context. The graduation cemented the memory of Anandibai as a historic figure and enshrined the reputation of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania as the leading institution of its kind. This graduation ceremony demonstrated the ways in which higher education participates in the shaping of culture through its rituals. Much like the theater, Anandibai's graduation gathered an audience to behold her on-stage and in-costume. Anandibai herself might be recognized as being at the center of the plot, with her achievement of successfully earning a medical degree representing a difficult obstacle cleared by the protagonist. The graduation ceremony can then be read as a happy climax that portends a better future, with the cheering audience validating the vision of progress and justice embodied by Anandibai. This is the fulfillment of the university's liberal promise – the creation of a progressive futurity through performative acts. The hegemony of the American academy is symbolically reproduced, and the transformation of Indian gender relations is underfoot.

If the graduation ceremony can be read as bringing liberal ideals into being, then the hyperattention on Anandibai imbued the event with a racialized imaginary. In addition to actualizing liberal sentiments, the graduation ceremony also reified a racial hierarchy. The cheering audience saw reflected in Anandibai a fantasy of their ideal selves; a fantasy of progressive American whiteness as benevolent, modern, and dare I say it, exceptional. The moment when Anandibai received her degree signified her own achievement, while also cementing the authority of the liberal white American university. In as much as Anandibai was representing an idealistic vision of Indian people and culture, she was also generating what Eric

Lott terms “surplus symbolic value,” or the extra-representational capacity to generate the symbolic clout of whiteness as well.[67] In a sense, the audience were cheering themselves for being present at the moment that demonstrated their institutionally organized ability to affect distant cultures. When the thousands gathered at the Academy of Music collectively displayed their enthusiasm for Anandibai, they articulated a relationship across racial and national difference that simultaneously celebrated women’s empowerment in India as well as reveled in the transnational reach of white American values. Such academic performances call attention to the functions and power of the university. Anandibai’s graduation lays bare the role of the university in harmonizing liberal progressivism with a racial will to power that operates transnationally.

In celebrating Anandibai’s graduation, the Woman’s Medical College established itself as an exceptional institution that provided opportunities actively denied in other places. A vision of the world defined by the authority of American institutions and the triumph of American cultural values was made manifest through Anandibai’s graduation, and this was spread by the news media world over. The unexpected outcome of this whole performance was that another Indian feminist insurgent, Pandita Ramabai, was catapulted into the U.S. national imaginary. We might recall that Anandibai passed away less than a year after her graduation, and so she wasn’t personally able to materialize her goals of building the health and educational institutions that could elevate the conditions of women in India. Pandita Ramabai was able to build on Anandibai’s reputation, raise funds from American sympathizers, and sustain the fight for women’s lives in India by building the institutions to carry out this immense task.

Pandita Ramabai was a distant relative to Anandibai. They met for the first time at Anandibai’s graduation. Ramabai had been attempting to get a medical degree from the

Cheltenham Ladies' College in England, while Anandibai was in the United States. Ramabai was older than Anandibai, a mother, and a widow. Like Anandibai, she had also caused a great stir in India, albeit for different reasons. Ramabai was also criticized for her desire to gain a formal education and for studying abroad. But unlike Anandibai, who held on to her religious identity, Ramabai had become quite notorious for denouncing Hinduism by converting to Christianity.[68] Dr. Rachel Bodley invited Ramabai to Anandibai's graduation as well as facilitated a gathering the next day where Ramabai could share her views on the condition of women in India. Almost overnight Ramabai's own distinctively ornamentalized personhood became enmeshed within the intimate public of women's culture to instrumentalize her as well.

The *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* ran its profile of Ramabai under the headline "A Hindoo Widow Talks to American Women – A Unique and Striking Scene" and introduced her as a "Hindoo woman of high caste, her slight figure wrapped in the white robe of Indian widowhood, out of which looked a face of most picturesque beauty and expression." The article went on to describe her speech as follows:

> Standing in an easy attitude, with her hands clasped upon the desk before her, and speaking with a voice of the most musical sweetness and distinctness, and with the unembarrassed manner of a genuine simplicity, she told the story of Hindoo womanhood to her American audience in a fashion that won all hearts and rivetted all attention … And when the earnest little lady suddenly closed her address by asking an American company of educated and refined men and women to join with her in a moment's silent prayer "to the Great Father of all nations of the earth" in behalf of the missions of her Hindoo sisters to whose cause she has

> given her life, there was something almost startling in the strangeness of the unique situation.[69]

Much like Anandibai, Ramabai was also able to win over the hearts of her audience. Ramabai's speech, similar to Anandibai's at the Serampore College Hall, was deeply moving because of its clarity, frankness, and insurgent demand. If anything, Ramabai went a step further by appealing to her audience's Christian sentiments in order to make an even deeper connection. Ramabai's skilled use of English, her plain yet exotic attire, her troubling account of Indian femininity, all primed her acceptance among the progressive American intelligentsia.

Following this speech, Ramabai encountered a very welcoming reception in the intimate public of women's culture, which prompted her to extend her the duration of her visit. Ramabai spent the next two years travelling widely through the United States. During this time, she gave numerous speeches about the exigent need for women's empowerment in India at colleges, churches, the homes of sympathizers, and a variety of other locations. She even published a book titled *The High-Caste Hindu Woman* (1887) in Philadelphia, which included a memorium to Anandibai, and provided a critical appraisal of the status of women in Indian society.[70] Furthermore, she created the Ramabai Association in Boston, an institution whose goal was to regularly send money and other forms of aid to create women's schools and shelters. The Ramabai Association pledged to send $5,000 annually to Ramabai for ten years to build a secular school for women, and it raised $11,000 on top of that for a school building. Meera Kosambi writes that by 1890 the "Ramabai phenomenon" gained immense momentum in the United States and the Ramabai Association grew to a membership of over four thousand people, it included a subsidiary in San Francisco, and seventy-five "circles" across the nation. The Ramabai

Association far exceeded its fund-raising goals and sent Ramabai almost $90,000 over the next nine years.

In 1898, all of the various chapters and iterations of the Ramabai Association were reconstituted under the umbrella of the newly created American Ramabai Association in order to continue lending financial support in perpetuity. Kosambi's research into the papers of the American Ramabai Association as well as Pandita Ramabai's personal correspondence reveals that this financial support provided education to nearly five hundred girls in India in its first ten years. Furthermore, this financial support saved another three hundred women and girls during a famine in Maharashtra over the late 1890s. The support that Ramabai received from her American sympathizers also went towards building two institutions: the Sharada Sadan ("Home for Learning"), which was a residential education school for widows, as well as the Mukti ("Salvation") Mission, a hundred-acre farm that included a variety of facilities for women, including a school and shelters for sexual-assault survivors, elderly women, blind women, and those affected by the famine. By the turn of the century, over two thousand women were housed at the Mukti Mission.[71]

Coda: Instrumentalization, Agency, Direction

This chapter has considered Anandibai's life as a way of thinking through the processes and ramifications of international students' instrumentalization. By way of an exploration of Anandibai's performance as an instrument of solidarity and of insurgence, I have tried to articulate a vision of international students as racialized agents around whom multiple structures of power coalesce. Anandibai's experiences were always caught within the competing interests

of Hindu patriarchy, British colonialism, and American progressivism. These contexts shaped her instrumentality by demarcating the epistemological and material conditions of her life.

Anandibai's instrumentalization discloses a contradiction between agency and direction. It cannot be denied that Anandibai was able to achieve significant gains in the movement for Indian women's empowerment through her studies abroad. Neither can it be accepted that she was uninfluenced in this process and operated freely out of her own will. Even Pandita Ramabai, who arguably saw Anandibai's immense task through, was at once a devoted Christian but at odds with the Anglican church,[72] as well as a combative internationalist feminist but an ardent exponent of American exceptionalism.[73] Inhabiting this aporia between affecting the world and becoming affected by the world is what it means to become instrumentalized.

At the very time, instruments are prone to glitches, failures, and unexpected functionalities. Just as Anandibai was poised to use her education and marshal her supporters to materialize her vision, she passed away. The immediate cause of her untimely demise can be attributed to the state of medical science at the time; tuberculosis can today be cured or managed. However, her death can also be attributed to the operation of Hindu patriarchy working in tandem with British colonialism. It was precisely because of her high Brahman caste that Anandibai's parents were eager to get her married as a child. Having an unmarried teenage daughter risked social ostracization for upper-caste families, like Anandibai's.[74] Furthermore, Hindu culture ritualized the sexual assault of girls, and created the *garbhadhan* (impregnation) ceremony, which drew on holy texts to legitimize the violence being perpetuated. [75] The British administration and missionaries were well-aware of this practice. They would often decry Hinduism as being barbaric and backward. But, as Anandibai noted in her speech at the Serampore College Hall, they did little to actually address the situation. Gauri Viswanathan's

book *Masks of Conquest* (1989) has noted that the primary goal of all educational institutions in India was to create a class of colonial subjects who would faithfully serve and execute the imperial agenda.[76] Not only did the British refuse to commit to building a robust medical and educational infrastructure that cared for women, but when the age of consent in India became a major political controversy in 1891, they enacted a characteristically milquetoast reform, and raised the age of consent from ten to twelve years old for girls.[77]

Anandibai's health was directly jeopardized by her proximity to Hindu patriarchy and British colonialism, and then she was forced to travel to the United States because there were no opportunities open to her within the British empire. Once in college, Anandibai's health rapidly deteriorated, and she frequently fell sick because of the harsh climate.[78] To an extent, even the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania had a part in Anandibai's demise. In a letter describing a bout of illness while at college, Anandibai wrote, "I have not spent a day without my new companion the headache."[79] In another letter from her final semester, Anandibai described her burnout from a particularly demanding round of final exams combined with another bout of sickness as "my brain and nerves seem 'dissected up' like the warp on the loom, distinct and bare, but sensitive."[80] Such references are peppered throughout her letters and they presage her early demise. Meera Kosambi has observed that towards the culmination of her degree, Anandibai's performance at her coursework was not up to the same quality as when she started.[81] When Anandibai was frequently ill and overwhelmed by her studies, why didn't her teachers intervene and reduce her workload or provide additional support? Was it because they were largely interested in accruing the surplus symbolic value that came out of supporting Anandibai, even at the expense of her physical health?

Anandibai's life and death attests to U.S. higher education's structural imbrication with conquest and racism. As Craig Steven Wilder convincingly argues in *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities*,

> The American college trained the personnel and cultivated the ideas that accelerated and legitimated the dispossession of Native Americans and the enslavement of Africans. Modern slavery required the acquiescence of scholars and the cooperation of academic institutions. Faculties and officers embraced the benefits of human slavery and extrapolated from the enslavement of Africans and the destruction of Native civilizations predictions of a future in which vast populations of the world would be eternally subjected or inevitably eradicated.[82]

Wilder's history of U.S. higher education discloses the ways in which the American university was essential to the reproduction of white supremacy, settler colonialism, and racial capitalism. Wilder shows how, through its management and ownership, its curricular design, its research agenda, as well as via incredibly sophisticated control over its students and professors, the nineteenth-century American university was a key instrument of hegemonic power. Furthermore, Wilder contextualizes the American university within an Atlantic-world framework, emphasizing the American university's global reach. As the European invasion of the Americas and their colonial missions in Asia and Africa brought disparate people into close relation, Wilder writes that the American university became a central location that "braided their histories and rendered their fates dependent and antagonistic."[83]

We might understand the support provided to Anandibai by the Woman's Medical College as being emblematic of the enforcement of unequal global power relations that Wilder ascribes to nineteenth-century U.S. higher education. Whereas Anandibai wasn't subject to the

violent forms of racialized dispossession and exclusion, outlined by Wilder and inflicted by the American academy on Black and indigenous people, she was nonetheless the focus of affirmative modes of power and domination that are also wielded by universities. Roderick Ferguson neatly lays out how U.S. universities have wielded affirmative power by writing, "Part of the signature achievements of these affirmative modes of power was to make the pursuit of recognition and legitimacy into formidable horizons of pleasure, insinuating themselves into radical politics, trying to convince insurgents that 'your dreams are also mine.'"[84] Although Ferguson's arguments are grounded in the context of the post-1960s American university, they resonate with Anandibai's experiences as well. His point that the university functions to secure power through the recognition of minority culture and experiences, strongly parallels the way in which the Woman's Medical College supported Anandibai to buttress its own cultural reputation and political authority. By supporting Anandibai, the Woman's Medical College was able to position itself, and the larger white feminist-Christian mission that it institutionalized, as being the legitimizing authority that enabled the quest for women's empowerment in India.

It would be partial, however, to exclusively situate Anandibai as a tool of hegemonic power, or to simply read her as an exporter of the virtues of American exceptionalism. The ways in which Anandibai used her identity as an international student to build solidarity and spark a feminist insurgency suggests that just as she was used by her university, Anandibai made use of her institution's influence and resources as well. Anandibai ought not be understood as a passive vehicle of hegemonic power. I posit that a more supple method is of thinking of her as an instrument who performed in multifaceted and contradictory ways. Anandibai's archive provides a rich historical base in which search for the potential of international students' instrumentality to participate in cultural struggles over gender, racial, and national identity. Her relationships with

the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania and the American public at large, which yielded lasting material support for the upliftment of Indian women, allows us to study the ways in which international students might use their university for insurgent purposes that supersede the attainment of degrees or technical skill.

Chapter 2

Sudhindra Bose's International Student Orientations

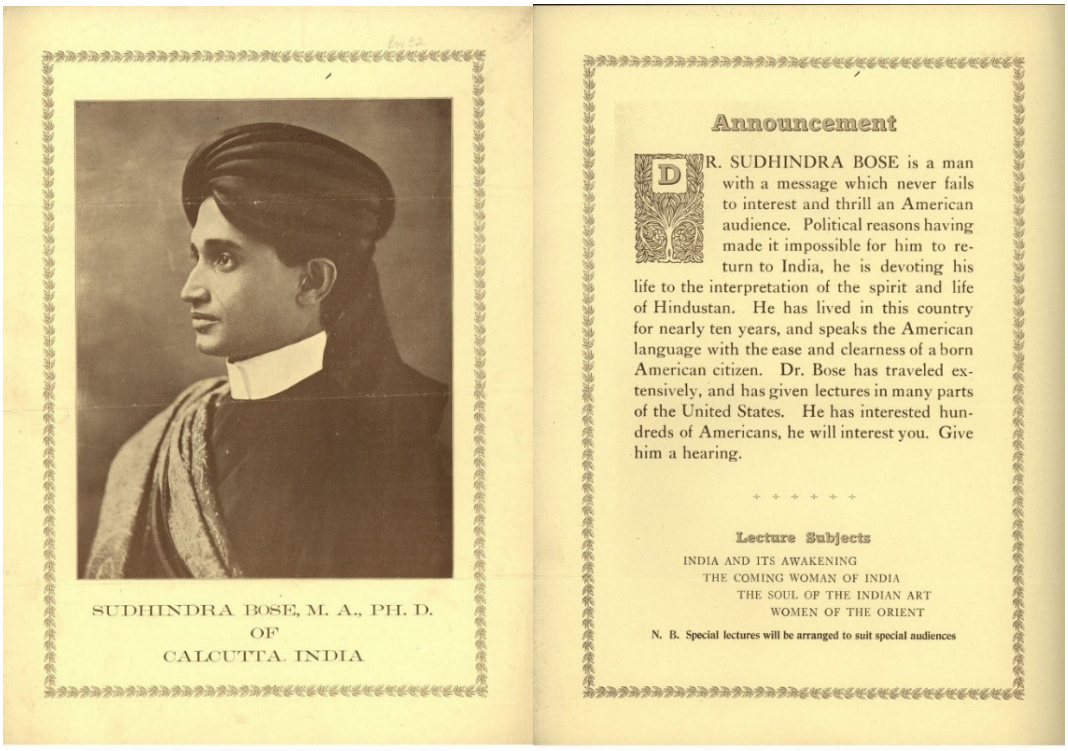
In the 1920s, rural audiences across the American Midwest spent a few evenings under a large tent listening to a professor lecture on the culture and politics of India. This professor was Dr. Sudhindra Bose, originally from Bengal, who had completed his PhD in Political Science at the State University of Iowa in 1913, where he held an appointment as a Lecturer of Oriental Studies.[1] Bose spent a portion of his summers in the 1920s giving public speeches on the Redpath Chautauqua lecture circuit, a wildly popular travelling tent show of speakers and performers that regaled the rural Midwest.

Founded in 1874 on the shores of Lake Chautauqua in New York state, the Chautauqua lecture series was a traveling show of speakers and performers that delighted rural America until 1930s.[2] Prominent Chautauqua lecturers, or "talents," as they were advertised, included Mark Twain, William Jennings Bryan, Susan B. Anthony, and Henry Ward Beecher.[3] The Redpath Chautauqua lecture circuit, in which Sudhindra Bose was a talent, was one branch of the larger Chautauqua program. More specifically, Redpath Chautauqua was a lecture touring route that went up and down the Mississippi river valley, visiting rural communities from Minnesota to Alabama. In his memoir *Fifteen Years in America*, which I discuss in greater detail later in this chapter, Bose described the Chautauqua lectures as "the nation's free forum: it is the people's popular university. It is a 'feast of helpfulness, a carnival of inspiration, a season of pleasure and relaxation.'"[4] Clearly a fan, Bose explained that the virtue of the Chautauqua lectures inhered in the opportunities for further education that it facilitated, which brought "local communities in touch with the great intellectual currents of the world."[5] He wrote that the Redpath Chautauqua program would run from five to ten days in a given locale where they would set up large tents by

a lake or in a glen. Those attending could expect literary and religious lectures, talks on political, social, and educational problems, musical and dance performances, comic and magic shows, Shakespearean plays, as well a diverse array of other programming on travel, science, and art.[6] This blend of community discussion, education, and entertainment proved to be an especially popular aspect of American social life and leisure. Charlotte Canning, a scholar of American theatre and performance, writes that at its peak in the mid-1920s, when Bose was an active lecturer, Chautauqua programs were held in more than 9000 communities across the continental US and reached an estimated 9 – 20 million people annually.[7]

While there are no extant transcripts of Sudhindra Bose's lectures on the Redpath Chautauqua circuit, we can still gather a vivid picture of his lecture topics from the promotional brochures that the tour organizers circulated in anticipation of his visit. These brochures disclose that Bose used the lecture circuit as a platform to educate and entertain American audiences on Indian culture and politics through an anticolonial and antiracist perspective. For example, one flier advertised Bose's lecture "The Dominant Problem of our Age – Imperialism," as a primer on contemporary global politics that delved into how "the East has risen against the 'White' imperialistic supremacy and is rapidly developing its own life." This lecture would also explore why the "problems of race-prejudice, missionary enterprise, international co-operation, are being oriented anew."[8] Some of Bose's other lectures providing a critical perspective included "India and its Awakening," "New India," "Gandhi and India," "The Awakened Orient," and "New Nations of the Far East."[9] These brochures also highlight that Bose's audience praised both the style and substance of these lectures. "It was simple, vivid, entertaining, admirable in form and spirit, and it gives all who heard it a better understanding of India and its problems, as well as its prophetic hopes for a better day to be," noted Dr. Joseph F. Newton of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.[10]

This view was shared by Dr. Charles M. Sheldon who wrote in *The Topeka Daily Capital*, "One of my pleasures has been meeting with Dr. Sudhindra Bose, a Hindu, a scholar and a linguist, a profound student of international affairs, a sympathizer of Gandhi, and a splendid platform speaker. He is a modern convert to the brotherhood of man and is giving remarkable information to great crowds, and creating influences that will go a long way to wipe out race prejudice."[11] Such favorable impressions, which were excerpted from newspaper reviews or solicited from Bose's audience members, were heavily featured in Bose's Redpath Chautauqua lecture brochures. They give us a sense of Bose's prowess at delivering these lectures, as well as his audience's receptiveness to his anticolonial and antiracist message.



SUDHINDRA BOSE, M. A., PH. D.
OF
CALCUTTA, INDIA

University of Iowa Libraries | digital.lib.uiowa.edu/tc

Announcement

DR. SUDHINDRA BOSE is a man with a message which never fails to interest and thrill an American audience. Political reasons having made it impossible for him to return to India, he is devoting his life to the interpretation of the spirit and life of Hindustan. He has lived in this country for nearly ten years, and speaks the American language with the ease and clearness of a born American citizen. Dr. Bose has traveled extensively, and has given lectures in many parts of the United States. He has interested hundreds of Americans, he will interest you. Give him a hearing.

+ + + + + +

Lecture Subjects

INDIA AND ITS AWAKENING
THE COMING WOMAN OF INDIA
THE SOUL OF THE INDIAN ART
WOMEN OF THE ORIENT

N. B. Special lectures will be arranged to suit special audiences

University of Iowa Libraries | digital.lib.uiowa.edu/tc

Figure 2.5: Promotional Materials featuring Sudhindra Bose on the Redpath Chautauqua lecture circuit, from the University of Iowa Special Collections.

Sudhindra Bose's ability to express critical opinions on one of the United States' biggest educational and entertainment platforms is especially striking when we consider that his tenure on the Redpath Chautauqua lecture circuit also coincided with the US colonial occupation over the Philippines and Puerto Rico, and when we account for the significant popularity and political sway wielded by white supremacist groups like the Immigration Restriction League, the Asiatic Exclusion League, and the Ku Klux Klan. These groups had the political strength to advocate for and then successfully pass restrictive legislations like the Immigration Act of 1917, which created the Asiatic Barred Zone and banned most Asians from traveling to or residing in the United States. They were also able to push through Immigration Act of 1924, which further limited immigration by creating racial requirements for naturalization that excluded all nonwhite immigrants from becoming US citizens.[12] Furthermore, these white supremacist groups organized at the community-level to foment racist sentiments through their engagements with churches, businesses, unions, and local politics. Given this historical context, it is quite likely that not everyone who attended Bose's lectures on the Redpath Chautauqua circuit would have shared or appreciated his anticolonial and antiracist perspective, which makes his appeal as a lecturer all the more noteworthy.

In this chapter, I turn to Sudhindra Bose's work as an international student, community organizer, professor, and public intellectual. I am interested in studying the ways in which he used the platform and connections provided by his academic standing to challenge racism and colonialism. This chapter explores how Bose strategically used his institutional affiliation to give lectures, start organizations, as well as publish books and journals. I discuss how Bose's writings and performances sought to counter racism against Indians in the United States, and how he imagined socio-political possibilities and priorities for a post-colonial India. Bose's activism and

community mobilization underscores the agency and authority that international scholars were able to extract from their institutional context.

In examining Bose's experiences, this chapter also pursues a core question pertaining to the experiences of Indian international students at this time. Namely, how did these students navigate the racist conditions in the United States in the first decades of the twentieth century? During this time, as the numbers of Indian migrants to the United States increased, an anti-Asian stigma began to consolidate against them. Much like the Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese, Indians were also accused of undercutting wages, stealing jobs, sexually harassing white women, and spreading diseases.[13] The experience of Indian international students must be contextualized in relation to this pronounced feeling of anti-Asian hatred in the United States. I explore how Sudhindra Bose's writings and performances as a public intellectual and as a professor to counter these xenophobic sentiments and create more tolerant feelings towards Indians.

