

## Afterword

### Mark Reeves

As sites of British imperial state-making and resistance to colonial power, India and the United States have found themselves entangled since the late eighteenth century. To choose a paradigmatic moment, the dumping of East India Company tea into Boston Harbour in 1773 offers a view onto multiple levels of this entanglement. The cargo and the participants – white settlers who adopted a pretended Indigenous “costume” to claim a native identity as “Indians” – reflected the discursive entanglement of the Americas with South Asia in European thought going back to Columbus. Yet, to say that India and the United States have been entangled for centuries raises more interesting questions: what is this unit called “India”? Or “the United States”? What might it mean for such units to be “entangled”? And, crucially, who are the agents of this entanglement? What is being entangled, where does this entanglement happen, and who is doing the entangling?

The chapters in this volume address these questions concretely. Chapters track people-in-motion, things-in-motion, ideas-in-motion, and practices-in-motion, with each line of motion also a vector – vectors carrying magnitude, leaving residue, and creating memory, like so many shoelaces criss-crossed over time and space. This motion went to, from, and within Bombay, Boston, Calcutta, Delhi, Hartford, Hawaii, London, New York, Philadelphia, Rudragar (Pantagar), San Francisco, Tasmania, and countless other places. People, things, ideas, and practices moved representationally through newspapers, theatres, sheet music, colleges, and motion pictures, but all these were transported by train and steamship or communicated by telegraph – for example, the Kansas grain shipped to India in 1897 and 1900, using funds mobilized through the New York *Christian Herald*, as described by Joanna Simonow in Chapter 4. The specific dependence on these nineteenth-century technologies places the Indo-U.S. entanglement within a certain moment of global history, a moment which enabled the emergence of coherent units to correspond to the labels “India” and the “United States.”

All the movement described in this volume took place in the aftermath of the dawning age of steam from the mid-nineteenth century, when railroads – and then steamships and the telegraph – would accelerate motion across vast space, prompting the consolidation of territories. These holdings were “battered, shaken, and undermined” by the “invincible force”

of steam and its technological progeny.<sup>1</sup> Thus, as Susan Ryan points out in Chapter 2, in 1871 Walt Whitman could exult in “the great achievements of the present, / Singing the strong light works of engineers” (“Passage to India,” stanza 1) at Suez and across the North American West, delighting in “God’s purpose from the first[,] / The earth to be spann’d, connected by network” (stanza 2).

By this point in the 1870s, along with the global technological innovations Whitman narrates, specific crises in South Asia and North America had produced the two spaces of this book’s title: one, a federation of self-governing provinces shaped by the British settler projects of the seventeenth century; the other, an amalgamation of British protectorates and provinces formed out of the rubble of a company-state which had in turn built itself on the remains of the Mughal Empire and a multitude of other regional principalities. In short, as they emerged from the tumult of the American Civil War and the 1857 Mutiny, “the United States” and “India” became metonyms for complex and overlapping regimes of governance covering continental stretches of space. As a global age dawned, both “the United States” and “India” became emblems of unifying space – the U.S. stretching from sea to shining sea, and India labelled a “sub-continent” – even as they were unified by the profoundly divisive forces of racialisation in white supremacy and settler colonialism.

In Part 1, Bradley Shope, Susan Ryan, and Philip Deslippe trace these processes of racialisation operating within and between the nascent places “India” and the “United States.” In Chapter 1, blackface minstrelsy in India operated within a complex racial hierarchy, reinforcing both localised East India Company-led white supremacy within India and a globalised hierarchy of whiteness over non-whiteness, with the performance of blackface shows allowing “audiences [to conflate] divergent categories of race into an essentialised classification...and [ascribe] to that classification a subordinate status.” Performing the subordination of enslaved Blacks in the United States displaced the localised racial conflicts of Bombay and Calcutta onto a different hierarchy to which white and non-white audiences could see themselves as superior. As Shope shows, the *Bombay Gazette* made this explicit in 1852, asking if these degrading performances “are, unconsciously, extending a livelier sympathy for a cruelly depressed race?” Minstrel performances around the same time in South Africa did not have the same goal, with the Confederate warship *Alabama* docking in

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<sup>1</sup> Michel Chevalier, 1838, quoted in Charles S. Maier, *Once Within Borders: Territories of Power, Wealth, and Belonging since 1500* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 185; Maier’s pp. 185-195 provide a fuller account of how these technologies rendered territory a space to be filled rather than simply bordered.