Sudhindra Bose was especially invested in creating a healthy relationship between India and the United States because he believed that the Indian anticolonial struggled would be greatly strengthened with American support. In his books, journal articles, and course lectures, he often emphasized the message that Americans should neither fear nor hate Indians, rather through the awareness that comes out of a sustained transcultural conversation, the cause of democracy could be advanced in the world at large, and especially in India. Bose played out this line of argument in a lecture titled "Gandhi's India," which was drafted between 1941 and 1946, and likely delivered as a course lecture at the State University of Iowa. Here Bose argued,

> President Roosevelt has proclaimed Four Freedoms of every people "everywhere." If the mission of America is to be the spearhead of democratic freedom "everywhere," can America stand for the status quo in India? Certainly

> one cannot defend democracy -- throughout the world and at the same time ignore India, which is inhabited by 1/5 of the human race. If the doctrine of Four Freedoms "everywhere" means what it should, it is felt by Indians that the people of America have a moral obligation in the emancipation of India. Americans must know what are the issues involved and what is transpiring in India today.[14]

Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" famously maintained that all people should have the freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, as well as freedom from fear. Roosevelt emphasized that these freedoms were being attacked by Nazism and Fascism. He called for the United States to preserve these freedoms by ending its isolationist stance and militarily intervening in World War II to support Great Britain against the Axis nations. Bose's reference to these freedoms was an attempt to hold the United States up to its own publicly declared moral aspirations. It was also a way of making the injustice of colonialism in India palpable to his audience, who may not have known the details on how their British allies were oppressing a vast population of Indians through colonialism. In this lecture, Bose critiqued the deliberate misrepresentations of India in the Western news and he called on his listeners to better understand the facts of the British colonial occupation over India. He provided a critical Indian perspective on the brutalities of British colonialism by highlighting the extrajudicial killings carried out by colonial administration, as well as the unlawful imprisonment of anticolonial leaders. Bose concluded this lecture by calling for decolonization in India, and perhaps most provocatively, he made a case for American intervention to support the decolonization of India to preserve the very freedoms that Roosevelt held sacrosanct.

When Bose was drafting his "Gandhi's India" lecture, this argumentative approach of bringing the United States and India into relation had become a well-honed tactic. The Asian

American Studies scholar Manan Desai traces the emergence of this strategy to the first decade of the twentieth century in his book *The United States of India: Anticolonial Literature and Transnational Refraction*. [15] Desai terms this rhetorical strategy of relating the US and India "transnational refraction" and outlines a how it enabled Indian anticolonials to think and write about their political struggles. He argues that by tracing out the similarities and differences between the India and the United States, individuals like Sudhindra Bose sought to "forge connections between the struggles of subjected peoples across continents without reducing each struggle as identical."[16] In a similar vein, the historian Nico Slate describes an ethos of "colored cosmopolitanism" as engendering a sense of solidarity, connection, and identification between Indian anticolonial activists like Gandhi, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya and Vijaya Laxmi Pandit, and Black political and cultural leaders like W. E. B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson, and Martin Luther King Jr. in the first half of the twentieth century.[17] Slate writes that by comparing the racial dynamics of colonialism in India to the operation of the "color line" in the United States, Indian anticolonial activists and Black political radicals in this period were able to lay the "groundwork for more inclusive concepts of belonging and resistance."[18]

This chapter continues exploring the ways in which anticolonialism and antiracism became entwined concerns for Indians in the United States during early twentieth century. My intention is to add to the research done on this topic by drawing attention towards Sudhindra Bose's writings. It is important to stress that Sudhindra Bose's life and writings have only been met with passing references in prior studies of the history of the South Asian American diaspora. Only Manan Desai's *The United States of India* stands as an exception to this claim. Desai analyzes Sudhindra Bose's writings in his discussion of the ways in which Indians understood and translated American culture. My study builds on Desai's research by focusing on Sudhindra

Bose's experiences in and around higher education. I turn to previously undiscussed writings from the Papers of Sudhindra Bose collection housed in the University of Iowa Libraries' Special Collections as well as digitized artefacts pertaining to him that I have found in the HathiTrust Digital Library. I argue that by focusing in on Bose's experiences, we can begin to outline connections between American higher education, the anticolonial struggle in India, as well the movement to counter white supremacy within the United States. My aim is to build on the cultural history of South Asian America by demonstrating the significance of the university as a location from where political authority and cultural sensibility is reproduced and exported.

Navigating through the Contradictions of Liberalism

Let us begin with some clarifying biographical details on Sudhindra Bose. Born in Keotkhali, a village near the city of Dhaka in 1883, Sudhindra Bose came from an upper-middle class family. He attended Victoria College of Calcutta University from 1901 to 1903, and in 1904, he worked his passage to the United States as an assistant steward on a Standard Oil ship.[19] He initially enrolled at Park College, Missouri for two years, then he transferred to the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where he earned his B.A. in 1907 and his M.A. in English in 1909, both in English. Bose subsequently attended the State University of Iowa in Iowa City (which was rebranded as the flagship University of Iowa in 1964), where he received his Ph.D. in Political Science in 1913, and where he continued to work as a Lecturer of Oriental Studies until his demise in 1946.[20] Even though Bose came from a background of some privilege, he received no support from them for his studies in the US. Bose funded his education by working as an agricultural laborer during the summer and in retail during the school year. He

also chose to attend rural public institutions, where the cost of attendance and the cost of living were relatively low, and which didn't charge international students any extra fees.[21]

Throughout his years as an undergraduate and as a graduate student Sudhindra Bose was involved with organizing international students to share resources and build networks of support. While at the University of Illinois, Bose became deeply involved with the Cosmopolitan Club, a social club for international students and Americans to mingle and learn about each other's culture. This club was a local chapter of a larger national student organization known as the Association of Cosmopolitan Clubs. The first Cosmopolitan Club was started in 1903 under the initiative of Kiyoshi "Karl" Kawakani, a Japanese international student at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.[22] The first dozen members of the group included students from Armenia, Germany, Japan, Norway, and the United States. Initially, the Wisconsin Cosmopolitan Club met regularly to have "serious and animated discussions" on current affairs in international politics. After primarily serving as an intellectual community for its first year, the Cosmopolitan Club expanded its activities to include receiving and aiding incoming international students. The Club also took to organizing social events that "promoted good fellowship" among its diverse members. Dances, "sociables," theatre, and banquets became recurring events. Entire evenings were often themed on particular nationalities and international students would play musical instruments, put on dances and performances, project images of their country, and describe their history and culture. The Cosmopolitan Club quickly became the preeminent center for cross-cultural exchange on campus. It provided resources to help international students adjust to life in the US and it created a collegial environment build interpersonal relationships across national boundaries.[23]

The success and popularity of the Cosmopolitan Club in Wisconsin led to similar student organizations being chartered at Cornell, Michigan, Illinois, Purdue, Ohio State, Louisiana State, and the University of Chicago. In December 1907, student delegates from this initial crop of Cosmopolitan Clubs gathered at a convention in the University of Wisconsin. Here they co-founded the Association of Cosmopolitan Clubs, a national organization that united their local chapters and sought to extend the movement to other institutions with significant international student populations.[24] By 1915, the movement grew to three dozen affiliated American chapters of the Cosmopolitan Club, with hundreds of active members representing dozens of nationalities and ethnicities. This vast apparatus was led by students and a few sympathetic professors. Financial support was raised through membership dues as well as subscription fees and advertising revenue from a monthly newsletter they published called *The Cosmopolitan Student*.[25] The pages of *The Cosmopolitan Student* are especially revealing not only because they detail the lively activities of the many local chapters of the club, but also because they provide an insight into the culture and politics that brought together its large membership. It is important to emphasize that the Cosmopolitan Clubs weren't merely organizers of social gatherings. As is reflected in their motto, "Above all nations is humanity," they were also actively building a progressive political movement grounded in international fellowship.

This existing Cosmopolitan Club network allowed Indian international students to find each other and begin to create new organizations that catered specifically to their needs and experiences. Sudhindra Bose's experiences with the Cosmopolitan Club allowed him to build relations with Indian students across the United States. With the help of these students, he became the founding president of the Hindusthan Association of USA (later renamed Hindusthan Association of America), an organization dedicated towards supporting Indian international

students in the US, as well as providing information about American educational opportunities to prospective students in India.

The decision to name their organization the "Hindusthan Association of USA." as opposed to the "Indian Association of USA." provides insight into its underlying political inclinations. The historian Manan Ahmed Asif traces the differences between "Hindusthan" (or Hindustan as it is predominantly spelled today) and "India" by highlighting that prior to the nineteenth century, Hindustan was associated primarily with the Mughal Empire, whose rulers were called *Shahanshah-i-Hindustan* (emperor of Hindustan). Over the nineteenth century, with the ascendancy of the British rule over South Asia, Hindustan gave way to "India," which had long been an appellation that was recognized across Europe. Asif notes that there was a brief resurgence of the use of "Hindustan" during the revolt of 1857, when the mutinous troops rallied behind the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar. However, when this uprising was crushed, Queen Victoria assumed the title of Empress of India and she sent the Mughal emperor to die in exile in Burma. Despite the end of the Mughal monarchy, "Hindustan" continued to linger in the public vocabulary and the anticolonial movement picked it up again in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The military leader Subhas Chandra Bose, to name one prominent example cited by Asif, used the rallying cry *Jai Hindustan ki* (victory to Hindustan) to spur the Free Hind Army in its armed struggle against the British colonial administration.[26]

Sudhindra Bose and the other founders' choice of naming their organization the Hindusthan Association of USA. was meant to signify an allegiance to this contemporary moment of anticolonial politics. Bose and the Hindusthan Association leadership hoped to mobilize their network of Indian international students in an anticolonial direction. The title page of the first *Bulletin of the Hindusthan Association of USA*, published in August 1913, stated the

organization's goals, providing further insight into how they hoped to contribute to the anticolonial cause. Their objectives were:

a) Solely to further the educational interests of the Hindusthanee students, present or prospective.

b) To gather and disseminate all kinds of educational information

c) To seek help and co-operation from people at home and in this country.

d) To extend similar scope of work, if possible, to other people of Hindusthan.[27]

Although these objectives don't say the organization's anticolonial leanings out loud, they nonetheless reflect an anticolonial agenda. The first goal, which stressed furthering the educational interests of Indian students, was framed directly in opposition to the British colonial educational policy, which was premised on denying and/or restricting education for Indians to the maximum possible extent. The Hindusthan Association was created to support and encourage students from India to come to the United States, which provided a measure of academic opportunity not available within the British Empire. This access to higher education in the United States supported radical Indian intellectuals in a variety of ways. Seema Sohi, a historian of the South Asian American diaspora, writes that in 1914, British intelligence warned that the Hindusthan Association was "recruiting Indian students to the United States to instruct them 'in nationalist, revolutionary, and even anarchical doctrines.'"[28] By securing the position of Indian students in the United States, the Hindusthan Association could then pursue its other goals, which included using this network of students to spread "educational information" on the reality of British colonial exploitation, as well as building solidarities and cooperative networks with Americans to assist in India's struggle for freedom from colonial rule.

In the first issue of the *Bulletin of the Hindusthan Association*, Sudhindra Bose wrote the leading article which directly took up the question of how to achieve their organization's national liberationist objectives. Here he described the major challenge facing the Hindusthan Association by writing,

> We Indians who are now in America can do a great deal for our country if we only get together. We all know how very often our country is misrepresented and misinterpreted. The most effective way to deal with such scurrilous attacks is to start a campaign of education. That is the matter which is clearly beyond any one individual; it requires the united efforts of us all. Hence arises the paramount necessity of having a strong organization.[29]

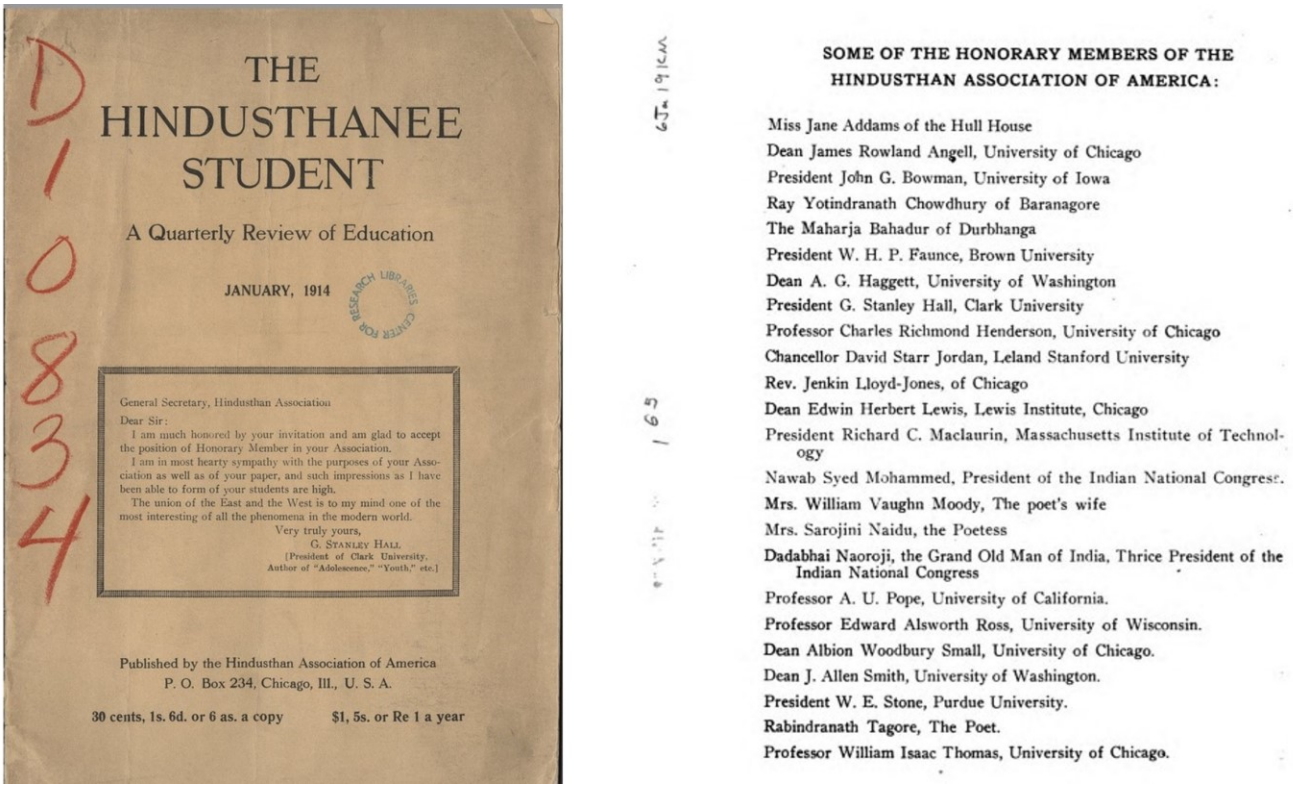
Given the atmosphere of widespread xenophobia against Indians at the time, winning American support was a key challenge for the Hindusthan Association. The scurrilous attacks alluded to by Bose refers to the torrents of racist vitriol produced by white nationalist groups, which was circulating quite widely in the mass media. Such depictions cemented a national consciousness that understood Indian culture through a racist lens. Indian people were broadly perceived by Americans as being mysterious, backward, strange, violent, and unable to assimilate with a Christian liberal democratic society. In 1913, when Sudhindra Bose helped get the Hindusthan Association of America off the ground, Seema Sohi estimates that there were around two hundred and fifty Indian students in the US.[30] This number had been increasing every year, and the burgeoning xenophobic sentiment made these students especially vulnerable. By pursuing the Hindusthan Association's goals, Bose hoped to build organizational strength to "command more respectful attention … and propagate Indian ideas from the Indian viewpoint."[31]

Despite living and learning in a toxic climate of racism, Bose nonetheless extolled the value of a liberal American education in his "Our Aims" article and maintained,

> We must not forget that America is about the only country where we Indians have perfect freedom of expression. Here, if we will, we can freely exchange our views and our opinions as to the best solutions of the educational problems before us in India and America. Is it not then our duty to make the most of such a golden opportunity?[32]

The "educational problems" of India and the US that Bose mentions here refers to, both, the xenophobic misrepresentations popular in American public discourse, as well as the intentionally deprived and ethically suspect colonial educational system operating in India. Bose believed that the racist fantasy that Americans maintained of India could be countered by fixing the way in which they came to know to India. At same time, Bose also believed that the failure of the British educational system in India necessitated a completely new framework, and the United States' robust liberal education system had many useful lessons to offer. Bose came to understand the American university as a "golden opportunity" that could address all of these "educational problems." He believed that from these institutions, Indian students could develop a critical consciousness of Britain's colonial injustices, build transnational solidarities and collective strength to counter colonialism, as well as provide a new socio-political vision of the future for independent India. The university also provided a platform founded on "free speech" for Indian intellectuals to directly connect with the American public in order to challenge their racist preconceptions so that India could gain support from the United States in its struggle for national sovereignty.

In this pursuit, Bose drew on the organizational strength of the Hindusthan Association of USA to start a periodical in 1914 titled *The Hindusthanee Student*, which would run for the next decade and circulate in the US, Germany, Japan, as well as India. It replaced the *Bulletin* as the Hindusthan Association's main publication, and featured articles on all aspects of studying abroad in the United States, such as how to navigate the immigration system, news on the successes and difficulties of other Indian students, general university policies, as well as on-campus opportunities and resources.



THE
HINDUSTHANEE
STUDENT

A Quarterly Review of Education

JANUARY, 1914

General Secretary, Hindusthan Association

Dear Sir:

I am much honored by your invitation and am glad to accept the position of Honorary Member in your Association.

I am in most hearty sympathy with the purposes of your Association as well as of your paper, and such impressions as I have been able to form of your students are high.

The union of the East and the West is to my mind one of the most interesting of all the phenomena in the modern world.

Very truly yours,
G. STANLEY HALL
[President of Clark University, Author of "Adolescence," "Youth," etc.]

Published by the Hindusthan Association of America
P. O. Box 234, Chicago, Ill., U. S. A.

30 cents, 1s. 6d. or 6 as. a copy $1, 5s. or Re 1 a year

SOME OF THE HONORARY MEMBERS OF THE HINDUSTHAN ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA:

Miss Jane Addams of the Hull House
Dean James Rowland Angell, University of Chicago
President John G. Bowman, University of Iowa
Ray Yotindranath Chowdhury of Baranagore
The Maharja Bahadur of Durbhanga
President W. H. P. Faunce, Brown University
Dean A. G. Haggett, University of Washington
President G. Stanley Hall, Clark University
Professor Charles Richmond Henderson, University of Chicago
Chancellor David Starr Jordan, Leland Stanford University
Rev. Jenkin Lloyd-Jones, of Chicago
Dean Edwin Herbert Lewis, Lewis Institute, Chicago
President Richard C. Maclaurin, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Nawab Syed Mohammed, President of the Indian National Congress.
Mrs. William Vaughn Moody, The poet's wife
Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the Poetess
Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of India, Thrice President of the Indian National Congress
Professor A. U. Pope, University of California.
Professor Edward Alsworth Ross, University of Wisconsin.
Dean Albion Woodbury Small, University of Chicago.
Dean J. Allen Smith, University of Washington.
President W. E. Stone, Purdue University.
Rabindranath Tagore, The Poet.
Professor William Isaac Thomas, University of Chicago.

Figure 2.6: The first issue of The Hindusthanee Student*, from the South Asian American Digital Archive.*

The Hindusthanee Student celebrated the significant institutional support given to it by prominently listing the Chancellor of Stanford University, the Presidents of the University of Iowa, Brown University, Clark University, MIT, and Purdue University, deans from the University of Chicago, University of Washington, and the Lewis Institute, as well as professors from the University of California, and the University of Wisconsin as honorary members. Many of these honorary members wrote essays and letters in *The Hindusthanee Student* welcoming students from India and extolling the importance of cross-cultural exchange. For example, Forrest C. Ensign, a Dean at the State University of Iowa, wrote in the first issue of *The Hindusthanee Student*,

> I think we can learn much from each other. You men from India must be interested in our social life, our customs, our homes. The message of the West to you is that of a larger democracy, of a freer life, and I fancy, of happier conditions. The message of the East to the West is stability, earnestness of purpose, fidelity to great ideas, the dignity of true learning. So we welcome you to our homes, to our classes, to our offices in this fortunate exchange of the commodities of the mind.[33]

Dean Ensign's clear articulation of the mutual gains to be made from cultural exchange highlights the cosmopolitan ideals guiding the academic institutional response to the increasing numbers of Indian international students. Notably, it stands in sharp contrast to the xenophobic public discourse. These welcoming sentiments also gesture towards the significant institutional support received by *The Hindusthanee Student* in particular and Indian international students more generally. Dean Ensign's vociferous welcome to the Indian students also indicated the material benefits that came from institutional support, such as a legal means to remain in the

United States for students, academic appointments and research support for advanced scholars, as well as space to run organizations and build sympathy among US citizens.

Sudhindra Bose's ability to cultivate these supportive relationships with higher education administrators opened new opportunities for Indians as the British universities started to exclude them. "No Indians Need Apply" reads one headline in the first issue of *The Hindusthanee Student*. This article presented the unfortunate story of Bhupati Mohan Sen, a talented and distinguished mathematician from Calcutta who had been awarded an annual £80 scholarship for King's College, Cambridge. Having won the highest honors in his most recent examination, Sen decided to step it up a notch and apply for Cambridge's prestigious Smith's Prize and Fellowship. The Cambridge administration, however, were not keen on awarding this particular prize to an Indian, and they instructed Sen's tutor to tell him that "he must not expect to be elected, however brilliant his thesis might turn out to be." Sen's tutor even went as far asking him to withdraw his application because "the body of electors considered him to be at a distinct disadvantage."[34] Indian students came to be widely discriminated against in British institutions at this time because of a marked increase in their anticolonial sentiment. The founding of the India Home Rule Society in 1905 and the India House in 1906, both of which primarily comprised of students and academics, created a hub of political activism for Indians in London. These became spaces to imagine an end to Indian colonial subjection in the very heart of the imperial metropole. The pushback to this political agitation made the British universities increasingly inhospitable for Indian anticolonials.[35]

The Hindusthanee Student's editorial board made it a point to highlight such stories of prejudice in British academia because they were committed to promoting the United States as the best destination for aspiring Indian students. Directly below Bhupati Mohan Sen's story of

discrimination at Cambridge were two articles encouraging Indians to study in the US. The first was headlined "Only two places to go" and it featured a snippet from a recent article in Calcutta's *Daily News* advising Indians to travel to the United States or Germany for higher education, where they would "learn a great deal more of the world, of business, of commerce, than [they] are even likely to learn in England." The second was headlined "America's welcome to the Hindusthanee Students" and it was composed of extracts from encouraging letters written by eminent university presidents to the Hindusthan Association. Richard C. Maclaurin, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, expressed his desire to "do anything that lay within [his] power to help." President Abbott Lawrence Lowell of Harvard University "sincerely hope[d] that [Harvard] may be of service to Indian students." Chancellor David Starr Jordan of Stanford University also committed to "do everything in [his] power to forward the interests of Hindu students." President W. H. P. Faunce of Brown University cryptically explained why American universities were collectively so eager to enroll Indian students and wrote, "Our American students could learn much from the Hindusthanee students, and they certainly could learn much from association in our American colleges. The East and the West are like the right hand and the left. Only when both are clasped will the great world-task be achieved." [36]

While President Faunce never provided any details by what he meant by the "great world-task," we can infer from his figuration of this project as a coming together of the East and the West that the key issue at hand involved constituting an intimacy across different cultural, religious, and linguistic traditions. This union of East and West would finally make both hands work in harmony and presumably move humanity forward through the creation of new knowledge. It is a rather optimistic and generous message to express to prospect students, and the editors of *The Hindusthanee Student* responded to President Faunce's overture by adding

after his note, “Now for India’s sake and to help achieve the world-task let our worthy young women and young men respond to the call. The gates of the great American institutions of learning are never closed against anybody.”[37] This mutual sentiment of understanding and agreement on the ambiguous “world-task” underscores the nature of the influence exercised by the academic milieu on Indian international students. The language of inclusion, opportunity, progress, and freedom in *The Hindusthanee Student* demonstrates the pervasive extent to which the ethos of liberalism suffused American higher education and the deep impact it left on Indian international students. Lisa Lowe, summarizing the philosophy of the liberal stalwart John Stuart Mill, underscores that the purpose of liberal education was to cultivate citizen-subjects fit for representative government as well as for participation in civil society.[38] This task, which is what I think President Faunce meant by the “great world-task,” prefigured the university as a vital space that produced the conditions of possibility for creating democratic governance and the “free” individual. Indian international students like Sudhindra Bose were drawn to this mission of the university because it opened the prospect of learning how to end colonial rule as well as how to establish a democratic government and a liberal society.

This language of inclusion strongly contrasted the xenophobic bile reverberating through the House of Representatives, who were keen on enacting a new immigration bill aimed at all Asians. In fact, even in the first issue of *The Hindusthanee Student*, which was replete with welcoming words from academia, two articles warned prospective students that officials at US ports of entry were already denying entry to all who were suspected of being Indian laborers, and they were especially targeting Sikh men who could be identified by their beard and turban, and who had been immigrating in escalating numbers to labor in the Pacific coast states. The Hindusthan Association advised prospective students to communicate with them before

travelling to make sure that they had the necessary documentation and financial proof to convince the immigration official at their port of entry that they were students and not laborers.[39]

Sudhindra Bose addressed the growing difficulties of entering the United States in the second issue of *The Hindusthanee Student*, which appeared in April 1914. Bose's article was ominously titled "The Future of the Hindusthanee Student in America" and it began with a dire warning: "A most serious crisis is now confronting the Hindusthanee students. They may find in the very near future the gates of American institutions of learning barred and locked tight against them."[40] Here Bose described the disastrous consequences of a popular new immigration bill being deliberated in the House of Representatives, which was designed to exclude laborers from Asia, and which would also go a long way towards hindering Indian international students from coming to the US as well. Bose wrote that this new bill would require prospective Indian students to obtain a "certificate of permission and identification" from the English government, which indicated that they had been allowed to study abroad by the state. Significantly, this certificate also had to disclose financial information which evidenced that adequate "provision has been made for the care and maintenance of the student."[41] Furthermore, this certificate would have to be vised by a US diplomatic agent in India and it would be examined yet again in a US port of entry, which had the full authority to deny admittance even if all the necessary documents and paperwork were presented. If these heightened requirements weren't enough, the new bill would also make it illegal for Indian international students to work in the U.S while they attended university. The net effect of this bill would be utterly devastating for Indian students, almost all of whom held jobs on the side to cover their expenses. Bose emphasized that not only would the British authorities make it nigh impossible for Indians to obtain this permission, but the proposed bill would also block those students who "lack cold cash, but have only the sterling

capital of brain, energy, and will power."[42] He criticized this exclusionary policy as being "as unjustifiable as it is un-American" and called on all Indian international students to "win the support of your faculty and get them to protest against the bill."[43]

In addition to helping organize a strident letter-writing campaign, Sudhindra Bose attempted to change the minds of the politicians pushing for the immigration bill by appealing to them directly. On February 13, 1914, Bose testified in Washington, D.C. before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization on the question of Indian immigration. The House Committee had recognized Bose's standing as an academic as well as a community leader and invited him to speak on behalf of the Indians in the United States. Bose began his testimony by stressing why Indians were attempting to migrate to the United States: "To us America is another name for opportunity. We come here to this country because of the opportunities we have for social uplift, intellectual betterment, and economical advancement."[44] This theme of recognizing the United States as a space where opportunities for progress can be realized recurs throughout Bose's testimony. It also reveals the general direction of his argument against the anti-immigrant law. Drawing deeply from the liberal rhetorical playbook, Bose consistently strived to stage Indians as being hard working laborers who could assist in the United States' economic development. "There are over 711,980,000 acres of undeveloped public land in this country," Bose said, "This country is thinly settled there being only 30 people to the square mile … America needs men to develop this vast undeveloped land; men to contribute toward the material upbuilding of this great nation."[45]

Bose's testimony was an earnest performance of liberal ideals and it underscores the depth to which he relied on notions like Manifest Destiny and American exceptionalism to further his argument. Bose's masterful use of the language of freedom, hard work, and progress,

while also combing over settler colonialism as well as racialized violence shows us just how comfortable he was with expounding liberal ideas. It appears that Bose's argumentative strategy was to win over the politicians by showing them that Indians and Americans shared a common set of ideals and commitments. In his opinion both Indians and Americans were ultimately quite like the Jeffersonian yeoman farmer – willing to work hard in the name of "free" real estate and national progress.

This line of argument faced immediate rebuttal from J. Hampton Moore, a Republican member of the House Committee from Pennsylvania, who argued that Indians and Americans were actually worlds apart and shared no common cultural background whatsoever. Moore questioned Indian people's ability to assimilate into American society and observed,

> It is said by Members of Congress and by others, some who are opposed to Hindus coming into this country, that they would not harmonize with Americans, that they would be nonassimilable in the matter of marriage, nonassimilable in the matter of language, nonassimilable in the matter of labor standards … That is to say, that you flock together, that the Hindu will speak his own language, and stay in his own group and not mix up with American ideas.[46]

The specific charge of nonassimilation gestured towards a widely held belief in the fundamental incompatibility between Indian and US American cultures. Hindus, which at the time signified a racial category referring to the vast diversity of peoples inhabiting British-colonial India, were commonly perceived as not adopting American values or conforming to American expectations – whatever those may be – at work and at home. Furthermore, Indians were thought of as being unable to even begin to acquire those "American ideas" that constellate the community of the nation because of differences in core aspects of life, such as language and religion.

Bose continued to draw on the liberal playbook and countered Congressman Moore's charge of being "nonassimilable" by stressing that Indians were, in fact, exemplary cosmopolitan subjects eager to interact with and learn from Americans:

> I have attended five or six universities, and, being at the head of a national organization, the Cosmopolitan Club, with four or five thousand members, with a chapter in every country, I have occasion to meet students from all the world, and never have I found a more cosmopolitan student than the Hindu student. I am not bragging; but these are actual facts and I think the observation and experience of various college professors and presidents will bear me out thoroughly. Wherever you go you will find that the Japanese and Chinese students live together in one room, but never do you find the Hindu students rooming together. They do not want to do that. If we stay among ourselves we will be liable to speak our own language instead of the English language, and we do not want to do that. I lived in one town where there were three or four Hindu students, and when I went to see them, they never returned my visits. They said, "We are getting too much Hinduized; we are getting too much by ourselves. Let us absorb all we can while we are here." [47]

There are profound issues with Bose's response to the allegation of nonassimilation. His exaggerated personal anecdote claiming that Indian students don't mingle with each other, as well as his racist mischaracterization of Japanese and Chinese students, cumulatively reveals the impoverished nature of cosmopolitanism that he was deploying. Cosmopolitanism, or a belief in the goal of transcending cultural differences and producing a universal notion of humanity, might seem like an apposite riposte to being called nonassimilable. Cosmopolitanism, after all,

recognizes the presence of cultural differences, as well as stresses the interconnectedness of all people and cultures. By claiming a cosmopolitan identity, Bose was arguing for an abiding commitment on behalf of Indians towards integration and assimilation with American ideals. The problem with Bose's use of cosmopolitanism, however, is that much like the notion of nonassimilation, it also relied on the reification of racial categories defined by a proximity to whiteness. Rather than attacking the very notion of nonassimilation itself, Bose tried to displace it onto other cultures. Bose was essentially arguing, wrongfully I must stress, that the Chinese and the Japanese were not as cosmopolitan nor as assimilable as the Indians. Such a line of thinking was factually untrue, ethically shortsighted, and politically unsound. If anything, it disclosed the contradictory racial underpinnings of Bose's own liberal outlook.

What I find particularly striking about Bose's response, however, is his reliance on academia to buttress his claims. Whereas Congressman Moore drew on a public feeling of xenophobia to level his charge of nonassimilation, Bose turned to international students, university presidents, and professors to back his claims of cosmopolitanism. Bose's rhetorical strategy relied on the truth-making power of academia to evidence his argument. He called on his experiences as an international student, as well as the observations and opinions of other academics to assert his views on the cosmopolitanism of Indian students in the US.

Bose's reliance on academic knowledge and institutional affiliation also reveals the political limits of this strategy. We see the drawbacks of Bose's argument in his congressional testimony when he sought to clear up some common misconceptions regarding Indians. He drew on contemporary theories of race, linguistics, and human migration to remind the committee that "Hindus belong to the great Aryan family."[48] He emphasized that Indians "are not of Chinese stock."[49] Invoking the research of prominent nineteenth-century professors like the orientalist

Max Müller, the philologist Franz Bopp, as well as the ethnologists William Hearn and Isaac Taylor, Bose said that there was "unmistakable kinship of the Hindus and Caucasian races of modern Europe."[50] We can see what Bose was attempting to do here. He had recognized that racial motivations behind the immigration bill, and rather than making an argument centered on the equality of all races, he tried to convince the committee that Indians were white and could assimilate into American society.

This claim also proved to be an especially difficult sell. Rep. James Manahan (Republican – Minnesota) immediately pushed back and said to Bose, "I think it is pretty generally conceded that what is known as the high-class Hindu is a Caucasian, but I have heard it said that the so-called coolie laborers, what might be called the common laborers of India, are not of the same, that they are a sort of mongrel mixture, possibly part Caucasian and part Mongolian. What do you think of that?"[51] As the tone of this conversation indicates, both Bose and Manahan's views converged on a belief in a scientific basis for racial difference and racial hierarchy.

Rather than throwing a wrench in the fundamental premise of the immigration debate, as Bose had hoped, this exchange further impressed on the politicians the immediate and pronounced exigence of their proposed bill. Bose tried to assuage Rep. Manahan's skepticism regarding the racial purity of Indians. He insisted that the vast majority of Indians, "over two hundred million people," were of the "original stock" of Aryans.[52] The implication was that the vast majority of Indians were white, and the racial minorities could be easily discerned. One imagines that collective shiver that went down the House Committee's spine as they considered the specter of two hundred million legal Indian immigrants. Representative John E. Raker (Democrat – California), among the most ardent proponents of the bill, noted in a most stupefied

manner, “If one could be admitted, any others of the same race of two hundred million would be capable of being admitted because of their racial condition … In other words, if one Hindu can be admitted as an Aryan, that would permit any other Hindu who complied with the requirements of our naturalization laws to be admitted.”[53] Mitigating against such a demographic shift was precisely the reason why these politicians were mobilizing to pass a new comprehensive exclusionary bill. Bose had confirmed their worst fears.

Some three years later, when the Immigration Act of 1917 was finally passed, the specific language of the bill avoided the use of racial categories. Instead, this Act created the Asiatic Barred Zone, which was a geographical designation bounded by specific latitudes and longitudes that were specified in the bill, from where immigration and travel to the United States was restricted. The Asiatic Barred Zone included almost all of continental Asia, the Pacific Islands, as well as Russia east of the Ural Mountains. The only exception was the Philippines, which was an American colony at the time. *The Hindusthanee Student* noted this change with dismay and called the Asiatic Barred Zone “an insult to [India’s] peace-loving and proud people.”[54] I cannot help but wonder if Bose’s approach of using academic theories regarding the link between “Indians” and “Caucasians” convinced the Committee that using racial categories for exclusion, as they had been doing, would create ambiguities through which non-white people could legally immigrate. Instead, they adopted a geographical framework for exclusion that was clearer to enforce. It is rather strange to think that an international student could have influence over national immigration policy and the very definition of American citizenship. But Bose’s testimony highlights that he did have a say in the matter, which calls attention to the agency and authority that could be carried by international students.

Sudhindra Bose said nothing disparaging about the US in his congressional testimony. His point was always to show that Indians could assimilate to the standards of bourgeois white Christian American life. He wanted to win the favor of American legislators so that they would remove Indians from the purview of the immigration bill. He presented a much more critical, oftentimes cynical, but overall positive overview of the US in his book, *Fifteen Years in America.* Published in Calcutta in 1920 and written primarily for the middle- and upper-class urban set in India, *Fifteen Years in America* presented a candid "cross-section view of American Life."[55] Its twenty-five chapters ranged the gamut of US culture and politics, exploring matters as diverse as the election system, the state and federal governments, hotels, newspapers, summer vacations, country life, "American women," and even "The Most American Thing in America." (Surprisingly, this was the Redpath Chautauqua lecture system and the general popularity of public lecturing at the time.) The bulk of the book, however, was devoted to discussing every aspect of the American educational system, from rural schools to collegiate education, of which Bose was a huge admirer. Individual chapters extolled the public school system, higher education, university training in journalism, and education for citizenship. Bose even devoted entire chapters to explaining the history, organization, and purpose of singular institutions like the University of Illinois and the State University of Iowa. The final chapter of the book presented his own rosy reflections on his student days and stressed that his experiences provided "unmistakable evidence of the equality of opportunity and education" in the United States.[56]

Bose's love for the educational system often blinded him to the ways in which academia itself nurtured the very elements of American life, such as racism, that he was most critical of. In the first chapter of *Fifteen Years in America*, ambiguously titled "American Ways," Bose

recounted a violent racialized incident from his college days. Describing how he came to change his style of dress to conform to the mores of his new American environment, Bose wrote,

> I recall with amusement my earlier experiences in America when I was tardy in adjusting myself to the new environment. One by one, almost unconsciously, I had shed my Indian costumes; but there was one article I fondly clung to: I persisted in wearing my turban. Although it provoked not a little silent mirth among my fellow-students, I was determined not to give up the remaining emblem of the Indian nationality. Fate was, however, working against me. One morning I happened to leave my head gear in the cloak room of the college. The sight that met my eyes on my return was too tragic for words. The poor turban was gone – gone forever! It had been coldly assassinated – literally hacked and butchered to pieces. Then came my long-deferred, enforced introduction to the plain, and incidentally ill-fitting, ugly American derby.[57]

The manner in which Bose narrates this incident, as if it was a funny occurrence and partially his own fault, is deeply troubling because of how it downplays the horror of what was done. Even though Bose never uses the words "racist attack," it is clear that this is what had taken place. The perpetrators went after Bose's turban, a visually apparent marker of his racial otherness. This was a moment of violent racialized social disciplining that forced Bose to assimilate to a new, uncomfortable, and admittedly "ugly" norm. Such attacks on the turban, sadly, were not uncommon at university campuses. An article from the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that on August 15th, 1921, a year after *Fifteen Years in America* was published, sophomores at UC Berkley were upholding their tradition of hazing the freshmen.[58] In the ensuing events, they "captured and lined up" three Indian graduate students and decided that their hazing was to be a

specially designed two-step process. First, the Indians were to take their shoes off and wade in the Chemistry pond, as a ritual bathing "in the university's sacred pool." Then, the Indians "were to unwind their turbans to solve the mystery of what might be underneath."[59] Such incidents reveal how, ostensibly under the guise of exploring the nuances of cultural differences, American students would bully and attack Indian students. The approach with which both Bose as well as the *San Francisco Chronicle* article frames their respective stories of attacks on Indians wearing turbans, as if these were instances of innocent jesting that normally takes place on college campuses, discloses how unsafe these predominantly white institutions could be. Why then did Bose continually champion the American university as an idyllic space for other Indians to build themselves up through knowledge?

The answer to this question reveals Bose's own difficulty with dealing with the profound contradictions of liberal philosophy and liberal institutions. As I have sought to discuss in this chapter, Bose held a firmly liberal perspective because it gave him the language to confront the xenophobic sentiment in the United States, and because it gave him a conceptual framework to discuss the possibility of a post-colonial sovereign Indian nation state. Liberalism, after all, is completely suffused with the ideals of individual freedom and equality that are connected with national democratic theories of governance and society. This is what Bose found most appealing and useful. However, as Lisa Lowe writes, even as "liberal forms of political economy, culture, government, and history propose a narrative of freedom overcoming enslavement," they simultaneously "deny colonial slavery, erase the seizure of land from native peoples, displace migrations and connections across continents, and internalize these processes in a national struggle of history and consciousness."[60] It is this structural relationship between freedom and subjection in liberal philosophy, wherein the very notion of national and individual sovereignty is

predicated on enforcing modalities of domination, expropriation, and extraction, that Bose does not acknowledge in his writings. Bose believed that liberalism and racism were antagonistic, as opposed to being imbricated, as Lowe argues. While Bose experiences a form of racism, he doesn't interpret the incident as a manifestation of the kinds of racism that were permitted at universities. In Bose's estimation, the liberal milieu of the university was a safe haven from the racist attitudes that were rife in American life, and so he remained silent about the pervasiveness of racism in his beloved university campuses.

While Bose never quite made the link between racism and liberalism, he still wrote of racial oppression and was keenly sensitive to the struggles of the Black community in the United States. *Fifteen Years in America* is rife with incidents of antiBlack violence and prejudice. For example, while discussing a train journey, Bose wrote about how a fellow passenger attempted to make his acquaintance by sharing a sordid story of a lynching.[61] The issue of lynching was raised again in a later chapter when Bose discussed his interactions with Ilya Tolstoy, son of the great novelist Leo Tolstoy. After hearing Tolstoy critique the United States for its individualism, its lack of creativity, and its money-grubbing society, Bose raised a question on the Russian persecution of and pogroms against the Jews. Here, Tolstoy admitted the "race hatred, economic rivalry, and political motives" of Czar Nicholas II against the Jews, but he also maintained that "America has her lynchings to account for." [62] Tolstoy castigated the American legal system for failing to protect Black families, and for letting the white perpetrators go unpunished. Bose writes that Tolstoy emphatically concluded his point by stating "Can the decent American whites explain these loathsome irruptions of the brute, these appalling outbreaks of savagery in race riots? The United States should bow her head in shame before such disgrace."[63]

Bose's own trenchant critique of racism can be found in the chapter "Life in the Southern States of America." Although this chapter begins by noting the pleasantries of life in the rural South, it quickly takes a critical turn and Bose notes, "There is this prevalent notion among the whites all over the south, that unless the negroes are 'kept in their place' there will be a 'general rapine and destruction.' And the means which are adopted to keep the negroes in their proper place are painfully elaborate."[64] Bose then went on to describe the Jim Crow system and how it segregated Blacks to "some neglected corners of the town." [65] He even expressed his outrage at how some Southern whites accused him of a serious offence because he used polite language like "colored folk," instead of the much nastier racist epithet.[66] Bose called out the moral hypocrisies of white Christians, who defended slavery as a "part of the ordinances of God," and after the fall of the Confederacy refused to welcome Black people into their Churches. [67] His critique contrasted the many ways in which the Black community contributed to American social life and prosperity with the open denigration and violence with which they were treated.

To further explain the structural underpinnings of racism to his Indian readers, Bose compared it to the caste system and wrote,

> Negroes are considered by the white Brahmans, the American "caste people," as unspeakable, untouchable "outcasts," the scum of the earth. Their lot is the most pitiable of any I have ever seen. And yet these despised downtrodden Blacks are the foundation of the southern economic structure. They carry the load, and if they ever take a notion to falter, there is no doubt in the minds of those who have made a careful study of the subject, that the southern economic structure will topple.[68]

Even though Bose's analogy flattened the substantial differences between race and caste, he nonetheless clearly communicated the fundamental way in which unjust systems of oppression

upheld the social and economic order in the United States as well as in India. Bose explained how racism and casteism were similar in that they revealed that the very organization of everyday life was simultaneously reliant on exploitative labor while also being absolutely disdainful of the people performing this necessary labor. Bose further elaborated on the parallels between race and caste by narrating a brief story where a white woman "dressed in rags and worn-out shoes" with a "lean and hungry look" approached his Southern landlady for a job. When it was suggested that she might be help out in the landlady's kitchen, this woman turned up her nose and exclaimed, "I would rather die of hunger than work in the kitchen. The kitchen is for the darkies."[69] This story would be immediately legible to Bose's Indian audience as paralleling the ways in which the caste system functioned in India, where similar tasks were relegated to the "untouchable" castes, and where there was also a widespread stigma of being associated with performing a particular kind of labor, such as kitchen work.

While Bose demonstrated a keen sensitivity to the racism faced by Black people, his views on race took a turn when discussing the conditions of Indian international students in the United States. Towards the end of his chapter on life in the South, most of which was devoted to his critique of racism, Bose wrote,

> I now hasten to add that the race prejudice does not seem to affect the people of India very much whether they happen to be in the north or in the south. It is still more emphatically so about the Indian students in the American universities. The doors of all educational institutions in America remain open to Indian students without regard to creed or color. The kindly interest, the sympathetic appreciation, which the American professors constantly manifest in the patriotic ambition of the Hindusthanee students is most unique. Neither is the warm bond of personal

> friendship that invariably exists between the Indian and his American fellow students to be less highly prized. Indeed, for Hindusthanee youths, such a congenial intellectual atmosphere will be hard to find in any other country.[70]

It is significant that Bose's backpedaling here comes right after a multipage description of a gruesome lynching that he excerpted from a recently released NAACP report. It appears that Bose didn't want to scare away any prospective Indian international students with his biting assessment of racism in the United States. As Bose describes it, racism was a fact of life in the South, but not in university campuses, and not towards Indians. Once again, we find Bose turning a blind eye to the ways in which the university itself reproduced racial hierarchies, in addition to the ways in which racism was a lived experience for Indians as well.

Bose was forced to reckon with his views on racism against Indians with the publication of the American writer Katherine Mayo's bestselling exposé *Mother India* in 1927.[71] Mayo's book was based on her three-week long tour of India. It detailed a menagerie of depraved titbits about life on the subcontinent and provided voyeuristic accounts of child marriage, pedophilia, homosexuality, masturbation, impotent men, the worship of phallic objects, animal sacrifices, "untouchable" castes, rampant diseases, funeral pyres, downtrodden widows, and other sensational Orientalia that she had witnessed or heard about. Two intertwined arguments threaded together Mayo's overview. First, that Indians were racially inferior to the white West, which was evidenced by all of the perverse details that she went over. And second, that the British colonial government was all that kept India from sliding deeper into its barbaric and "ancient" ways. *Mother India* was thus grounded within an unabashedly racist and pro-imperialist ideology.