Cape Colony in 1862, where enslaved Black men “performed minstrel shows for white South Africans sympathetic to the Confederate cause and bitter about Britain’s ending of slavery in the Cape Colony.”<sup>2</sup> From Hawaii to Bombay, and from New Orleans to Cape Town, the entanglement of white supremacy in blackface performance circled the globe under steam in the 1850s and 1860s, albeit with different valences for each audience.

Susan Ryan’s reading of *Jessie Brown*, staged in New York only seven years after the New York Serenaders visited India, reverses the flow of racialised displacement, transposing the complex conflicts of the 1857 Mutiny onto the hierarchies of the United States through the invocations of slavery and the potential for slave revolt. Philip Deslippe’s account of the discursive career of “fakir” in Chapter 3 also speaks to the confusion many Americans grappled with in representing India, much like *Jessie Brown*’s confusion of mosques and temples. Through its adoption in performances by magicians such as Isaiah Harris Hughes (“the Fakir of Ava”), and through its confusion with yogic practices, in the United States “fakir” transformed from its South Asian meaning of Islamic ascetic into a common huckster by the 1870s. As with *Jessie Brown*, the Mutiny seems to have been a turning point (Hughes debuted his “gift shows” in 1857), elevating India in the U.S. public mind without providing much clarity or understanding of the subcontinent.

The 1850s and 1860s were confusing times around the world, but especially in North America and South Asia, and these decades were the moment when the units of Indo-U.S. entanglement – “the United States” and “India” as places – took political shape as unified spaces. Yet the notion of either North America or South Asia cohering into unified spaces implies a trilateral beyond the “Indo-U.S.” bilateral, adding to the dyad another space which is notoriously difficult to define: “Britain,” or even more loosely, “the British Empire.”<sup>3</sup> The logic of spatial and racial unification and division accompanying the creation of “the United States” and “India” as places originated from British imperial practices, though the entanglement of space, power, and race long pre-dated the rise of British sea power in the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, the English language carried by British settlers and colonial

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Trent Vinson, *The Americans Are Coming! Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2012), 14.

<sup>3</sup> For the complexity of defining a unit called “Britain” or “the British Empire,” see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 4-9; Colin Kidd, *Union and Unionisms: Political Thought in Scotland, 1500-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 5-9 on the Scottish dimension complicating “Britishness”; and John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2-12.

<sup>4</sup> On the U.S. inheritance of specifically British military-fiscal imperatives in the late eighteenth century, see A.G. Hopkins, *American Empire: A Global History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 45-94—and on the specific dynamic tying the American Revolution to East India Company policies, 105-107.

agents facilitated the Indo-U.S. entanglements described in this volume, in some cases through specific words adapted, translated, and mis-translated from South Asian contexts such as *fakir*.

So far, I have described in part the “how,” “when,” and “where” of Indo-U.S. entanglement, but what was in motion, or who was entangled? The chapters in this volume demonstrate the great diversity of “what” and “who” Indo-U.S. entanglement entailed, especially in Part 2. In Chapters 4 and 5, Joanna Simonow and Harald Fischer-Tiné demonstrate the ways that Protestant missionary endeavour and the trans-Atlantic circulation of Progressive ideas further entrenched the overlapping of U.S. and British interests in India before 1947. Simonow reconstructs numerous Indo-Anglo-American links through figures such as Robert Allen Hume, the American missionary awarded the *Kaisar-i-Hind*, the editors of the *Christian Herald*, women such as Abbie Child, or returning missionaries like Henry Potter and Justin Abbott, who smoothed over fin-de-siècle Anglo-American tensions by focusing on the common effort of famine relief in India. In parallel with this explicitly Christian world, Fischer-Tiné focuses on the secularised language of “boyology,” which the YMCA shared with the Boys Brigade, the Scouting movement, and broader turn-of-the-century Anglo-American anxieties about white masculinity. As with the missionaries profiled by Simonow, the Y’s “boyologists” did not replicate or enact British imperial policy, but operated in a milieu associating progress, development, and growth with whiteness, such that Calcutta’s Y secretary H.G. Banurji had to insist on Bengali boys sharing “the same boyish elasticity and impressionableness of character that are so common in other lands and climes” in 1907. Room for manoeuvre within Anglo-American institutions could open, though. Unlike the strictly segregated Boy Scouts Association of India, the Y’s Scout troops “knew no racial barriers,” per Daniel Swamidoss speaking to an international YMCA gathering in Austria in 1923.