The book sold phenomenally in the United States, where it was initially released. *Mother India's* publisher issued nine reprints in its first year alone. It was the basis of a Broadway play and there was even a venture to turn it into a feature film.[72] The book quickly made its way to the United Kingdom, where it also caused a scandal and sparked debates. It was largely celebrated among the British administrators and aristocracy as a defense of colonialism. Correspondingly, the book was severely criticized by Indian anticolonials.[73] Gandhi famously described *Mother India* as "the report of a drain inspector sent out with one purpose of opening and examining the drains of the country … or … [giving] a graphic description of the stench exuded."[74]

It might be easy to attribute *Mother India's* success to the fact that it was composed largely of slander, sex, and sanctimonious self-righteousness, a mixture that has long demonstrated the potential to cause a stir. Such a surface reading of the book, however, would do the power and allure of its argument a grave disservice. As Manan Desai points out, *Mother India* came out when there was a marked upsurge of activity in the Indian freedom movement, as well as amidst political challenges to the United States' 1924 Immigration Act, which barred Indians from naturalization and sought to strip the citizenship of Indians who had immigrated before the 1917 Immigration Act had passed.[75] Desai writes that placing *Mother India* within this historical context raises two intertwined questions that Katherine Mayo was implicitly asking in her book: "Were these the same people clamoring for independence? And would you want them as neighbors?"[76] Not only did the book question the feasibility of a sovereign Indian nation, but it also doubted the moral character of Indian people. Through its racially slanted descriptions of quotidian experiences like sex, hygiene, bodily functions, religious practices, and family relations, Mayo provided a justification of why the white West was both superior to and the rightfully suzerains of the colonized East. Furthermore, as Anupama Arora and Asha Nadkarni

argue, Mayo's imperialist perspective also served to prevent the possibility of Indian immigration to the United States by raising the specter of sexual perversion, public health, and nonassimilation.[77] The combined effects of the Immigration Act of 1917, the 1923 Supreme Court decision in the *US vs Bhagat Singh Thind* Case, as well as the 1924 Johnson-Reed Immigration Act had effectively closed all pathways to immigration from India. However, the proposed and eventually unsuccessful, Hindu Citizenship Bill of 1926 (S. 4504) by New York Senator Royal Copeland had attempted to reopen the borders to Indian immigrants.[78] Such political maneuvers highlight that even after a series of effective legal and legislative actions to halt Indian immigration, challenges to these rulings were still being made. *Mother India* proved to be a forceful and lasting intervention in this debate. It contributed deeply to swaying the public opinion and stopping any attempt to reverse these legislative and legal restrictions on Indian immigration.

Mother India elicited at least fifty book-length responses from Indians such as Lajpat Rai's *Unhappy India* (1928), K. L. Gauba's *Uncle Sham* (1929), Dhan Gopal Mukerji's *A Son of Mother India Answers* (1928), Dinshah Ghadiali's *American Sex Problems* (1929) as well as Sudhindra Bose's *Mother America* (1934).[79] Much like these other books, Bose's rejoinder to Mayo never really disagreed with the factual details of her argument. Instead, he focused on the history, culture, politics, and quotidian experiences within the United States to discuss how it was also riddled with inequities, violence, strife, and hypocritical moral beliefs. "No one denies that conditions in India are far from being ideal, but Katherine Mayo and her cohorts assume that life is perfect in Mother America," Bose wrote.[80] He attacked Mayo's position of moral and racial superiority by pointing out that the United States was also guilty of the same failings that she had levelled against India. In *Mother America*, Bose lambasted the history and persistence of

antiBlack racism in the United States, he called out the hypocrisy of the *Declaration of Independence* for its acceptance of slavery, he drew attention towards the unsavory personal correspondence of iconic presidents like George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, he also critiqued the US colonial administration of Puerto Rico and the Philippines as a "snobocracy" that withheld the freedom of proud and honorable people. This line of analysis shows us the direction in which Bose's own perspective shifted over time. He became more comfortable with calling out the profound harm caused by the United States within and outside its borders.

Even as he adopted a sharp critical tone, Bose was careful not to completely alienate his American readers. He was committed to improve these ties because he still maintained that the American educational system was integral to helping India build a strong and stable nation. Just as he did in his earlier book, *Fifteen Years in America*, Bose sang praises of the American educational system in *Mother America* as well. In this vein, the opening paragraph of his chapter "Ideals of American Education" from *Mother America* reads,

> Schools and colleges are recognized as a unifying force in America, which is inhabited by many more races than India. The supreme task before the United States, as it is before India, is to make out of the diverse races and creeds a single national consciousness. The trusted American agency, which is relied upon to achieve the national solidarity, is education. It is the single largest factor in American nation-building. And if the educational experiment of creating the American out of heterogeneous raw material is to a large extent a success in these United States, why will not the same experiment succeed in making the true Indian in India?[81]

The cruel irony that belies Bose's rosy words is that formal education in the United States was a segregationist force, and not a unifying force during this time. From the Jim Crow laws that racially separated school children, to the anti-Semitic, anti-Irish, and anti-Italian admissions practices at many universities and schools, and even including the truly abhorrent boarding schools for Native American children (such as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School) operated the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the American educational system seemingly existed to enforce racialized segregation and violence. While he made prescient critiques of racism, colonialism, and xenophobia, Bose never commented on how these systems of power suffused the American educational system as well.

Despite spending more than two decades in the United States at this point, almost all of it deeply embedded within academia, Bose's unwavering and uncritical appreciation for the educational system seems rather baffling. Especially if we reconsider his own career at the State University of Iowa. Margery Sabin's research into Bose's terms of employment reveals that he was never promoted beyond the rank of an adjunct lecturer. He spent his entire thirty-three-year teaching career on "annual part-time contracts, with low salary increments and seemingly punitive restrictions and provisos."[82] Sabin writes that Bose's salary in 1921 was a mere $750 for teaching 108 lectures, and the department could have assigned him an additional 36 lectures with no corresponding increase in his pay, if they needed him to cover for someone else. In 1937, when he was invited by the US Department of Education to lead a month-long public forum, the State University of Iowa did not pay him his salary. Sabin summarizes Bose's career as a professor by observing that he was a "second-class citizen" at his home institution.[83]

We can only speculate on what kept Bose so attached to the university, despite his racist experiences inside it. The primary factor we must consider is that following the 1923 Supreme

Court decision in the *United States vs. Bhagat Singh Thind* case, which legally identified Indians as not being Caucasian or white and therefore being ineligible for citizenship or residency, Sudhindra Bose was on the verge of being deported back to India. Bose's position within the university attested to his assimilation within American society and his job as a professor marked him as being a respectable member of society who made valuable contributions to knowledge and education. Nayan Shah writes that such demonstrated records of good conduct were used by South Asians to challenge their deportation proceedings.[84] Sudhindra Bose maintained his position within academia to uphold his public reputation and remain in the United States. The secondary factor we must consider when thinking about the context behind Bose's attachment to academia is that the university provided a platform from which to engage the American public. It wasn't enough for Bose to simply live in the United States, he hoped to use his considerable skill as an orator and lecturer as well as the authority that comes with being a scholar to highlight the gruesome truths of British colonialism in India and build a transnational solidarity that supported the decolonization of India.

Overall, Bose highlights how to strategically inhabit the university and marshal its resources and cultural capital for purposes that both safeguarded his personal interests as well as advanced a larger anticolonial politics. Roderick Ferguson, citing the theoretical influence of Michel Foucault, notes that the academy operates "outside, below, and alongside" the state and capital to engage in the management of knowledge and to create individual citizen-subjects who ultimately align with dominant systems of power.[85] Ferguson posits that higher education functions in society as a tool that socializes and educates the state and capital to maintain hegemonic power amidst shifting politico-historical conjunctures. Sudhindra Bose's life and writings highlight how it was possible to instrumentalize these socializing and educative

functions of higher education in the service of one's own pathway to immigration, while also attempting to counter the rhetoric of xenophobia with the logic of liberal cosmopolitanism.

Coda: International Student Orientations

In her book *Queer Phenomenology: Orientation, Objects, Others*, Sarah Ahmed helpfully lays out the many meanings carried by the word "orientation." Ahmed writes that orientation can encompass a range of implications, including "to place so as to face the east; to place in any definite position with reference to the points of the compass or other points; to adjust in relation to new circumstances or surroundings; to turn a map so that the direction on the map is parallel the direction on the ground; to turn toward the east or in specified direction."[86] Ahmed elaborates that these many meanings signified by "orientation" jointly disclose a larger attempt to "find one's way," "establish one's direction," and consider "the east itself as one direction privileged over others."[87] The value of a term like orientation, Ahmed stresses, inheres in this proliferation of meaning that it brings to explore how "space is dependent on bodily inhabitance" and how a "familiarity with the world" is constructed.[88] Orientation, then, gestures towards a larger set of behaviors and tactical practices that allows one to navigate through spaces, inhabit sites, and build relationships with new places.

These many meanings of orientation allow us to better understand the larger significance of this chapter on Sudhindra Bose's life and writings. Studying how Bose found his orientation in the United States shines a light on how the university was a space that managed the internal contradictions of liberalism and racism. Bose's orientations were predicated on finding his way towards the most idealistic notions of national sovereignty, individual freedom, and democratic

governance that are enshrined by liberal philosophy and institutionalized in higher education. However, even as he navigated towards these ideals, he was constantly confronted by the stark reality of the persistence of racialized violence and discrimination that was rife in American society. The American university, in particular, became the site where the coexistence of seemingly incommensurate doctrines between liberal freedom and progress, on the one hand, and racialized inequality and subjection, on the other, were explained away. Bose himself internalized this contradiction and used the fantasy of the university as a space of opportunity, equality, cosmopolitanism, and freedom to comb over his lived reality of academia as a space where his labor was consistently undervalued by institutionalized racism, and as a location where his fellow students were occasionally prone to racist violence.

By way of conclusion, I would like to add on to Ahmed's conception of "orientation" by grafting another dimension of meaning onto this term. In particular, I want to highlight that the international student orientation is often the first encounter that international students have with their campuses and the university community more generally. The design and intention of international student orientations theoretically follows Ahmed's elaboration of the term because it is an exercise in making international students feel at home on campus and become acquainted with its community and resources. Furthermore, the international student orientation in the US is also necessary legal requirement wherein incoming students are informed of their rights and restrictions. Officially, the international student orientation only lasts a few days. In practice however, the international student orientation continues at all points of the educational experience, as the student has to be kept up with the changes on campus and in their legal status. In a more expansive sense, then, the international student orientation can be deployed as an analytic ballast through which it becomes possible to describe the ongoing processes by which

the international student navigates the university in search of opportunities, while being well aware of the limitations of their privileges and being informed of the legal repercussions of any transgression. The international student orientation can therefore be understood as an administrative expression of Sara Ahmed's theorization of orientation as an exercise for international students to "find [their] way in a world that acquires new shapes, depending on which way [they] turn."[89]

This new theorization of an international student orientation opens the possibility of understanding how international student might learn to strategically inhabit the university to marshal its resources and community to pursue their own projects. Sudhindra Bose's orientation taught him to use the university to create networks of support for Indians to study in the United States. His work as a founding organizer of the Hindusthan Association of America, as well as his writings in *The Hindusthanee Student* and in his books highlight his abilities as an orientation leader in helping Indian students navigate their experiences in the US. As we consider the multifarious ways in which Bose used his positionality within the university to help Indian students and influence the larger American sentiment on India, we realize that international students aren't a merely a token presence on campus, but rather that they represent an outsized locus of influence and agency.

Chapter 3

Taraknath Das and the Cosmopolitics of International Education

In the year 1910, Taraknath Das, an Indian international student at the University of Washington in Seattle, was named "the most cosmopolitan man of the university."[1] We do not know exactly how he came to win this accolade; whether it was an honor that many students voted on, or if a panel chose to recognize his dedication to cosmopolitanism. What we do know, however, was that Das's standing as "the most cosmopolitan man" was indelibly linked to his position on campus as an Indian student who appreciated cherished liberal American ideals like national sovereignty, democracy, and individual freedom. A profile about him, titled "Taraknath Das – A Cosmopolitan Leader," written by a fellow undergraduate noted,

> First of all Mr. Das is *American*. It is true, of course, that he was born with an East Indian skin, and that he has only taken the preliminary steps toward American naturalization; but what of that? Beneath that dusky cuticle is an American mind filled to the brim with American ideals and a heart overflowing with sympathy for all mankind … And yet in spite of his Americanism and his many activities of a purely American character, Taraknath Das is an East Indian. Deep in his heart are enshrined two burning ideals, the attainment of which is the conscious goal of his whole existence. The first of these is the freedom of his native land. "Young India's Reply to Count Tolstoy," a series of articles published in the *Twentieth Century Magazine*, embody his hopes and aims for the welfare of his people. The second and broader of these ideals is Cosmopolitanism, a "patriotism for the whole world." In a complete sense he sees these two aims as one and to them he renders his fullest devotion and his noblest efforts. [2]

Notice the profile's inconsistency regarding Das's national identity. At times it emphasized Das's total absorption of "Americanism," at other moments it acknowledged that his "dusky cuticle" as well as his active support for decolonization in India spoke towards his commitment to Indian nationalism, and finally, the profile recognized Das's overarching cosmopolitanism by touching on his "sympathy for all mankind" and "patriotism for the whole world." Das was presented as having a hybrid identity that brought together the histories and cultures encompassing India and the United States. Such a characterization, especially the reference to Das's attempt towards becoming a naturalized American, painted a picture of a person whose Indianness was being integrated into the bureaucratic and ideological fabric of the United States. This introduction allows us to put Das's status as "the most cosmopolitan man" into sharper relief. Das was considered the paradigm of cosmopolitanism because he embodied the intermingling of multiple national identities. Das's cosmopolitanism came out of the ways in which he straddled being an Indian and an American.

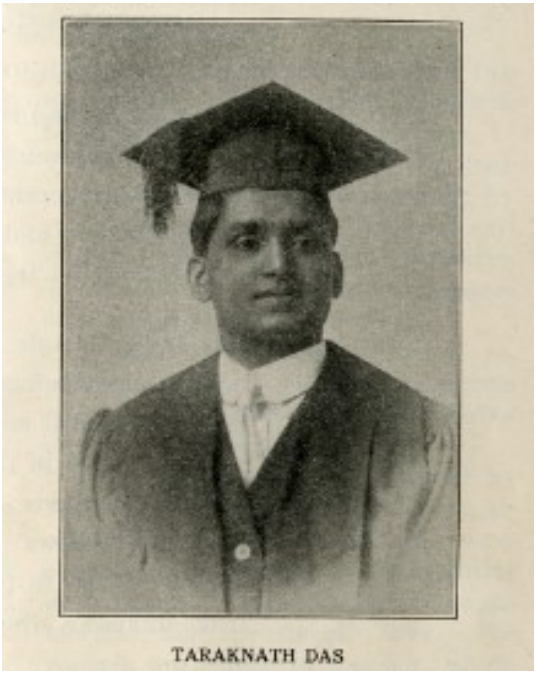


Figure 3.7: Taraknath Das portrait from the South Asian American Digital Archive.

Such a characterization raises larger questions regarding the meaning of cosmopolitanism at the time. Could Das really be cosmopolitan if he was merely substituting one national identity for another? Didn't cosmopolitanism signify a form of belonging that eschewed nationalism and aspired towards a citizenship with the world?[3] What was the nature of the overlap between nationalism and cosmopolitanism? Where, ultimately, did Das's allegiance lie? Was he a cosmopolitan? Was he an American? Was he an Indian?

At stake in asking these questions is an effort to unspool the ways in which international students navigated the vicissitudes of nationalism and cosmopolitanism, which took on a particularly heightened pitch in the context of universities and academic life. Addressing the institutional purpose of higher education Roderick Ferguson writes, "The modern Western academy was created as the repository and guarantor of national culture as well as a cultivator and innovator of political economy."[4] Ferguson underscores that the twin functions of Western universities was the imperative to preserve a shared sense of national identity, as well as catalyze economic innovations that drives the national experiment forward. These functions put international students in a conflicted space because their national identity was, by definition, different from their universities'. Their loyalties were divided between respecting the authority of the country and university where they were studying and claiming an allegiance to their national origin. However, as Das's profile demonstrated, it was possible for international students to maintain multiple patriotisms and use the rhetoric of cosmopolitanism as way of reconciling this conflict. Cosmopolitanism thus reflected a determination to subsume multiple different national identities into a single unified identity. It operated within the academic context as a disciplining mechanism for incorporating the national, cultural, and racial differences that international

students represented. Focusing on Das's multinational characterization shows how, far from transcending nationalism, cosmopolitanism was actually fully invested in regulating and, ultimately, preserving nationalist ideals.

Yet, even as cosmopolitanism functioned as a hegemonic apparatus to bring international students in line with the university's national ideological framework, this disciplinary drive could still be subverted and used for insurgent purposes. We can see a trace of this kind of subversion in the aforementioned profile of Das, which noted that the "conscious goal[s] of his whole existence" were, firstly, the "freedom of his native land," and secondly, "Cosmopolitanism, a 'patriotism for the whole world.'" Significantly, the profile emphasized that Das saw both of these two aims as being "one," suggesting that cosmopolitanism also carried with it anticolonial connotations.

In this chapter I explore Taraknath Das's writings and experiences as an international students to show how he utilized this ability of cosmopolitanism to encompass both nationalism and anticolonialism. I discuss how the cosmopolitan character of American higher educational institutions opened a tactical space for Das to relate the discourse of liberal American nationalism to the struggle for freedom and national sovereignty in India. I chart the ways in which Taraknath Das was able to use his institutional presence and resources to directly support the Indian anticolonial cause by raising funds and creating solidarities with sympathetic Americans. I argue that Taraknath Das's archive allows us to see the both the potential as well as the limitations of the American higher education's ability to facilitate critical political agitation.

We can better understand the specific texture of the connection that Das drew between cosmopolitanism, nationalism, and anticolonialism by grasping its philosophical foundations as it was theorized by its foremost modern proponent, Immanuel Kant, who theorized

cosmopolitanism in works such as *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Perspective* (1784) and *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795). Kant outlined his understanding of understanding of cosmopolitanism as broadly resting on three conceptual pillars. The first was that, for Kant, cosmopolitanism named the last stage of the universal progress of human history wherein human perfection would finally be allowed to express itself.[5] The second pillar is that Kant's cosmopolitanism favored republicanism, and not monarchy, as the appropriate form of national government that would lead to a cosmopolitan world order wherein human perfection could finally emerge.[6] And finally, the third pillar, envisaged cosmopolitanism as an ethos regulating relations between a "federation of nation states" who were peacefully coexisting with each other under a collectively held "law of nations."[7] Cosmopolitanism, according to Kant, thus operated at three distinct but connected scales of analysis: at the level of the individual subject progressing through universal history, at the level of national politics and the internal governance of a people, as well as at the international level as code of conduct regulating transnational relations. The ultimate goal of cosmopolitanism as Kant theorized it was the creation of an everlasting peaceful state of global politics that created the conditions of possibility for humanity to progress into ever greater horizons of individual perfection and ingenuity.

Having established this Kantian framework, we can now begin to approach some of the tactical anticolonial openings that cosmopolitanism presented. It can be argued that a fundamental respect for national sovereignty is what aligns anticolonialism with all three of the Kantian pillars of cosmopolitanism. We can see this alignment quite clearly in a work of writing only briefly referenced in Das's profile, but which was probably among his most widely read series of articles. In October 1909, while still an undergraduate at the University of Washington,

Das engaged in a public conversation with the eminent Russian novelist Count Leo Tolstoy over the need to draw attention towards the unjust rule of the British in India and support the cause of Indian anticolonial nationalism. This conversation was serialized in seven installments in the *Twentieth Century Magazine*, a leading progressive magazine in the United States at the time. Here Das summarized his objectives and wrote,

> We advocate freedom of India for the sake of service to humanity and resistance to tyranny, and shall continue to do the same as long as it exists. Our program is: (1) absolute self-government; (2) national education; (3) development of Indian industries, agriculture and commerce; and (4) no starvation caused by foreign exploitation. We pray aid from humanity at large.[8]

These aims disclose how Das drew on the ample ideological space that overlapped cosmopolitanism, nationalism, and anticolonialism. Das would have agreed with Kantian cosmopolitanism because they both shared liberal notions of freedom, equality, progress, justice, and sovereignty. Crucially, in Das's view, India's freedom wasn't a local matter pertaining to those living in a particular geography, it was a humanitarian concern that required attention and aid from people across the world. This move of drawing attention to the tyranny of British rule in India and then reframing it as an impediment to the progress of humanity at large also keys us into Das's rhetorical strategy, which made the colonial exploitation of India relevant to American audiences by emphasizing cosmopolitanism and universalism. The constellation of ideas, ethics, facts, and beliefs that emerge in Das's rhetoric were geared towards helping his American interlocutors see the transhistorical anticolonial relationship between India and the United States. Das would stress that both nations shared a common past grounded in anticolonial nationalism, as well as a common future predicated on republican national sovereignty. His writings gathered

a public who felt a sympathy for humanitarianism, political freedom, and universal justice, who were also responding to the ethical imperative of anticolonial nationalism. In so doing, Das was able to instrumentalize cosmopolitanism and transform it from an ethereal ideal to a political weapon in the anticolonial struggle.

Previous studies have analyzed Das in the context of larger histories of racialization, state surveillance, immigration, and the emergence of the Indian lobby in Washington DC. In her book *Echoes of Mutiny: Race, Surveillance, and Indian Anticolonialism in North America*, Seema Sohi discusses how Das's outspoken political activism was used by US and British officials to conjure a "Hindu menace." Sohi describes this phantasmagoria of this "Hindu menace" as a "consolidation of racial images that embodied the threat allegedly posed to the nation's security by 'foreign agitators,' whose subversive politics justified the federal government's antiradical measures."[9] Sohi's analysis pays particular emphasis to the ways in which Das was targeted by a joint effort of the US and British governments to criminalize seditious Indians and develop a transnational partnership for counterinsurgency. Nayan Shah has also discussed Das in his book *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting, Race, Sexuality, and the Law in North America*, within the context of the racial construction of the immigration and citizenship laws in the United States.[10] Shah pays close attention to Das's contentious path to citizenship and the revocation of his citizenship following the 1923 US Supreme Court ruling in the *United States vs. Bhagat Singh Thind* case. Finally, Vijay Prashad provides what may be the most critical perspective on Das in his book, *The Karma of Brown Folk*. Looking primarily at Das's later years, Prashad argues that Das embodied the "desire to posit some kind of high culture before the eyes of white supremacy," and lambasts him for pursuing a "bourgeois nationalist dynamic towards

monoculturalism" that inaugurated a strong lineage of conservatism within the South Asian American diaspora.[11]

My own foray into Taraknath Das's life and writings pays closer attention to a matter largely overlooked in these aforementioned studies, namely his relationship with American higher education. I turn to previously unanalyzed publications by Das which were composed while he was in college. I explore the reasons behind his abiding connection with US academia by asking: How did Das's position in higher education make him a target of state surveillance and counterinsurgency? Which forms of knowledge and solidarity was Das able to draw from his higher educational institutional context as he battled the decades-long attempts to challenge his claims to US citizenship? What role did Das's close relationship with academia play in the development of his conservative politics later in his life? As I address these questions, I continue an ongoing thread of argumentation in this dissertation which relates American higher education's ideology of freedom, progress, and inclusion to the hegemonic systems of dispossession that serve as academia, the state, and capital's conditions of possibility.

Patriotic Cosmopolitanism

The first sizeable wave of migrants from India came to continental North America at the dawn of the twentieth century. In 1904, forty-five Indians arrived in Canada and 258 Indians arrived in the US. By 1907, the number of Indian arrivals had increased to 2623 in Canada and 1072 in the US.[12] These numbers do not include those who were denied entry at Canadian and American ports of call, where it was estimated that as much as fifty-percent of arrivals from India were turned away.[13] This migration of Indians can be traced to the exploitative economic

policies championed by the British colonial administration, which routinely caused famines, epidemics, and mass immiseration in the South Asian subcontinent throughout the nineteenth century. Nayan Shah writes that some thirty thousand Indian migrants, most of them from the province of Punjab, made it to continental North America over the first two decades of the twentieth century because of the political economic factors pushing them out.[14]

As the numbers of Indian migrants to the United States and Canada increased, an anti-Asian stigma began to consolidate against them. "Have we a dusky peril? Hindu hordes invading the state" read the headline for a full page spread in the *Puget Sound American*, published on September 16th, 1906.[15] This article raised an alarm over the increasing numbers of Indian laborers crossing the border into Bellingham, Washington, after arriving in Vancouver, British Columbia. Indian laborers were drawn to the Pacific Coast because they found ample opportunities for employment in the region's booming lumber, fishing, canning, and agricultural industries. The rapidly growing town of Bellingham, for example, provided much of the lumber boards and shingles to rebuild San Francisco following its catastrophic 1906 earthquake and fire.[16] The *Puget Sound American* noted this pronounced demand for labor by emphasizing,

> Work is plentiful in the mills, in fact, too plentiful, and this is responsible for the ease with which the foreigners have found employment. The scarcity of white men has led mills to accept the service of those whom American workers regard as a common enemy. They feel that wages will be reduced if suppressive measures are not taken in the beginning.[17]

In the year since this article was published, the numbers of Indians migrating to Bellingham grew from less than ten to about four hundred, which exacerbated the tense racial climate of the town. Bellingham's Labor Day parade in 1907 featured "fiery orators" who

castigated its modest population of Indian workers. Two nights later, a mob of five hundred white men stormed the bunkhouses where the Indians lived. The mob pulled the sleeping Indians from their beds, forced them out on to streets, and set their possessions on fire. The police intervened in this scene by "herding" hundreds of Indians into the basement of the police station, "for their own protection."[18] All the Indians were then forced to leave Bellingham after spending two days in the basement. They proceeded on foot along the Great Northern Railway in the direction of the city of Vancouver, approximately sixty miles away. Many of these laborers had served the British colonial military in its Asiatic campaigns. They sought to reach Canada because they hoped that the British administration there would offer them protection. Two days after the Indians began their long walk, Vancouver witnessed its largest ever race riot. The Indians there were violently targeted by the whites yet again. The Asiatic Exclusion League, working in tandem with local whites-only unions, had orchestrated both of these xenophobic uprisings.[19]

THE SUNDAY PUGET SOUND AMERICAN, BELLINGHAM, WASH. SEPTEMBER 15, 1907

HAVE WE A DUSKY PERIL

HINDU HORDES INVADING THE STATE

BELLINGHAM workmen are becoming excited over the arrival of East Indians in numbers across the Canadian border, and fear that the dusky Asiatics with their turbans will prove a worse menace to the working classes than the "Yellow Peril" that has so long threatened the Pacific Coast.

Keep the Hindus Out, Says Writer

Figure 3.8: Have We a Dusky Peril? From the South Asian American Digital Archive.

While Indians were relatively powerless to advocate for justice and equality in the United States, they believed that they could seek redress in Canada, which was then also under British suzerainty. At stake here was a fundamental issue in colonial citizenship: did Indians enjoy the same rights and privileges as whites in the British empire? Were Indians also permitted to immigrate, own land, start businesses, and compete in the labor market in British settler colonial possessions like Canada, South Africa, and Australia? These questions had been ostensibly addressed by Queen Victoria's proclamation of 1858, which declared that all British subjects would "enjoy the equal and impartial protection" of British law, implying that Indians held the same legal status as whites.[20] This legal basis was also recognized by W. D. Scott, the Canadian superintendent for immigration, who acknowledged that "British citizenship in all British Crown colonies is exactly the same as British citizenship in the United Kingdom, and, therefore, a British citizen of India would also be a British citizen of any other British Crown colony."[21] However, the virulence of the racialized backlash against the Indians in Vancouver pointed to the fact that despite the Queen's authority, the white settler population as well as the imperial administration did not consider Indians to be equal in any such way. The British Columbia government, working in cooperation with authorities in London and in India, sympathized with these xenophobic currents and soon started enacting a variety of legal measures to bar and deport Indians as well as restrict their movement throughout the colonies. Renisa Mawani writes that these measures included the continuous journey regulation of 1908, which required all immigrants to make a direct journey from their country of birth to a Canadian port of entry. This measure was openly designed to exclude migrants from South Asia, while maintaining the allowance of white migrants from Europe or North America. To ensure its success, the Canadian

authorities even forcibly halted the only Calcutta – Vancouver route that had been operating at the time. [22]

Similar measures were taken against Indian migrants in the United States as well, where the fear of communicable diseases was weaponized as an exclusionary regulation. Nayan Shah writes that officers in San Francisco's Angel Island immigration facility would subject Indian migrants to a full physical inspection and even collect stool samples from them to search for hookworms, a parasitic infection that was also known as the "germ of laziness" because its effects included anemia, diarrhea, and listlessness.[23] Such techniques of screening the body and using the migrant's capacity to labor provided a supposedly scientific rationale to enact racist immigration policies that not only discriminated against people suffering from a condition that was treatable at the time, but also shored up the supremacist belief that white workers were more healthy and hygienic.

Seema Sohi observes that these riots and exclusionary movements "politicized thousands of Indians on the Pacific Coast, who began drawing explicit links between the racial discrimination in North America and colonial subjugation in India."[24] It is important to emphasize that over 90% of the Indian migrants in North America were Punjabi males. Many of them had recently served in the British army, and many of these migrants' ancestors had sided with the British in suppressing other Indian mutinous forces during the revolt of 1857.[25] After encountering such pronounced indignities in Canada and the United States, where they were denied the respect of the law, Sohi writes that these laborers "came to see themselves not simply as migrants seeking economic opportunity, but as politicized workers who understood the transnational dimensions of racial subjugation," and they started "linking their calls for racial

equality in North America and other white settler countries to demands for independence in India."[26]

It was in this context of an increasing anticolonial consciousness among the Indians in North America that Taraknath Das arrived in the United States in 1906, at the age of twenty-two.[27] Das was born in 1886 in a village just outside Calcutta. He came from a middle-class background. In 1902, while attending the University of Calcutta, Das was recruited into the Anusilan Samiti, a gymnasium whose purpose was to "build a cell of physically strong, brave young men who would eventually form the base of a disciplined and dedicated national liberation army."[28] This was a period of growing anticolonial nationalist sentiment across India and Das threw himself headfirst into the political struggle. In 1904, Das quit college and he spent the next two years traveling in eastern Bengal, where he would distribute nationalist pamphlets, and undertake, in his own words, "the work of an itinerant preacher, explaining the miserable economic, educational and political condition of India to the masses of the people."[29] Das's revolutionary profile grew significantly, and he soon learnt that the police were ready to arrest him at any moment. One of Das's supporters stole a "considerable" sum from his employer, using which Das was able to buy a passage to Japan in late 1905.[30] After reaching Japan, Das continued in his struggle against the British. He started gathering the Indian international students together in Japan, to whom he would give speeches on the evils of colonialism, and he began a propaganda campaign on the British colonial injustices in India. In retaliation, the British Ambassador applied diplomatic pressure on the Japanese Foreign Ministry, and once again Das was forced into exile.[31]

Das continued heading east and on July 12th, 1906, he arrived in Seattle. He was admitted on the basis of claiming political asylum from the tyrannical British rule in India. [32] Soon Das

made his way to San Francisco, where he initially worked as a laundry assistant and as a custodian in a hospital. He lived in a room in the historic Vedanta Society Temple, the first Hindu temple in the Western world. A sympathetic professor noticed Das reading in a corner of the hospital one day, and he was moved by hearing Das's story of exile and revolutionary struggle. The professor arranged for Das's admission into UC Berkeley's College of Chemistry in January 1907. Das signed up for courses in chemistry, mathematics, military science, political science, Oriental languages, economics, and drawing. He also worked as a laboratory assistant. Once again, Das immediately started organizing the Indian international students at Berkeley in anticolonial direction, with whom he founded the California Hindu Students Association. He also founded the Indian Independence League with the migrant laborers settled in the Bay Area. Taraknath Das's biographer, Tapan K. Mukherjee, writes that his organizing work as well as his courses did not leave Das with enough time to work on the side. He soon ran out of money, set aside his studies, and applied for the position of an interpreter for the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization. He passed the civil service entrance exam with the highest rating and was posted to Vancouver in May 1907, only four months before its anti-Indian riots.[33]

Following the riot, Das started advocating for the Indian laborers. He formed the Hindusthani Association in Vancouver, which raised funds to hire lawyers for Indian migrants facing deportation proceedings, and which also set up scholarships for Indians at local universities. Das would even "surreptitiously" coach migrants in the immigration building's waiting rooms and staircase on the answers to give the inspectors.[34] In April 1908, he amplified these efforts by starting a newspaper called the *Free Hindusthan*, which discussed the connection between the migration of Indian laborers to North America and the cruel atrocities of the British in India.[35] The paper exposed the way in which British administration's rapaciousness had been

masquerading under the cover of the so-called civilizing mission in India. It highlighted the Raj's history of state-engineered famines, its unreasonably high rates of taxation, as well as its repression of the Indian press, in addition to regular updates on the violence and discrimination faced by Indian migrants in North America. The *Free Hindusthan* was written entirely by Das in English. It was intended to be read across the British Empire and the United States to build international sympathy for the cause of national liberation in India and provide justice to the Indian migrants in the Pacific Northwest.

Reading through the *Free Hindusthan* reveals that Das's cosmopolitan perspective had already been developed by the time he reached North America. In the first issue of the *Free Hindusthan*, Das noted how, similar to Canada, other British colonies like Australia and South Africa were also barring the free immigration of Indians. In contrast, the flow of indentured laborers, contracted to toil in distant plantations under neo-slavery conditions, continued unabated. He exposed the politics governing the terms and conditions of Indians to move within the empire of which they were a part and wrote,

> Is it not curious that today India is the inviting land of all Britishers to occupy all high positions, and the natives of India cannot become laborers in the British colonies where they can understand the principles of Liberty! The Indian government sends every year shiploads of immigrants to Fiji Islands under contract to serve the British planters as slaves, but she is going to stop immigration into Canada as it is a land of Freedom![36]

In situating the discrimination and dispossession faced by Indians in a global context, Das brought out the asymmetric relations of power and profit that characterized the colonial world order. His use of words like "liberty" and "freedom" is also striking because he so succinctly, yet

emphatically, revealed how these concepts were paradoxically predicated on restriction, border policing, colonization, and slavery. Das wrote that such indignities could not be tolerated and called for an "upheaval which will rend the empire into pieces." [37]

The *Free Hindusthan's* regular rousing calls for national liberation prompted the British to ban it and Das was placed under surveillance. Das's biographer writes that the paper also caused an "embarrassment" to the American federal government, who employed Das in Vancouver. They found it difficult to dismiss him because his conduct in the office was "intelligent and conscientious" and his "character and behavior" was "exemplary." Furthermore, since peaceful protests and writing were protected under the US Constitution's First Amendment, they couldn't use Das's political activism as a cause for terminating his employment. Eventually, however, when Das started publishing shocking images of emaciated children starving due to state-engineered famines in India, which bordered on being considered obscene at the time, his employer gave him an ultimatum to either cease publishing the *Free Hindusthan* or resign from his post.[38]

Das resigned, and after spending a few months continuing to advocate for the Indian laborers in British Columbia and publishing the *Free Hindusthan*, he returned to the United States in May 1908. He had been admitted to Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont, which offered him room and board as well as a small scholarship. Norwich University was a military college whose curriculum was developed by the Federal Government's War Department. It housed its students in barracks, expected them to dress in uniform, and trained them in military engineering and warfare, with the goal of supplying men to serve as officers in the armed forces. Upon enrolling at Norwich, Das continued to write for the *Free Hindusthan*, which he arranged

to be printed by the *Western Clarion*, a Seattle-based socialist newspaper, as well as by the *Gaelic American*, an Irish national liberationist publication in New York.[39]

Why did Das enroll in military school? How did he find out about a lesser-known college in rural Vermont? What were his thoughts on Norwich University? We have answers to these questions because a surprising number of documents from Das's tenure at Norwich have survived and many have been digitized. The survival of these archival materials has occurred in significant part because of the conscious effort of William Arba Ellis, the Norwich University librarian, with whom Das built a close and lasting friendship. Ellis corresponded with Das for many years, even after Das left Norwich, and he made sure to archive many of their letters as well as Das's writings at Norwich.

Das's first publication at Norwich appeared in the student newspaper, *The Reveille*. It was titled "A Call for Universal Fellowship" and it was published in the October 1908 issue, during his very first semester.[40] An expression of Das's cosmopolitanism, this article brought together "Eastern" and "Western" cultural values by outlining an overlap between the Hindu concept of *mukti* or the absolute freedom of the soul, and the liberal notion of individual freedom. Das argued that both of these concept were grounded in a shared a understanding of fundamental equality and human dignity. In bringing together "East" and "West," Das sought to bring out universal values that were common to all cultures, which could provide a philosophical foundation on which humanity could build a "Universal Fellowship" that recognized that "there is no sectarianism, no creed, no dogma, no God, no man, no woman, no difference between cat and man."[41] Das wrote that a vast cross-cultural sympathy would emerge out of this shared belief in the humanity's oneness, and the world would collectively start redressing its violence and inequities. Crucially, Das ended this article by stressing that the world should be concerned about

colonialism in India, where a great travesty was being committed against humanity. “There are people dying like flies from famines,” Das wrote, “and the famines are caused by the British commercialism and exploitation. Try to realize that over thirty millions of people died for want of food, starved to death, while the British merchants were daily carrying away ship loads of food from the people who worked hard to provide it. Humanity is suffering from the effects of slow poison.”[42] Das called on his fellow students to be morally outraged and ready to help, writing, “You talk so much of Spanish exploitation of America, but why are you silent about the British injustice to humanity? … Here is a call for a Universal Brotherhood. Show your spirit by co-operation and action. We want sympathy. We need your aid in giving the poor people of India an opportunity, at least a chance, for education … [India’s] salvation lies in the education of her children.”[43]

Das’s “A Call for Universal Fellowship” clues us in to one of the reasons why he had returned to pursuing his higher education. He had arrived at a conclusion shared by Sudhindra Bose, whom I discussed in the previous chapter. Like Bose, Das also believed that the American university system could provide the knowledge of essential skills as well as a deep understanding of freedom needed to decolonize and build a sovereign nation state. Moreover, he also believed in the American university as an open forum from where he could build international solidarity against British colonialism. We see Das doing this when he wrote in “A Call for Universal Fellowship,” “Indeed it is heart rending, that in a country of three hundred million, only nine per cent of the people can read and write, and yet the British Government refuses to start free public schools and checks all attempts at private educational movements. The injustice done to humanity through the afflictions of the people of India is enormous and you are called upon to do justice to the cause as far as you can.”[44]

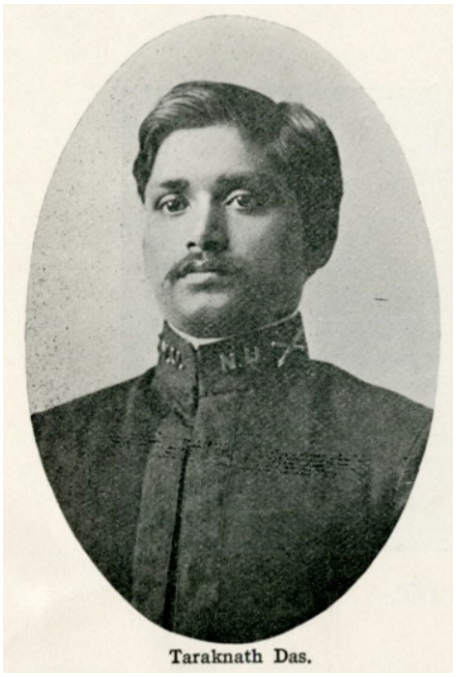


Figure 3.9: Taraknath Das in uniform at Norwich University, from the South Asian American Digital Archive.

While "A Call for Universal Fellowship," provides some insight into the reasons prompting Das's return to studies, a lingering question regarding this decision remains. Of all the different academic programs available in the United States, why go to military school in particular? Two of Das's publications from this period shed light on this decision. The first of these was titled "Importance of Military Education in Civil Life" and it appeared in the January 1909 issue of Norwich's student paper.[45] Here, Das discussed the critical thinking and ethical judgement skills taught by military training, as being essential for cultivating good citizenship. Moreover, he even made a case for the utility of the military in fighting oppression and wrote,

> Though we know that the civil body politic is of more importance than anything else, yet in time of dire necessity when our preaching of good will does not accomplish the desired end of preservation of peace and establishment of justice, it is the martial power that serves as the right hand of civil government to execute

> the good will of the citizens … Blessed are the people who stand for the safety of a country and the establishment of peace against tyranny.[46]

Although he doesn't allude to it specifically, I suggest that we ought to read this passage keeping Das's early training at the Anusilan Samiti anticolonial gymnasium in mind. During his years as a member of this organization, Das spent a good amount of time reading the revolutionary thought of the Italian nationalists Giuseppe Mazzini and Giuseppe Garibaldi, both of whom wrote of the role of violence and the military in preserving peace, establishing justice, and standing against tyranny.[47] Das's decision to go to military school reflects his support for an armed struggle for freedom, a topic that I will return to later in this chapter when discussing his involvement with Germany during World War I.

The next article providing insight into Das's decision to enroll at Norwich University was titled "Impressions of Norwich University" and it was published a month later in February 1909 in *The Vermonter*, a magazine focusing on interests pertinent to the state.[48] In this article, Das provided more specific information regarding how he found out about Norwich University and why he enrolled. He wrote that he first came across Norwich University while he was a student at Berkeley, where he took a course on the educational systems of different countries. In this course, Das read reports on American military schools written by the US Bureau of Education, and he was impressed by the glowing reviews of Norwich that he encountered. When he decided to go to military school, Das wrote to many institutions and Norwich emerged as the most generous and waived his tuition fees as well as provided housing. Das emphasized that it wasn't just the financial aid that drew him to Norwich. He also wrote admiringly of how "Norwich is the most democratic and self governing institution" that teaches "the practical application of civil government and military obedience." Once again, we find Das drawing on

the language of discipline, democracy, and civil governance to justify his decision to go to military school. We also come to think of the ways in which financial aid could determine the routes taken by Das, turning unlikely locations, like rural Vermont, into spaces from where to counter British colonialism.

These early writings paint Norwich University in the most idealistic light as being a refuge from where Das could gain theoretical knowledge of republican statecraft, as well as grasp a practical understanding of military strategy, in addition to providing a collegial forum from where to build solidarities for the cause of Indian decolonization. What these romanticized portrayals leave out of the picture was that Norwich was also a space where Das was being surveilled by British intelligence agents, who were working in cooperation with the US War Department. William C. Hopkinson, an Anglo-Indian spy tailed Das from Vancouver to Norwich University. In one of his regular reports to the Undersecretary of India in London, Hopkinson described Das as "an absolute fanatic on the question of physical force for the freeing of India from British rule."[49] Hopkinson enlisted the support of Captain Leslie A. Chapman, an instructor at Norwich, who claimed to have "stronger racial prejudices," to provide updates on Das's activities. Chapman wrote that Das "voices his hostility on all occasions, appropriate and otherwise. He writes for everything which will publish his communications and writes pretty well. He makes every endeavour to speak before clubs and societies of which there are several … His topic is invariably 'Free Hindusthan.'"[50]

These reports disclose the extent to which Norwich University became a site of inter-imperial surveillance and counterinsurgence. They were presented as evidence by British diplomatic service in Washington to Brigadier General W. W. Wotherspoon, Chief of the Second Division of the US Army, who in turn raised the matter of Das's political convictions with

Norwich University's Board of Trustees. The Board quickly arrived at the conclusion that a military college was no place for such outspoken radicalism.[51] However, several professors, deans, and even the university president himself recognized Das's good academic standing, as well as personally agreed with his anticolonial perspective. But they feared running afoul of the War Department in Washington. Instead of expelling Das, they arranged for him to receive an honorable discharge in 1909, and they also furnished him with several letters of recommendation to facilitate his admission to another university.[52] The manner in which Das was made to leave Norwich University underscores the transnational reach of British colonial authority, its indirect power over US higher educational institutions, as well as exposes its limitations. While the British were successful in interrupting Das's military training, they were unable to have him deported or extradited into their custody, which had been their prime intention.

In the months following his discharge, Das initially moved to New York City and attempted to gain admission to Harvard and Columbia. He was unsuccessful in this and soon moved back to Seattle by October 1909, where he registered for classes in political science and history at the University of Washington.[53] Furthermore, now that he was back in the Pacific Northwest, he resumed advocating for the thousands of Indian migrant laborers in Canada and the US. His status as an enrolled student allowed him to travel frequently to Vancouver, where he would provide legal assistance to Indians threatened with deportation.[54] He even found the time to create an organization called the "Association of the Promotion of Education of People of India," whose officers and Board of Trustees included numerous professors from the University of Washington as well as a judge of the US Federal Court in Seattle.[55] This organization published pamphlets decrying the inadequate measures made by the British administration in

providing for the education of Indians. It sought to raise funds to build primary schools and fund teachers in rural India.[56]

Das's tenure at the University of Washington, where he earned his BA and MA degrees in Political Science between 1909 and 1911, was marked by the flowering of his cosmopolitanism. This was the time when he was recognized as "the most cosmopolitan man of the university" and he refined his use of cosmopolitanism, nationalism, and anticolonialism to reach American publics. Cosmopolitanism was institutionalized at the University of Washington at the Cosmopolitan Club, a student organization where Das served as the president, and which I have discussed in my previous chapter. In addition to leading his local chapter Das was also the Vice-President of the Pacific district of the Association of Cosmopolitan Clubs in 1910 and 1911. Updates from the Washington chapter in *The Cosmopolitan Student*, often written by Jogesh C. Misrow, another Indian international student, describes the atmosphere of the organization under Das's leadership as "no more an outlandish organization with a strange name among a score of different clubs and 'frats' but it is a strong, well known, and cherished institution of which every loyal Washingtonian takes a legitimate pride."[57] Some of the notable events organized by the Cosmopolitan Club during this time included an address from Edward Clark Carter, the international secretary of the YMCA and an alleged communist sympathizer,[58] as well as at least three large social nights that "drew big crowds of jolly good fellows." [59] Interestingly, each of these social nights began with a one-minute speech from every member present on their current interest in international affairs. The Washington Cosmopolitan Club's regular fortnightly meeting included discussions on the international peace movement as well as talks on the history and culture of the different nations represented by the members. In addition to these events, which sought to globalize the students' perspective and create a social atmosphere for international

students to ingratiate themselves to campus life, the Cosmopolitan Club also took an active part in advocating for student welfare. Under Das's leadership and advocacy, the Cosmopolitan Club along with other students at Washington successfully mobilized to demand the establishment of a free hospital for students on campus, which the University Regents agreed to do.[60]

These events underscore how the Cosmopolitan Club at the University of Washington became a hub of international social activity and progressive politics. Taraknath Das styled himself in the image of an ideal liberal who was sympathetic to the cause of freedom, democracy, equality, and social progress. In addition to his activities at the Cosmopolitan Club and as an advocate for Indian migrant laborers, Das continued to publish the *Free Hindusthan* and he wrote frequently in local and national publications. In 1910 Das engaged in a debate in the University of Washington's student newspaper where he argued in favor of women's suffrage, which, according to one observer, "ended in the complete rout of his American opponent."[61] In 1911, he organized a national fundraising effort through the Association of Cosmopolitan Clubs to send aid to the victims of famine in China, which raised a thousand dollars.[62] He also wrote a detailed argument against capital punishment in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* as well as circulated petitions to end the practice in the state.[63] The highlight of Das's public engagement as a student at Washington, however, was his public conversation with Count Leo Tolstoy over the tyrannies of the British rule in India and the place of violence in the anticolonial struggle. Published as a seven-part series in the *Twentieth Century Magazine*, this dialogue with Tolstoy cemented Das's public reputation as a crusader against colonialism in India and a strong advocate for republican national sovereignty in India.[64]

While Das was cultivating this image of himself as a progressive cosmopolitan student leader, the British spy William C. Hopkinson followed him from Norwich University to Seattle

and set in motion a new plan to get Das deported on the allegation of being an anarchist. In order to see this plan through, Hopkinson attempted to use the Immigration Act of 1903 to his advantage, which stipulated that "anarchists, or persons who believe in, or advocate, the overthrow by force or violence the government of the United States, or of all government" were not permissible for immigration.[65] Hopkinson was concerned that if Das could gain American citizenship, then he could incite revolution in India while enjoying the protection of the US legal apparatus backing him. Upon learning that Das was applying for naturalization in the Coos County Court in Coquille, Oregon in January 1912, Hopkinson leaned on the Canadian deputy minister of the interior, W.W. Cory, to send information regarding Das's alleged anarchism to the US State department.[66] The State department, however, did not find enough evidence to support Das's allegation of anarchism and they allowed his immigration trial to proceed. During the trial, despite intense questioning from the Coos County district attorney, Das was not revealed to be an anarchist because he did not oppose all government, and he publicly advocated that India ought to be governed democratically by her own people. His application for naturalization was nonetheless still rejected, due to a technical error regarding Das's name in the immigration records. When he first arrived in the US from Japan and claimed asylum, he did not provide "Taraknath Das" as his name to the immigration official processing his entry. Instead, for reasons that we can only speculate on now, he entered "Jogendranath Das" as his name. This discrepancy was used as reason enough to reject his application. Das was informed that he could reapply if he secured a corrected landing certificate from the Seattle Port Authority.[67]

Following this unfavorable decision, Das moved to San Francisco and enrolled as a PhD student in UC Berkeley's Political Science department.[68] It appears that Das had only registered in the doctoral program as a way of continuing to legally remain in the United States because

there doesn't seem to be any indication that he enrolled in courses or was actively working on a research project. Another reason prompting Das to enroll in Berkeley in particular was the rapid emergence of Northern California as a major hub for Indian anticolonialism. The arrival of exiled Indian anticolonial revolutionary Har Dayal in 1911 catalyzed the nascent organizing and resistance work among the Indian migrant laborers that was already underway since the Bellingham and Vancouver race riots of 1907. Har Dayal himself was a brilliant student who had won a scholarship from the colonial government of India to attend Oxford University in 1905, with the expectation that he would return to India and work for the colonial administration after his studies. Dayal instead became deeply involved with the small but loud Indian anticolonial intelligentsia in England. He resigned in protest just before completing his studies and spent the next several years writing and speaking against British colonialism, until eventually he too traveled to the United States in 1911 fearing surveillance and imprisonment for his outspoken critique.[69] Once in San Francisco, Har Dayal took the lead in radicalizing the Indian international students and migrant laborers in the Pacific Northwest, and Das joined him in these efforts.

On the 12th of October, 1912, Har Dayal, Taraknath Das, and a group of Indian international students at Berkeley organized an event called "Nation Day," where they celebrated the growing spirit of Indian anticolonialism in the United States.[70] Some two hundred people gathered in Stiles Hall at Berkeley, which was festooned with Indian nationalist flags and pictures of anticolonial revolutionary leaders. Attendees included numerous members of the Berkeley faculty as well as many American and international students. R. H. Reed, a professor of Government, addressed the gathering and said, "As the new spirit of Indian Nationalism is for self-government, we are in favor of the movement and our presence assures you the most cordial sympathy of the faculty of the University and the American people. American institutions are for

'Rights of Man' and we are always ready to co-operate in all movements which uphold the principles of the American institution by which I mean, government of the people." [71] This spirit of international cooperation was also echoed at the event by Sun Fo, a Chinese international student at Berkeley and son of the preeminent Chinese republican leader Sun Yat Sen, who said, "China and India, in fact all the Orient, should learn many lessons from the Occident; but India and China should not forget their mission. Three hundred millions of the Indian people and four hundred millions of the Chinese people, i.e., seven hundred millions of strong people, living in peace side-by-side for four thousand years should teach the aggressive West a new lesson in the art of peace." [72] Das also spoke at the event and evoked the spirit of cosmopolitanism by emphasizing, "It is impossible to describe definitely and adequately the scope and aim of Indian nationalism because it is an expression of human aspiration. Our program will change the world. But as far as we can foresee today, we expect that young India will implant a new ideal of civilization which will practically demand a revolution in modern social ideals, that it will adopt means that genius shall not be wasted under adverse circumstances, that poverty will not shrink human aspirations, that special privilege will not over-shadow equal opportunity, that women will not be kept under subjection." [73]

The Nation Day celebration clearly displays how adept Taraknath Das was at using campus resources to bring anticolonialism, nationalism, and cosmopolitanism together. He had become a master of using the discourse of liberalism and universal fellowship to cultivate solidarities and draw awareness towards the cause of Indian national liberation. This solidarity would prove to be essential some two years later in January 1914, when Das filed another petition for citizenship in the San Francisco district court. Once again, the spy Hopkinson, who was alerted to Das's plans by student informants at Berkeley, set in motion a chain of

communiques via the British Embassy in Washington to the US Bureau of Immigration to follow up on the allegation that Das was an anarchist. The Bureau of Immigration acted on this tip and sent circular letters to their field offices in Vermont, Washington, and California to gather incriminating information on Das. The agents took sworn and notarized testimonies from a dozen professors, all of whom had nothing but praise for Das. Accompanying him to his hearing were two Berkeley professors, R. H. Reed and Arthur Upham Pope, who attested to his moral character and his belief in democratic government. Having failed, yet again, to charge Das with anarchism, a last-ditch attempt was made at denying his petition for citizenship based on the Naturalization Law of 1790, which only allowed "free white persons" to become citizens.[74] Similar to Sudhindra Bose's congressional testimony, Das drew on contemporary race science as well as prior legal decisions to argue that as a high-caste Hindu, he was part of the Aryan race which was Caucasian and therefore white. These arguments as well as the chorus of recommendations provided by the professors satisfied the judge and Das was granted US citizenship on June 6, 1914.[75]

Das's journey to American citizenship provides insight into the ways in which academic affiliation provides a pathway to immigration. The way in which Das used Berkeley's institutional credibility as well as campus resources was similar to how Sudhindra Bose leveraged his position at the State University of Iowa. They mobilized the academy's socializing and educative functions to demonstrate their assimilation with American society and represent themselves as accomplished citizen-subjects who were already making a valuable contribution to their community. Das and Bose used their institutional affiliation for purposes that exceeded the ability to gain technical skills or degrees; they also used their positionality as international students to gain access to American citizenship.

Now that he had finally become a US citizen, Das no longer felt the need to seek refuge in higher educational institutions and he set aside his doctoral studies. Moreover, he became much more emboldened in his anticolonialism. He sharply increased the tenor of his activism and went from merely generating awareness and goodwill for the Indian anticolonial movement through public speaking, writing, and community organizing, to collaborating with Germany and engaging in secret military operations against the British Empire amidst World War I. We gain some context behind this change of approach in Das's last published work of writing while he was still enrolled at Berkeley. In an article titled "The Attitude of India," published in California-based *Sunset* magazine's October 1914 issue, Das explored the likelihood of an anticolonial rebellion opened by the World War and wrote,

> It is evident that there is every possibility of having serious uprisings, if not a revolution, in India. Its success will depend upon many factors and most important of them are the successful German resistance against the allied force, and the attitude of Turkey towards Great Britain. If Germany, by diplomacy or any other means, can get Turkey to declare holy war against Great Britain, then in this juncture there will be uprisings in Egypt, Persia, and India where the Mohammedan population is over sixty million, and other parts of the Mohammedan world such as Algeria, Tripoli, and Morocco which will keep the Allies busy. From the view point of Hindu and Egyptian nationalists, it is the most opportune moment to strike a blow against Great Britain as the Spanish dependencies did about a century ago when Spain was engaged in a European conflict.[76]

Optimistically aware of the strategic potentialities opened by the war and convinced that the enemy of his enemy was a friend, Das used his new American passport to travel to Germany in November 1914.[77] Along with other Indian anticolonials and the German Foreign Office, Das formed an alliance known as the Berlin India Committee. The main objectives of this alliance were twofold. Firstly, Berlin India Committee hoped to infiltrate the sizeable numbers of British Indian troops fighting in the First World War and convince them to rebel against the British. Secondly, they intended to provide German arms and ammunitions to the thousands of disaffected migrant laborers in the United States and Canada so that they could launch an armed rebellion in India while Britain was occupied with the war in Europe.[78] Das was instrumental in these efforts and spent the next three years on missions in Germany, Turkey, Egypt, Afghanistan, China, and Japan.[79]

I will not dive into the details of these missions because they fall outside the purview of this chapter, which focuses on Das's experiences as an international student. However, in the interest of continuity, I will say that Das's fortunes changed considerably once the United States ended its stance of neutrality and joined the Allies in 1917. On the day after the US entered the war, arrest warrants were issued for thirteen Indian anticolonial revolutionaries, including Das, under the charge of violating the US neutrality laws and conspiring against an ally during wartime.[80] Das was served his arrest warrant when he applied to have his passport renewed in Tokyo.[81] The lawsuit that followed, known as the "Hindu Conspiracy Trials," represented the longest and most expensive state trial in the United States at the time. It lasted five months and it involved the American, British, and German governments. The United States spent $450,000 on it and the British spend $2.5 million. The trial was based on evidence gathered by American and

British secret agents over a period of ten years. Das was found guilty on April 23, 1918, and sentenced to prison for 22 months.[82]

While serving his sentence at the notorious Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary, the first maximum-security prison in the United States, Das made acquaintances with many labor activists and conscientious objectors who were also imprisoned there. He named a corner of the prison yard the "campus" where he would gather with a circle of activists, artists, and intellectuals to discuss the news and historical topics, as well as read poems and sing together. Das even held evening classes in Hindu philosophy, for which the prison would occasionally give him a special dinner.[83] Some of the letters from Das's time in prison indicate that he had softened his position on violently overthrowing the British rule in India, and had turned instead to appreciate the power of education in the freedom struggle. In a letter to Agnes Smedley, an American labor activist and ardent supporter of Indian anticolonialism, Das wrote, "To me the problem of nation building is as important as the development of an individual. Those who are educated, they owe to the masses to help them to be enlightened … Knowledge is the foundation of Freedom and that is the prime necessity of India – knowledge acquired through experience is more valuable, so I believe that thousands of young people should come out of India to get [a] wider vision."[84] In another letter he ruminated on the negative impact of his incarceration towards getting a job as a teacher and wrote, "When I think of education, I forget myself that I am a convict and am debarred from the sacred profession of education. This life gives me pain."[85]

Das's writings and experiences in prison bring out how connect he still felt to the academy and how he cherished his experiences as an international student and scholar. Das was released from prison in October 1919 and spent the next three decades fighting efforts to revoke

his American citizenship, a period of time that saw his return to working in universities. The infamous Supreme Court ruling in the 1923 *United States vs. Bhagat Singh Thind* case not only banned Indians from becoming US citizens, but it also revoked the citizenship of the handful of Indians who had already been naturalized. The verdict made Das stateless, however he still managed to remain in the United States and evaded the federal marshals who attempted to serve him with a notice informing him of the cancellation of his citizenship. They were only able to locate him when Washington D.C. newspapers reported on his graduation in June 1924 from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, where he became their first PhD graduate.[86] Taraknath Das spent the last decades of his life, from 1935 to 1958, working as a lecturer at a number of institutions including the Catholic University of America, the University of Maryland, the City College of New York, Queens College (Flushing), New York University, and Columbia University. He also frequently gave invited lectures at universities. Das never stopped critiquing colonialism and advocating for Indian independence in these years. He wrote at least eight books on foreign policy and international affairs as well as regularly penned articles for the *Modern Review* in Calcutta and numerous letters that were published in *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.[87]

In these years, Das had also married Mary Keatinge Morse, an American women's rights activist twenty years his senior. She was a founding member of the National Women's Party as well as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.[88] It wasn't until the passage of the Luce-Celler Act in 1946, which allowed an annual quota of a hundred Indians to immigrate to the US and permitted Indian nationals already in the US to renaturalize, that Das's American citizenship would be restored. Das's marriage, his reputation as an academic, as well

as the numerous legal challenges and political lobbying that he mounted on behalf of the Indian community in the US had kept him from deportation during this uncertain period.

Das passed away on December 22, 1958 in New York City at the age of seventy-five. The April 1959, issue of the *American Historical Review* published an obituary of him in which it remembered him as "a life member of the Association, long a familiar figure at its meetings, and instrumental in establishing two of the prizes it offers … His greatest interest was in the promotion of a better understanding among the peoples of the world, especially between East and West."[89]

Coda: The Subversive Intellectual and the University

In their widely read work *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*, Stefano Harney and Fred Moten provide a theoretical relationship between a subversive intellectual and the contemporary university. Harney and Moten provocatively write,

> it cannot be denied that the university is a place of refuge, and it cannot be accepted that the university is a place of enlightenment. In the face of these conditions one can only sneak into the university and steal what one can. To abuse its hospitality, to spite its mission, to join its refugee colony, its gypsy encampment, to be in but not of – this is the path of the subversive intellectual in the modern university.[90]

Harney and Moten write that despite a major conflict between their ethics and their interests, the subversive intellectual and the university nonetheless fundamentally need each other. The university needs the subversive intellectual's labor to teach classes and uphold the veneer of

presenting itself as a noble educational institution in pursuit of a higher truth, while it actually functions as a mechanism to reproduce the bourgeois professional class which is always and already subjugated to the ruling logic of racial capitalism. Conversely, the subversive intellectual needs the stage represented by the university classroom as well as the access to the "downlow lowdown maroon community of the university"[91] in order to abolish the very logic of racial capitalism that the university upholds. The university and the subversive intellectual, in Harney and Moten's framing, are therefore locked in a conflictual relationship where they need each other but cannot bear each other, and so the only possible relationship that emerges between them is a criminal one. The subversive intellectual steals from the university and undermines its ideological mission. The university, in turn, exploits the subversive intellectual's labor to shore up its own ends.

Harney and Moten's views have deservedly garnered a fair amount of scholarly purchase because they poetically disclose a conflict that sits at the heart of many an academic: How do we square our moral goals with the lived realities of the neoliberal university? What are the politics and ethics of maintaining criminal relationships with universities? Given the theoretical impulse behind *The Undercommons*, Harney and Moten never provide any concrete example of a particular subversive intellectual's life and labor. Their purpose in this work is not to explore a case study, but to lay out a different mode of thinking about one's relationship with institutional life and bring out the subversive possibilities of practices like study and community assembly within the larger auspices of academia. I want to suggest that my exploration of Taraknath Das's experiences in and around academia in this chapter contributes towards this larger discussion of being enmeshed with academia. Das's life and writings provides historical and biographical

evidence to test Harney and Moten's theorization of the relationship between the subversive intellectual and the university.

In many ways Taraknath Das performed quite similarly to Harney and Moten's subversive intellectual. He tactically used the university as a refuge to maintain his legal standing in the United States and as a stage to propagandize the cause of Indian anticolonial nationalism. Das's time as a PhD student at Berkeley is especially revealing of his skill at appropriating resources from the university because he was able to hold an institutional affiliation, while disregarding all the responsibilities that came with it. Instead of working like a diligent doctoral student, Das devoted himself wholeheartedly to fighting colonialism in India, and once he gained the security of American citizenship, he quit the university outright. Das's troubles with maintaining his citizenship later in his life prompted him to return to the refuge of the university. While this relationship with academia might not be as antagonistic as Harney and Moten's theorizations, it is nonetheless true that Das's time in academia exposes the ways in which universities reproduce and even enforce the cultural logic of racial capitalism. Das's surveillance and dismissal from Norwich University, as well as his inability to secure the honor of a tenured position in his life discloses how imperialism and racism can also affect the internal operations of universities.

In associating so closely with American higher education, however, Das also came to be influenced by what Roderick Ferguson drawing on Michel Foucault terms, the "affirmative mode of power." Indeed, Das was not immune to the regulatory impulse of US higher education, which, as Ferguson reminds us, worked through the inclusion and recognition of minority history and culture.[92] It was precisely via the affirmation of Das's anticolonialism that the institution of US higher education was also able to win his favor and make him deeply identify with the

American national project. We can see the extent to which Das came to think of himself as an American when we observe that even after India achieved its independence in 1947, and Das faced no danger of British persecution if he returned, he still chose to continue to live and work in the United States. Das did make a few visits to post-colonial India, where he was celebrated as a freedom fighter.[93] Despite this warm reception, Das was deeply disillusioned with the direction that India's political elite were taking the new nation. He had been a life-long advocate for creating a strong relationship between India and the United States, and he bitterly criticized Prime Minister Nehru's turn towards socialism and the cultivation of close ties with the USSR.[94] The gradual tempering of Das's subversive tendencies as well as the shift in his sense of national self-identification asks us to consider how universities can often change a subversive intellectual's perspective through their affirmative operations of power. In Harney and Moten's theorization, the subversive intellectual is able to maintain a constant antagonism vis-à-vis hegemonic power. Das's life allows us to see that, perhaps, such a stance may be unsustainable if one remains too close to academia over the long term.

I began this chapter by drawing attention to a student-written profile of Taraknath Das from his days at the University of Washington to problematize our understanding of his sense of national identification. I asked, was Das an Indian? Was he an American? Was he cosmopolitan? Das's multiple, overlapping, and even contradictory loyalties reveal that these questions remain unresolved. The larger matter that these questions underscore, however, is how the context of higher education had a major impact on Das's sense of belonging. They show us that international students are crucial to shaping the campus discourse on national identity and citizenship. Far from being a minority figure at the fringes of power and the social hierarchy of

the academy, Das life highlights how an international student could be an agent of portent change and influence.

Chapter 4

Orientalism and the Quotidian Life of International Students

In this dissertation I have written about the experiences of three Indian international students in US colleges and universities around the turn of the twentieth century. By centering attention on Anandibai Joshee, Sudhindra Bose, and Taraknath Das, I have sought to disclose the complex ways in which they tactically used access to campus resources to provoke social and political change in India as well as fight for immigration and citizenship rights in the United States. I have also highlighted the ways in which these students grappled with the hegemonic nationalist ideological apparatus that operated at their campuses. Even as these students imagined a progressive, sovereign, and democratic future for India, they turned to American higher educational institutions and its specific brand of liberal politics, grounded in racism and settler colonialism, as the model that India should aspire towards. While these international students were welcomed by US higher education institutions and given space to voice their critiques of patriarchy and colonialism in India, the horizon of their sense of political possibility came to become determined by an immersion into discourses of American exceptionalism that they encountered on campus. The writings and contexts of Indian international students that I have discussed therefore attest to the long history behind higher education's attention towards normalizing and incorporating minority culture and difference. These international students provide an insight into the ways in which higher educational institutions had developed an affirmative mode of power which, as Roderick Ferguson stresses, "was not simply a moment of construction but a moment of subjection."[1] My readings have sought to demonstrate how higher education was able to catalyze as well as discipline these students' insurgent desires.

In making these observations, I have buttressed the larger arguments of this dissertation: that analyzing the agency and context of Indian international students in the US provides an insight into the ways in which the liberal narratives of inclusion, progress, and freedom that structure the culture and politics of US academia are inextricably predicated on concurrent global histories of colonialism, racism, and counterinsurgency. The conditions of the students that I have discussed points towards a sustaining relationship between anticolonialism and women's empowerment in India as well as the liberal democratic and cosmopolitan thrust of American campus life, on the one hand; and on the other, towards an imperial international alliance between the US and Britain to combat the threat counterhegemonic of anticolonial activity as well as towards internal structures of white supremacy that governed the administration and bureaucracy of US higher education. I have sought to show that these students' writings and experiences resist the notion that international students are a minority group on-campus, or an unthinking tool deployed by power. In contrast, I posit that these international students embodied the cultural contradictions of liberal modernity and disclosed the limits of the discourses of freedom and progress.

I have laid out these arguments by focusing on individual international students and drawing on the archival and biographical information pertaining to them. Anandibai Joshee, Sudhindra Bose, and Taraknath Das are unique in this regard because of their significant presence in archives and, to varying degrees, in scholarly discourse. This methodological approach, of analyzing these students' experiences in and around academia, posits reading their lives as evidence revealing that international students operated as agents who attempted to shape the course of Indian, British, and American national histories, while also being influenced by larger structural forces of hegemonic power. In thinking about their lives as forms of evidence,

my intention has not been to suspiciously test the veracity of the experiences revealed through biographical research, as much as it has been to show that these international students used their universities as tactical spaces that brought together the politics of anticolonial nationalism in India with discourses of American liberalism that supported their ends. I have devoted attention to describing what these students did with their campus resources, such as accessing visas to remain in the US, cultivating networks anticolonial solidarity, as well as gaining the credentials to work as public intellectuals who perform on popular lecture tours and directly influence public opinion.

In this final chapter, I turn to another set of biographical and archival materials shedding light on Indian international students' experiences in the United States during the early twentieth century. However, rather than highlighting the experiences of anticolonial and antipatriarchal students, I discuss the experiences of two aristocratic and pro-colonial Indians: Indu Bhushan De Majumdar, a high-caste Hindu, and his friend Prince Victor N. Narayan, the youngest son of His Highness Maharaja Sir Jitendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur of Cooch Behar, in northern Bengal. Majumdar and Narayan attended Cornell, where they learned advanced scientific methods of tobacco cultivation. They toured other American colleges and tobacco plantations between 1905 and 1909. Majumdar and Narayan were products of the cozy relationship between the Indian provincial ruling class and the British colonists, who jointly upheld the Raj. The prince's godmother was none other than Queen Victoria herself, who also named him Victor, possibly after herself.[2] By shifting the focus away from anticolonial students, I want to highlight the range of political opinions held by Indian students. This chapter looks at how some Indian students supporting the Raj were also able to tactically use their acceptance into the American university.

The primary text that I discuss in this chapter is a memoiristic work, written by Majumdar and edited by Narayan, titled *America Through Hindu Eyes*, which was published in London and Calcutta in 1918.[3] As the title suggests, *America Through Hindu Eyes* shares glimpses of their thoughts and experiences of American people, culture, and institutions. The bulk of the book was written by Majumdar. Narayan wrote the book's editorial foreword as well as its final chapter. *America Through Hindu Eyes* is particularly relevant in my study because the university setting figures quite prominently in the book. Majumdar and Narayan spent the bulk of their time on college campuses, after all. *America Through Hindu Eyes* therefore devoted a significant amount of space to their memories and experiences on-campus. It recounted a number of events set in the campus milieu such as, college parties, meals at the dining hall, campus tours, and visits to the beach, among others.

I refer to *America Through Hindu Eyes* as memoiristic because it is formally quite hybrid, incorporating the characteristics of many different-yet-related forms such as the travelogue, reportage, sociological analysis, and national history. Recourse to this mélange of literary forms was a common way for Indians to narrate their memories and impressions of the United States. Manan Desai notes the 1910s and 1920s witnessed the publication of similarly styled works by other Indians such as Lajpat Rai's *The United States of America: A Hindu's Impressions and a Study* (1916), Sudhindra Bose's *Fifteen Years in America* (1920), as well as the Punjabi journalist Saint Nihal Singh's series of essays titled "As an Indian Sees America" which came out initially in the *Hindusthan Review* in 1909. This hybrid style was the product of these works' dual objects: explaining the culture and institutions of the United States to Indian readers, as well as providing Americans with an Indian perspective on their own idiosyncrasies and social mores. These works performed this act of two-way cultural translation by employing a variety of forms

of writing which narrated evidence and facts about the United States, as well as gave an improvised contextual framework for the writers' impressions of their travels.

Saidiya Hartman has said that the genre of writing based on the narration of a person's life story, like the memoir or the autobiography, is "not a personal story that folds onto itself; its not about navel gazing, its really about trying to look at historical and social processes and one's own formation as a window onto historical and social processes."[4] Hartman's crystallization of the cultural politics of memoirs keys us into their significance as forms of evidence that outlines how racial formation takes place at an individual level. Memoirs are not only sources of information regarding the details of personal experience and the outline of an individual's perspective, but they also provide a window into specific historical and social structures, such as race, within which the memoirist lives and forms their perspective. Memoirs, in other words, allow us to see the relationship between an individual and the world which they inhabit – how perspective and experience are shaped by and in response to larger socio-cultural conditions, such as race and gender. In the context of this dissertation, Hartman's insight encourages us to read memoiristic works by Indian international students as disclosing the background and perceptions of students themselves, as well as providing an insight into the racial and gendered dynamics of American higher education at the time. *America Through Hindu Eyes*, in particular, discloses the shared Orientalist sensibilities between its authors and the academic milieu that they largely inhabit.

Orientalism and higher education have a longstanding history. Edward Said has famously theorized Orientalism as "the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having

authority over the Orient."[5] Said's framing of Orientalism presents it as an exercise of hegemonic Euro-American power that creates a discursive lexicon for interpreting and representing the "East" or the "Orient" as the subordinate antithesis of the "West" or the Euro-American empires. Furthermore, Said holds that although it has a widespread presence across social and political life, influencing foreign policy, judiciary practices, literary and visual arts, as well as individual psychology, Orientalism is first and foremost an academic enterprise.[6] Said's theorization presents Orientalism as a scholarly inquiry into the "East" and the subsequent construction of a dominating framework for understanding and dealing with the "East." He emphasizes this point by writing, "so far as the West was concerned during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an assumption had been made that the Orient and everything in it was, if not patently inferior to, then in need of *corrective study* by the West. The Orient was viewed as if framed by the *classroom*, the criminal court, the prison, the *illustrated manual*. Orientalism, then, is *knowledge* of the Orient that places things Oriental in *class*, court, prison, or manual for *scrutiny*, *study*, judgement, *discipline*, or governing."[7] Said's framing of Orientalism as a project geared towards the construction of knowledge about the Orient, in addition to his frequent mention of academic spaces as well as research and teaching practices also alludes towards how Orientalism was a joint undertaking between academic institutions and other organs of hegemonic power. The primary directive of Orientalism was a scholarly one of creating an epistemology for pathologizing, criminalizing, and, ultimately, subjugating the Orient. Orientalism and higher education can therefore also be understood as having institutional as well as ideological ties.

This chapter explores how this relation between Orientalism and higher education also came to inform the social atmosphere on campus, and how the exoticization of culture was both offensive and alienating, as well as the only way for Indian international students to relate with a

new community. By studying how a high-caste gentleman, like Indu Bhushan De Majumdar, and a titled member of the aristocracy, like Victor N. Narayan, responded to the Orientalist milieu that they encountered, I highlight how forms of racialized desire and domination manifested in quotidian social interactions among Americans and Indian students. Detecting this presence of Orientalism in the social ambience of college allows to see how structural forces of colonialism and racism created forms of social life on campus. Majumdar and Narayan's experiences add complexity to the perception of the American university as a bastion liberal democratic sensibilities by bringing out how its everyday life was linked to colonialism and empire.

The Ambience of Orientalism

In his editorial foreword to *America Through Hindu Eyes*, Victor N. Narayan quoted the opening lines from Rudyard Kipling's poem "The Ballad of East and West" to highlight the preconceptions with which Americans came to know Indian people and culture. Kipling famously wrote, "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet," and sought to implant the fundamentally Orientalist understanding that the East was absolutely contrarious to the West, there can be no understanding or dialogue between the two. Narayan questioned this understanding of cultural difference and wrote, "Can this be taken for gospel truth, when the human mind is fundamentally the same everywhere, and 'above all nations is humanity.' The various nations differ from each other not so much in the divine instincts of patriotism, love, fellowship, etc., as in the various ways and habits of life, which are the outward gloss of civilization."[8] Narayan argued, contrary to Kipling, that cultures differ only in quotidian aspects of life, which are the most visible markers of ethnic, racial, and/or national belonging, while sharing a fundamental humanity grounded in common feelings like patriotism, love, and

fellowship. Curiously, Narayan also included a quotation in his response to Kipling that he must have learned while at Cornell. The phrase "above all nations is humanity" is the motto of the Cosmopolitan Club, the same national student organization that I have discussed in my previous chapters. This motto was coined by Goldwin Smith, a beloved history professor at Cornell, who even had it engraved on a stone bench that still sits on Cornell's campus.[9] By citing Smith's dictum, Narayan intimated that the spirit of cosmopolitanism was opposed Orientalism, and the educated person ought to know better than accept Kipling's fabrications as reality.

In naming Kipling and in problematizing the role of Orientalism as the dominant cultural framework for understanding the East, Narayan called attention to a major issue facing Indian international students in their quotidian lives and everyday interactions with Americans. Indian students were having difficulties with being taken seriously as fellow human beings because the public perception of them was rooted in fantastic tales. Narayan's friend and primary author of *America Through Hindu Eyes*, Indu Bhushan De Majumdar belabored this point as well. Majumdar wrote in his preface to the book that "to the generality of the American people … India has no greater significance than that of being a land of palmists, jugglers and snake-charmers, where 'The poor benighted Hindoo / He does the best he kindoo / He sticks to his caste / From first to last, / And for pants, he makes his skindoo.'"[10] This caricature was deeply offensive to cosmopolitan and privileged Indians like Narayan and Majumdar, who were neither poor nor benighted, and as disclosed in the portrait photographs that they include in the book, they certainly dressed quite well. Far from being carnival performers, Narayan and Majumdar were members of the Indian aristocracy who were traveling to the United States to learn the latest innovations in the cultivation of tobacco. They did not take well to the being the butt of cheap racist jokes.

Figure 4.10: Indu Bhushan De Majumdar and Prince Victor N. Narayan, from America Through Hindu Eyes*, courtesy of the HathiTrust Digital Library.*

Narayan and Majumdar confronted this widespread misconception of Indians by writing *America Through Hindu Eyes*, a work whose purpose was to share "the impressions of a person from one of the oldest countries of the world, with one of the oldest civilizations, brought face to face with the newest civilization of the world's youngest country."[11] They presented their book as a good faith attempt at initiating a cross-cultural dialogue, which would rectify the American impressions of Indians by showcasing their knowledge of the ancient wisdom of Indian civilization, as well as invert the Orientalist gaze by providing an Eastern perspective on the West. Majumdar and Narayan believed India's older cultural life and history would have valuable lessons to share with the United States, which they perceived as being youthful, energetic, and dynamic. They stressed that their intention was not to demean American society

and culture or advance an ideological agenda, rather *America Through Hindu Eyes* simply conveyed "the reminiscences of a University man, who for three years lived with the Americans as one of them, and therefore had plenty of opportunities to study even the light and humorous side of an American life."[12] Majumdar, in particular, hoped that "this little book may not be unwelcome to the American people, who are more eager to get the opinions of a stranger about their own country than any other people in the world."[13] He stressed the book's intentions to delight and entertain by highlighting, "Most of the matters dealt with in the book were discussed before American audiences and friends, and it was found that the impressions of oriental people about America greatly contributed to their enjoyment." [14]

This framing of *America Through Hindu Eyes* as responding to cultural misconceptions, in conjunction with its emergence out of close personal interactions with Americans allows us to see how Orientalism played a key factor in shaping the texture of everyday life for international students. In turning to their individual experiences, Majumdar and Narayan recounted ordinary moments from their time in college. *America Through Hindu Eyes* is full of conversations with American students and professors, accounts of parties and cultural events on campus, as well as other everyday events in college life like meals in the dining hall and descriptions of studying late into the evening in the library. This fidelity to the quotidian – to events that are recurring, mundane, and commonplace – is what makes *America Through Hindu Eyes* an important source of information regarding the experiences of Indian international students. It allows us to gain a sense of the ambience at some of the United States' most elite institutions. The authors' accounts of everyday experiences in college provide a window into the mood and character of these spaces. Despite the authors' conscious decision of maintaining a distance from overt political

analysis, their descriptions of college life nonetheless betray the pulsating reverberance of a very specific political aesthetic that pervaded the social atmosphere on campus, namely Orientalism.

Majumdar represents this influence of Orientalism in an early chapter titled "My First Impressions of an American University – At Yale (1905)." This chapter describes his visit to Yale University, where he met an unnamed American friend who was attending a PhD program there. During this visit, Majumdar's American friend offered him an alcoholic drink, which Majumdar declined citing his religious background as a Hindu. The American friend was rather shocked at learning that many people in India abstained from alcohol. "How can you live in a country like India without drinking," he remarked and spent the rest of the evening thinking that "India must be a very funny country indeed; everything there must be strange and outlandish."[15] The specific of choice of adjectives like "funny," "strange," and "outlandish" carries with them a subtext that points towards additional meanings that range from describing deceptive or dishonest behavior (what we might think of as "funny business") to designating someone or something as being alien and abnormal. There is a shared negative connotation that underlies these descriptors pointing towards an interpretive framework seeking to pronounce a judgement that is subtly condescending and which recognizes cultural difference as a sign of inferiority as well as perversion. The representation of this interaction highlights Orientalism's manifestation in casual conversation between an Indian student and his American friend.

The pervasiveness of this kind of Orientalist attitude towards India and Indians at Yale wasn't just evidenced by a few passing remarks in this single conversation. Majumdar wrote of a series of recurring encounters with other students and professors at Yale that not only provides a sense of the deep extent to which Orientalism had pervaded the campus culture but also highlights an influential source of this perspective. "It seemed to me that everybody in Yale,

student or professor, was familiar with [Rudyard Kipling's] books," Majumdar wrote, "and thus knew something about India."[16] He goes on to describe to a series of encounters that took place when he ate at the Yale Commons. Majumdar writes that during his meal, he would be assailed with questions inquiring into his impressions of Kipling's books, specifically his views on the reliability of the representations therein.[17] Typical questions included: "Are the girls in India pretty? … Does your heart pine for the girls you left behind in India? Tell Mr. De, are Kipling's pictures overcoloured?"[18] This fervor surrounding Kipling was also noted in an article covering Majumdar's visit to Yale, when a journalist from the *New Haven Register* wrote, "Every student he has so far been introduced to has opened the conversation by enquiring: 'Tell me, Mr. De, are Kipling's books on India true to life?' The mere mention of Kipling is now sufficient to put Mr. De to full flight."[19] As the newspaper article suggests, Majumdar's response to the repeated questions about Kipling at Yale seems to have been primarily self-defensive. His own recollection of being berated by questions about Kipling at the Yale Commons emphasizes the incessant volume of questions being hurled his way. Question after question are directed at Majumdar and he never has a moment to reply adequately. Majumdar wrote that he "made a hasty retreat" from the Yale Commons as soon as his meal was over, before another "gentleman could ask me if the tales he had been lately reading were of an exaggerated character or true to life."[20]

Edward Said has written about Rudyard Kipling as being among the masters of Orientalist literary aesthetics. Said has described Kipling in the following terms: "there are few more imperialist and reactionary than he," and that "his fiction represents the empire and its conscious legitimization."[21] The popularity of Kipling at Yale reveals that there was a penchant for narratives that celebrated the dominance of the white West over the colored East. More

specifically, Majumdar's impressions of Yale underscores that there was an inclination to treat Indians not as human beings who should be regarded with dignity, but rather, as Kipling's oeuvre demonstrates, there was a specific understanding of Indians as objects to be scrutinized and controlled. It is this tendency of being perceived as an object serving the Orientalist gaze that Majumdar found quite startling. Recounting an experience at a party attended by students and faculty at the Yale Graduate Club, Majumdar remarked that he was stunned by the volume and tenor of questions that were once again directed at him:

> The variety of questions they asked me about India and their vast information about the life and conditions in my country simply astounded me. I could not but feel in my mind that these gentlemen, although they had never been to India, knew more about her in certain respects than I did, - being an inhabitant of the place. In fact, I learned more from their questions than they did from my answers. Facts and figures about the population, the religion, the castes, the languages, the mineral resources, the industries, and the famines of India seemed to be at their fingers' ends. They asked me questions on so many phases and from so many standpoints that I came to think of many things which never crossed my mind before … The next morning I went to the University Library, and consulted the Encyclopedia and some literature on India in order to equip myself thoroughly for any future cross-examinations by these savants of Yale.[22]

The manner in which Majumdar was constantly berated with questions about India constructed him as a specimen that the Yale community would interrogate for their own enjoyment and refinement. It appears that the people at Yale were more interested in performing curiosity than they were in hearing Majumdar's answers, given that they already presumed to know quite a lot

about India. Majumdar's framing of these interactions as a "cross-examination" subtly reveals how his interlocutors at Yale were interested in performing a kind of intellectual mastery over him to confirm that they did, in fact, know more than the Oriental native.

This Orientalist atmosphere was also alive and well at Cornell University, which both Majumdar and Narayan attended. Majumdar graduated from Cornell in 1906 with a Master of Science degree in Agriculture. He had been sent to the United States with a scholarship from the Association for the Advancement of the Scientific and Industrial Education of Indians.[23] After completing his studies, Majumdar returned and was appointed to work for the State of Cooch Behar, which is how came in contact with the royal family and Narayan. [24] The Maharaja of Cooch Behar had attempted to grow tobacco in his lands in 1905, and having received initial positive results, he resolved to send his youngest son, Narayan as well as Majumdar to the US to learn more about the science and business of tobacco, as well as to visit plantations in the American south and in Cuba.[25] In 1908, Narayan and Majumdar, accompanied by Narayan's personal valet, a Muslim man named Ijaharuddin, traveled to the United States.[26] Narayan was at Cornell for less than a year, and it doesn't appear that he spent much time in the classroom. It was Majumdar's responsibility of picking up the scientific and practical details of growing tobacco during this visit. Narayan's account of Cornell consists mostly of his memories of playing sports as well as his fine impressions of the lovely home and gracious hospitality of Professor J. H. Tanner, a mathematician, in whose care he was staying.[27]

Both Majumdar and Narayan were involved with the chapter of the Cosmopolitan Club at Cornell, and in this context they partook in a variety of social events. Majumdar describes one of the major events that they participated in called Hindusthani Night. Majumdar writes that this event "was the occasion of the orientalising of several Ithicans" and it began with the attendees

being greeted at the entrance of Cornell's Barnes Hall by Narayan's valet, Ijaharuddin, who wore a red and gold turban that hung down his back like a "heavy curtain." Ijaharuddin greeted the attendees with a massive silver tray containing a variety of different flowers. The evening's entertainment began with a comedic roast of American fashion delivered by a Chinese international student, who could "outHindu any Hindu at Cornell for his Hinduism." This student, referred to simply as Mr. Yih, was dressed in a "green turban, a silk shirt, pajama-like trousers, and a shawl which resembled a stole of gigantic proportions."[28] In this costume, Yih impersonated an Indian and poked fun at derby hats, choky collars, and the many pockets in an American suit. As a counter to Western fashion, he jovially highlighted the advantages of the Indian turban and the shawl. "When you want a derby you go to a hat store and the hat man makes your head fit the hat. Our turban fits any sized head," Yih quipped. His defense of the shawl followed a similar logic, with a touch of chivalry thrown in: "our shawls fit girls just as well as men; and how nice it is, when at parties a girl says she feels right cool, for you to take off your shawl and lend it to her."[29] Following Yih's roast, several international students performed a seven-scene reenactment of an "educated Hindu's" courtship and wedding. A photograph of the play's characters, provided bellow, reveals the multinational cast of this performance. Its caption illuminates, "A Chinese student played the part of the Hindu bride, an Argentine student that of the bridegroom, a Brazilian student that of the bride's mother, and a Filipino student that of the bridegroom's mother. Prince Narayan N. Narayan (third figure from the left) played the part of the bride's father, and B.M. Chatterjee, who is shown in the picture as blessing the couple, played the part of the Brahmin priest."[30]

A SCENE OF THE HINDU MARRIAGE CEREMONIAL IN THE HINDUSTHANI NIGHT:

A Chinese student played the part of the Hindu bride, an Argentine student that of the bridegroom, a Brazilian student that of the bride's mother, and a Filipino student that of the bridegroom's mother. Prince Victor N. Narayan (third figure from the left) played the part of the bride's father, and B. M. Chatterjee, who is shown in the picture as blessing the couple, played the part of the Brahmin priest.

[To face p. 155.

Figure 4.11: A Scene of the Hindu Marriage Ceremonial in the Hindusthani Night. Image from America Through Hindu Eyes*, courtesy of the South Asian American Digital Archive.*

The Orientalist aesthetic of the Hindusthani Night is revealed by the lack of depth to the performances that were staged. Much in the vein of the Saiidian critique of Kipling, who was charged with being invested in superficial details,[31] the Hindusthani Night was also primarily concerned with surface-level representations. None of the characters in the marriage reenactment, for example, appear to have names or a sense of interiority, and the play itself didn't have a plot with any moments of dramatic conflict. The students simply recreated some of the rituals and costumery that could be witnessed at a stereotypical Hindu marriage. Even Yih's comedy routine poked fun at the most trivial differences in styles of clothing. Furthermore, his choice of costuming, which consisted of a hodge-podge ensemble of accoutrement that could be

vaguely identifiable as Indian or Arab or Chinese, discloses a tendency to self-Orientalize, or a willingness on behalf of the international students to correspond to and reify racist Euro-American notions of the Orient.

The various scenes of Orientalist impersonation put on by the students underscores how the spectacle of racialized caricature created community, carried pleasure, as well as mobilized power and knowledge in Cornell's social milieu. The effect of this ambience was transformational and educative, as Cornell's president, Jacob Gould Schurman's, remarks at the Hindusthani Night noted:

> My friends, living as we usually do, we get the idea in our heads that we are superior race in this world. We feel that there is no man like the American man and, of course, no woman like the American woman. All this is very well; but we get to think also that there are just about five or six other nations besides American – the English, the German, the French, the Italian, and perhaps one or two more and the rest – all savages. I have the idea, however, that this Cosmopolitan Club, in the exhibits of the civilization of the different countries presented to us on such occasions as to-night is compelling us to recognize that others are our equals in many ways including civilization. Especially do I see this in the lands of China and India … I express, therefore, my appreciation and also my gratitude that this club exists, for it has become, in its own way, one of the real educating forces of this university.[32]

President Sherman's remarks bring out how the social ambience at Cornell blended ideas of racial hierarchy civilizational progress, as well as Orientalist aesthetics. Rather than simply pronouncing India as a "funny," "strange," and "outlandish," as Majumdar's friend at Yale did,

President Sherman went a couple steps ahead and recognized that their cultural difference wasn't simply a mark of inferiority, but that it could also be disciplined and made to conform to Western expectations. Watching the Indian and Chinese students correspond to an Orientalist sensibility and experiencing how they entertained their American peers and professors convinced Sherman of their capacity for being incorporated into the West. Thus we see why Sherman considered the Cosmopolitan Club to be a "real educating force" at Cornell: it created the ideal social conditions to inculcate international students into Western modes of thought as well as normalize racist cultural assumptions. While the spectacle of the Hindusthani Night wasn't a quotidian event, it went a long way towards validating a commonplace understanding of Orientalism at elite institutions like Cornell and Yale, which harbored an explicitly pro-colonial politics.

Majumdar describes one such encounter with a pro-colonial organization when recounting his visit to the racially segregated White City beach in West Haven, Connecticut with the "British Imperial Club" at Yale. This was an organization of students who appreciated and celebrated the British empire. It is not surprising that such a club should exist at Yale University, an institution that traces the origins of its considerable fortune to the colonial plunder of India. Gauri Viswanathan has written of how Elihu Yale, the institution's namesake, famously built his fortune as an unscrupulous top-ranking East India Company executive in Madras. Yale eventually donated his considerable estate to support a fledgling academy in Connecticut because he didn't have any legitimate male heirs to whom he could bequeath his wealth upon his demise.[33] In the first decade of the twentieth century, when Majumdar visited Yale, this detail regarding the origins of the university became celebrated within the larger culture of appreciating colonialism and empire more generally. Summing up his fun time with British Imperial Club, Majumdar signaled his support of the club's agenda and wrote that he "was indeed overwhelmed

with delight to find that there was such unity and brotherhood among the people of the British Empire in that far-off land."[34] The Cosmopolitan Club at Cornell functioned similarly in its attitude towards colonialism. Unlike all other chapters of the Cosmopolitan Club across the United States, the Cornell chapter organized its members from colonial territories into sub-groups which they referred to as "colonies." *The Cornell Cosmopolitan Club Annual* for the academic year 1906 – 1907 carries group photographs of the Argentine Colony, the Brazilian Colony, the Chinese Colony, the Hindusthanee Colony, the Philippine Colony, and the Peruvian Colony.[35] By contrast, there was no English Colony, French Colony, Dutch Colony, or Spanish Colony, even though there were members from these countries as well. Such an organizational logic reflects an affirmation of the larger geopolitical project of colonialism, in which the international students also participated. The social atmosphere at Yale and Cornell was grounded in upholding a fundamental belief in empire and colonialism, which gave these universities a different character than other public universities like the State University of Iowa or the University of California, Berkeley, where professors and administrators openly supported anticolonial students. Keeping this context in mind, we might interpret Majumdar's description of events such as the Hindusthani Night as being part and parcel of the larger appreciation for empire and colonialism at these institutions. These events highlight how the public spectacle of racist impersonation created forms of social life and community on campus.

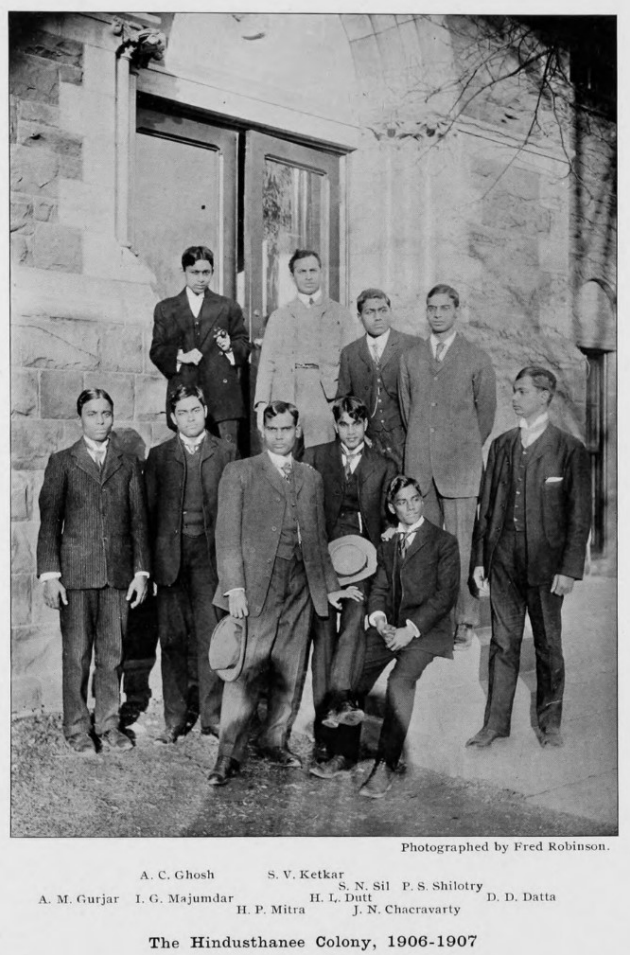


Figure 4.12: Group photo of the Hindusthanee Colony at the Cornell Cosmopolitan Club (1906 – 1907), Majumdar is in the middle row, second from the left. Image from the Cornell Cosmopolitan Annual*, courtesy of the HathiTrust Digital Library.*

The underlying question for Indian international students in such a milieu asks how they were able to become a part of the campus community, given this heavy influence of racist discourses like Orientalism in building the social life on campus. Whereas Majumdar and Narayan write about feeling rather thrown-off by the way in which Orientalism mediated their ability to relate with Americans, they found other ways in which to build a common framework of understanding. We get insight into how they built relationships with Americans in a chapter titled "Before Richmond Women's College (1908)." Majumdar began this chapter by recalling a phone call that took place between an American friend of his and the President of Richmond

Women's College in Virginia. Majumdar wrote that his friend asked the President if he would permit Majumdar to tour their college and speak with some of the students. The President agreed with this request and said, "I have not much to show him though; the building is an old one, but I can show him a bunch of pretty girls, if that would interest him." To this friend replied, "That is what my friend is particularly interested in. I am sure he would enjoy seeing the girls more than anything else."[36] Majumdar's overt and public interest in "pretty girls" gestures towards a common understanding that normalized the objectification of women. Higher caste Hindu society was incredibly sexist, as I have demonstrated in my first chapter on Anandibai. Majumdar's representation of his friend's conversation with the President of Richmond Women's College highlights how such attitudes towards women were held by prominent elements of American and Indian society and served as a shared touchstone of understanding between men. The casual manner of the conversation underscores how sexism created a point commonality that superseded the boundaries created by Orientalist tropes and helped wealthy international students like Majumdar relate with American men.

Majumdar's sexism also reveals the limits of his own critique of Orientalism. His description of his tour of Richmond Women's College, as well as his thoughts on women more generally show that he felt perfectly justified with regurgitating Orientalist notions of gender, while also slipping into a self-Orientalizing mode and performing as an exotic foreigner. We see Majumdar do this at Richmond Women's College during an interactive session between him and the college's students and faculty in their auditorium. During this session, when a student asked Majumdar how women in India are different from American women, Majumdar replied, "The Hindu women are bashful and modest, and may be – a little pensive and melancholy; whereas the American women are bright and dazzling, jovial and cheerful. The former are *Il Penseroso*

and the latter *L'Allegro*; the former are timid, calm, and quiet; the latter are sprightly, smart, and clever."[37] Majumdar's reductive framing of the psychological and emotional differences between Indian and American women borrowed directly from Orientalist tropes of gender. He openly represented East and West as having opposite traits, while also lending credence to the sexist stereotypes of both Indian and American women. At another moment in the conversation, a student asked Majumdar about polygamy in India, and Majumdar replied saying that it is not as common as it used to be. Majumdar gave many reasons for polygamy's decline, including "one cannot have too much of a good thing," as well as that "it is an expensive affair to give the same amount of jewels and clothing to every wife and in the second place the wives invariably get jealous of each other. Two's company, three's a crowd. They often quarrel and sometimes fight."[38] These thoughts were presumably expressed in jest, but they nonetheless reveal Majumdar's comfort with belittling and objectifying women, as well as his willingness to present himself as an exotic foreigner. He closed out this chapter by highlighting that the Richmond Women's College community thoroughly enjoyed the spectacle he presented and "the young ladies clapp[ed] their and did not stop."[39] Majumdar's self-orientalizing tendencies as well as his perspective on women discloses how some international students would perform the part, as it were, to build a common ground with Americans.

Coda: Brown Skin, White Masks

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon provided a psychoanalytic discussion of the "mental attitudes adopted by Black men in the face of white civilization."[40] Describing the general contours of these attitudes, he wrote,

> All colonized people – in other words, people in whom an inferiority complex has taken root, whose local cultural originality has been committed to the grave – position themselves in relation to the civilizing language: i.e., the metropolitan culture. The more the colonized has assimilated the cultural values of the metropolis, the more he will have escaped the bush. The more he rejects his Blackness and the bush, the whiter he will become.[41]

Fanon fleshed this theory out by giving the hypothetical example of a bourgeois Black man from Martinique who travelled to mainland France for work and/or education and then returned home. Fanon wrote that upon coming back, this person would put on a specifically white metropolitan affectation in his social interactions with friends and family. "He can no longer understand Creole; he talks of the Opera House," Fanon observed, "but most of all he assumes a critical attitude toward his fellow islanders."[42] This shift and split from Martinican culture evidences the psychological grip of colonialism for Fanon. He used this returnee's behavior to show how the racist cultural logic of colonialism is naturalized by colonized people of color. The returnee's metropolitan affectations serve as a white mask, in Fanon's terminology, that hides his deep-rooted sense of fear and inferiority, which Fanon links to his Blackness. Fanon explicitly states that "a Black is not a man," but rather that Blackness is a "zone of nonbeing,"[43] and the concomitant desire to emulate whiteness is a grasp at "becoming a true human being."[44] Fanon presents the returnee's drive to assimilate as both an ideological reproduction of white supremacy as well as scarring performance of psychological self-abasement that ultimately degrades Blackness itself.

What I find noteworthy about Fanon's theory is his detail that the hypothetical returnee's performance of masking/self-abasement takes place in a real location known as the Savanna in

Fort-de-France, Martinique.[45] Fanon describes the Savanna as a large centrally located open-air square surrounded by trees, where young people congregated and socialized. He wrote that as many as three or four hundred people would go regularly go to the Savanna, "as soon as school's out," to meet and talk, and that this practice had been going on for at least fifty years. In this setting, the returnee would be given center stage to "flaunt his superiority" and perform his assimilation with metropolitan culture, where he would be asked to recount his impressions of cliched spectacles like "the gendarmes on horses' backs." [46] Although he doesn't quite say it outright in *Black Skins, White Masks,* Fanon's decision of using a quotidian social interaction – friends gathering in a public square – to describe the psychological hold of colonialism and racism, displays how everyday interactions provide a window into the operations of larger structural forces of hegemonic power. Fanon allows us to understand how even moments of revelry and camaraderie can carry the epistemic violence of colonialism and racialization.

Majumdar and Narayan's experiences as international students shows us how they were not unlike Fanon's Martinican returnee. If anything, they help us fill a narrative gap in Fanon's hypothetical by providing a window into understanding what the Martinican might have experienced during his time in mainland France, and how he might have studied the nuances of metropolitan affectation. The quotidian scenes and conversations that are recounted in *America Through Hindu Eyes* draws attention to the ways in which Orientalism influenced the everyday life and social interactions of Indian international students. Despite their disagreements with Kipling, Majumdar and Narayan were largely comfortable with Orientalism because it gave them a framework to relate with elite Americans and also be desired by them. This pervasiveness of Orientalism points towards the internal workings of racism in structuring the social life of university settings, as well as discloses the ways in which international students themselves were

complicit in reproducing such discourses, often in social gatherings. Much like it did in the Savanna in Fort-de-France, the cultural logic of colonialism and racialization also suffused the halls where the Cornell Cosmopolitan Club gathered and socialized.

Majumdar and Narayan's own allegiance to colonialism, their own desire to become proximate to the colonizer, cannot be doubted. They had gone to Cornell, after all, to learn scientific methods of planting tobacco, a very peculiar commodity that is linked indelibly to the settlement and expansion of the first English colonies in continental North America. The historian Paul G. E. Clemens argues that the introduction of tobacco by settlers in Virginia and Maryland tied the future of these American colonies to market agriculture and the Atlantic commercial system, bringing the peripheral American colonies closer to the sphere of European metropolitan influence.[47] Clemens notes that the land to grow tobacco was accumulated by repeatedly breaking treaties with the native communities and illegally encroaching on their land. Furthermore, he writes that the labor necessary for the tobacco plantations came through violently subjugating indigenous communities as well as from indentured and enslaved people.[48] Tobacco, much like sugar and cotton, can therefore be considered an agro-technology for establishing and maintaining colonial rule.

Majumdar and Narayan demonstrated how this form of colonial knowledge could travel via international students. They brought advanced techniques of manufacturing tobacco to India. In 1915, Majumdar authored a brief book titled *How to Improve the Tobacco Crop of India*, which was based on the scientific theories and techniques that he had learnt in Cornell and through his travels with Narayan in the American South and Cuba.[49] Majumdar dedicated this book to Narayan, who noted in his introduction,

> We have quite a number of tea plantations, working successfully in India at the present time; and we had a good many indigo plantations a few decades ago. But there is no tobacco plantation worth its name in India, working with improved machinery, and on up-to-date scientific principles; although tobacco is one of our principal crops, and the annual outturn of tobacco in India is greater than that in any other country in the world, except the United States.[50]

Narayan's framing of Majumdar's book unapologetically betrayed their colonial allegiances. He quite literally introduced the book as containing essential knowledge to revive and extend the plantocracy in India. Once again, tobacco was being proposed as the route to securing colonial rule through the establishment of plantations. Furthermore, Narayan also went on to characterize the rural communities, who would face dispossession and expropriation as a result of increased plantation activity, as being "poor and ignorant" with "no proper combination of capital, labour and skill."[51] The industrial rationality of the plantation would bring these missing elements to the rural underclass and positively impact their conditions, Narayan smugly contended, with his Fanonian white mask on full display. Rather than uplifting the conditions of the rural masses, a number of studies of India's economic history have shown that the increase in plantation-activity during the Raj corresponded with a sharp rise in famines.[52] Narayan's call to modernize tobacco production papered over the fact that by converting arable land to produce cash crops (like tobacco) instead of food crops played a major role in deepening the hunger crisis in colonial India. Furthermore, Narayan ignored the disastrous effects that plantations would have on the pre-existing social relations among the displaced communities, who would face new forms of immiseration and alienation brought about the wretched socio-economics of plantations. *How to Improve the Tobacco Crop of India* commands us to consider the ways in which Majumdar and

Narayan's experiences as international students in the US endowed them with the technical skill to introduce new modes of expanding India's colonial plunder.

Figure 4.13: Majumdar and Narayan (center) with the proprietors of the Por Larrañaga Cigar Factory and Plantation in Havana, Cuba. Image from America Through Hindu Eyes, *courtesy of the HathiTrust Digital Library.*

Close contact with American higher education had not pushed Majumdar and Narayan towards an anticolonial direction, as it did for the other students examined in this dissertation. This difference in perspective might be attributable to the fact that Majumdar and Narayan arrived in Cornell as devoted children of the British empire. They never questioned their colonial loyalties. Furthermore, their experiences in the US were rather comfortable. Their patriarchal, caste, and class privilege had shielded them from the more physically brutal forms of racism, such as the violence inflicted upon the laborers in Bellingham, Washington, or even the harsh bullying experienced by UC Berkeley students and Sudhindra Bose, which I have discussed in my previous chapters. Seema Sohi writes that such lived experiences of racism were critical to

making Indian migrants and students aware of the racialized dimensions of their subjection and developing an anticolonial emancipatory politics. [53] Majumdar and Narayan were never made to experience these humiliations. If anything, their connections with the British colonial administration eased their entrance into the US by exempting them from humiliating immigration, health, and customs checks when they arrived in New York City.[54] Moreover their immense class privilege and their loyalty to colonialism helped them to ingratiate themselves with the American elite at Cornell, Yale, and beyond, for whom they performed the part of the oriental curiosity, and who had largely bought into the Kiplingesque narrative of colonialism as being a civilizing mission.

My discussion of Indu Bhushan De Majumdar and Victor N. Narayan's experiences in university settings addresses the larger matter of teasing out the ways in which uncovering the history of Indian international students allow us to study the relationship between American higher education and British colonialism. Majumdar and Narayan complement the mosaic of international student experiences that I have covered in this dissertation by showing how even pro-colonial students were welcomed by American universities and given the resources to pursue their ends. Institutions like Cornell and Yale used the language of inclusion and progress to rationalize their overt sympathy for colonialism in India. In exchange for assisting pro-colonial students, as searches in the *Chronicling America* newspaper database reveals, Cornell in particular, received much flattering publicity in the American press for being the destination of choice for India's royalty, further allowing it to cement its reputation as an elite institution. Newspapers across the United States such as *The New York Times*, the *Evening Star* (Washington D.C.), the *Desert Evening News* (Salt Lake City, Utah), *The Topeka State Journal*, and *The Montgomery Advertiser*, among dozens of other papers reported on Narayan's arrival in New

York City and his intention to study agriculture at Cornell.[55] This positive spotlight on Cornell highlights the intimate colonial relationship it shares with a far-flung enclave in northern Bengal, allowing us to draw a connection between two seemingly unrelated histories: colonialism in India and quotidian college life in Ithaca, New York. In linking a scene of colonial exploitation in one side of the globe, with the university setting connoting individual growth and scientific progress in another, this chapter has shown how international students embody the violent conditions of modernity, wherein the racialized extraction of labor and resources in the colonies creates forms of quotidian social life in the imperial heartland.

Notes

Introduction

[1] Sarangdhar Das, "Why Must We Emigrate to America?," *The Modern Review* 10, no. 1 (July 1911), 79.
[2] Das, "Why Must We Emigrate to America?", 78.
[3] Das, "Why Must We Emigrate to America?", 79.
[4] Seema Sohi, *Echoes of Mutiny: Race, Surveillance, and Indian Anticolonialism in North America* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 16.
[5] Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (Columbia University Press, 1989).
[6] Das, "Why Must We Emigrate to America?", 78.
[7] Das, "Why Must We Emigrate to America?", 72
[8] Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (University of California Press, 2011), 20.
[9] Das, "Why Must We Emigrate to America?", 78 – 79.
[10] Das, "Why Must We Emigrate to America?", 78.
[11] Das, "Why Must We Emigrate to America?", 78 – 79.
[12] Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Duke University Press, 2015), 3.
[13] Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, 1 – 2.
[14] Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, 3.
[15] Roderick A. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*, 1 edition (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2012).
[16] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 6.
[17] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 4.
[18] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 8.
[19] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 76.
[20] Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*, 34.
[21] Gayatri Gopinath, *Unruly Visions: The Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora* (Duke University Press, 2018).
[22] Gopinath, *Unruly Visions*, 4.
[23] Manan Desai, *The United States of India: Anticolonial Literature and Transnational Refraction* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2020).
[24] Vivek Bald, *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015).
[25] Seema Sohi, *Echoes of Mutiny: Race, Surveillance, and Indian Anticolonialism in North America* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[26] Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).
[27] For other studies of South Asian America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Renisa Mawani, *Across Oceans of Law: The Komagata Maru and Jurisdiction in the Time of Empire* (Duke University Press, 2018); Nico Slate, *Lord Cornwallis Is Dead: The Struggle for Democracy in the United States and India* (Harvard University Press, 2019); Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India* (Harvard University Press, 2012); Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk* (U of Minnesota Press, 2000); Joan M. Jensen, *Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Emily Clara Brown, *Har Dayal, Hindu Revolutionary and Rationalist* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1975).
[28] Vincent Brown, "Mapping a Slave Revolt: Visualizing Spatial History through the Archives of Slavery," *Social Text* 33, no. 4 125 (December 2015), 135, https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-3315826.
[29] Brown, "Mapping a Slave Revolt," 135
[30] Lisa Lowe, "History Hesitant," *Social Text* 33, no. 4 125 (December 2015): 85–107, https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-3315790.
[31] Lisa Lowe, "History Hesitant," *Social Text* 33, no. 4 125 (December 2015): 85–107, https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-3315790.

Chapter 1: Anandibai Joshee and the Instrumentalization of International Students

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[3] "Special congratulatory letter from Queen Victoria," South Asian American Digital Archive, https://www.saada.org/item/20140716-3626.
[4] Meera Kosambi, *A Fragmented Feminism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 197.
[5] Kosambi, *A Fragmented Feminism*, 144.
[6] Kosambi, *A Fragmented Feminism*, 197 – 201.
[7] On the university as a site of hegemonic reproduction, see Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014); Christopher Newfield, *The Great Mistake: How We Wrecked Public Universities and How We Can Fix Them* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016); Roderick A. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2012); Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (Columbia University Press, 1989).
[8] "instrument, n.". OED Online. December 2022. Oxford University Press. https://www-oed-com.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/view/Entry/97158 (accessed December 23, 2022).

[9] My development of this notion of instrumentality is deeply indebted to Ann Anlin Cheng's *Ornamentalism.* I discuss this theoretical framework at greater length later in the chapter.
[10] Roderick A. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*, (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2012), 148.
[11] Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk* (U of Minnesota Press, 2000), viii.
[12] Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk*, viii.
[13] Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk*, 171.
[14] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Duke University Press, 2003), 7.
[15] Kosambi, *Fragmented Feminism*, 29.
[16] Gopalrao Venayak Joshee, "Letters from Missionaries and Native Friends," *The Missionary Review*, January – February, 1879, 47 – 48, HathiTrust Digital Library, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hng92k&view=1up&seq=483.
[17] Joshee, "Letters from Missionaries and Native Friends," 47 – 48.
[18] Meera Kosambi, "A Prismatic Presence: The Multiple Iconisation of Dr Anandibai Joshee and the Politics of Life-Writing," *Australian Feminist Studies* 16, no. 35 (July 2001): 157–73, https://doi.org/10.1080/08164640120076005.
[19] Ian Tyrrell, "The Missionary Impulse," in *Reforming the World*, The Creation of America's Moral Empire (Princeton University Press, 2010), 56 https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt7sh8v.8.
[20] Royal G. Wilder, "Reply," Missionary Review, *The Missionary Review*, January – February, 1879, 49 – 50, HathiTrust Digital Library, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hng92k&view=1up&seq=486.
[21] Kosambi, *Fragmented Feminism*, 29-31.
[22] Kosambi, *Fragmented Feminism*, 31.
[23] Kosambi, *Fragmented Feminism*, 31.
[24] Anupama Arora and Rajender Kaur, "India in the American Imaginary, 1780s–1880s,"Anupama Arora and Rajender Kaur, eds., *India in the American Imaginary, 1780s–1880s* (Springer, 2017) 3- 39.
[25] Jeffrey H. Richards, "Sati in Philadelphia: The Widow(s) of Malabar," *American Literature* 80, no. 4 (December 1, 2008): 647–75, https://doi.org/10.1215/00029831-2008-034.
[26] Anupama Arora and Rajender Kaur, "India in the American Imaginary, 1780s – 1880s," in Anupama Arora and Rajender Kaur, eds., *India in the American Imaginary, 1780s–1880s* (Springer, 2017), 10.
[27] End note from *India in the American Imaginary, 1780s–1880s* (Springer, 2017)
[28] Kosambi, *Fragmented Feminism*, 34.
[29] Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, 3.
[30] Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, 5-6.
[31] Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, 19.
[32] Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, 22.
[33] Note regarding photo – see also Kosambi, *Fragmented Feminism*, 42
[34] Kosambi, *Fragmented Feminism*, 43.
[35] Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, 14.
[36] Dall, *The life of Dr. Anandabai Joshee*, 36-37.

[37] The difference that ornamental personhood makes, Cheng writes, is that "Asiatic femininity in the Western racial imagination does not need to pass through the biological or natural in order to acquire its most palpable, fully sensorial, supple, and vibrant presence" (Cheng, 14).
[38] Kosambi, *Fragmented Feminism*, 42.
[39] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders : Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Duke University Press, 2003), 7.
[40] Kosambi, *Fragmented Feminism*, 54.
[41] Dall, *The life of Dr. Anandabai Joshee,* 80.
[42] Dall, *The life of Dr. Anandabai Joshee,* 71-72.
[43] Dall, *The life of Dr. Anandabai Joshee,* 81.
[44] Dall, *The life of Dr. Anandabai Joshee,* 84.
[45] Dall, *The life of Dr. Anandabai Joshee,* 85.
[46] Ronak K. Kapadia, *Insurgent Aesthetics: Security and the Queer Life of the Forever War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 34.
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[48] José Muñoz, *Disidentifications Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 4.
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