Up to this point, this discussion of people-in-motion has concentrated on Americans moving to India, or observing India, but the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also saw many Indians entangle themselves with the United States. Chapter 4 tells the story of Sumantrao and Gurubai Karmarkar, who travelled to North America in 1888, where they both took degrees from north-eastern universities before returning to India in 1893, where they joined the YMCA and YWCA movements, linking Simonow and Fischer-Tiné’s chapters. Sumantrao Karmarkar brought a stereopticon back from the United States and integrated it into proselytization, at the exact moment Swami Vivekananda crossed to Chicago for his major introduction of Indian religious traditions to American audiences.

Another entangling crossing emerged from the Karmarkar family through their adopted son Vishvasrao, who followed in his adopted parents' footsteps to seek education in the United States, where he lost his life serving Americans during the devastation of the influenza pandemic of 1918.

Another Indian journey across the Atlantic would cast a long shadow for Indo-U.S. entanglements: Lala Lajpat Rai's second visit to the United States, from 1914 to 1915.<sup>5</sup> Lajpat Rai took an intense interest in the struggles of Black Americans, as W.E.B. Du Bois noted in a 1935 article for *Aryan Path*.<sup>6</sup> As Nico Slate recounts in Chapter 8, this article prompted Rammanohar Lohia to write to Du Bois in 1936, to strengthen Indo-Black solidarity. In Chapter 7, Neilesh Bose also follows a notable individual whose movement entangled India and the United States, the activist and writer Taraknath Das.

The shift from Das and Lohia's outreach to the United States before India's independence, to the criss-crossing journeys Nicole Sackley narrates in Chapter 10, is striking. Between Das's Pacific crossing to Seattle via Japan in 1906, to Pupul Jayakar opening the Sona handicrafts boutique in New York in 1965, we can see how Walt Whitman's vision of progress narrated in 1871 had radically shifted one hundred years later. While Das passed from Bengal to North America via Asia rather than Europe, his early activism in Canada had to navigate the Eurocentric pan-Britannic racial segregation system making journeys like his difficult and discriminatory.<sup>7</sup> His work with the Ghadar movement had British rule as its target, a British rule sharing an outlook with U.S. expansion, exemplified in 1871 by Whitman paralleling "the procession of steamships" down the Canal and the "continual trains of cars winding across the Platte," without a place for the people whose lands and labour were seized to create these wonders ("Passage to India," stanza 3). Das challenged this omission forty years after Whitman, and thirty years after Das's Ghadar work, Lohia could tour the United States focused on the wider problem of imperialism and racism at local and global scales, rather than a specific malady afflicting "India" or "Indians."

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<sup>5</sup> Lala Lajpat Rai, *The United States of America: A Hindu's Impressions and a Study* (Calcutta: R. Chatterjee, 1916), iii-iv. (His first visit was a brief one in 1905.) Lajpat Rai quotes extensively from Du Bois's *Souls of Black Folk* (pp. 157-161, 167-172).

<sup>6</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, "Indians and American Negroes," published as "The Clash of Colour," circa March 1936, p. 2, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, <http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b209-i028>.

<sup>7</sup> For the pan-Britannic background of the Vancouver Riots, see Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 178-189 (and 187-189 for Das). On the settler colonies as sites of "Britannic" solidarity, see Darwin, *Empire Project*, 144-148.

For both India and the United States, the two World Wars truly changed everything, like Whitman's "great achievements of the present" (stanza 1). The chapters in Part 3 describe the aftermath of the collapse of British power during the Second World War, which enabled U.S. hegemony to fill the vacuum in India – and elsewhere – albeit in particular ways, accommodating and even seeing U.S. power supported in the assertion of an independent India.<sup>8</sup> In Chapter 8, Sujeet George shows how generational wealth amassed during the U.S. age of steam, now channelled into philanthropy in the form of Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, went toward studying India to project U.S. influence.<sup>9</sup> This new entanglement built on old ones, as seen in the careers of William and Charlotte V. Wiser, who passed from the explicitly Christian "ecumenical Protestantism" of missionary groups like the American Marathi Mission (and, in its religious functions, the YMCA) to the academically oriented and foundation-funded work of "village studies." As with the earlier missions, this was not a simple imposition of U.S. power – Indian sociologists such as M.N. Srinivas blended his training from Oxford and the work of his Chicago colleagues to forge his distinctive "Indian sociology" focused on the village.

Likewise, the development of Uttar Pradesh Agricultural University, narrated by Prakash Kumar in Chapter 9, flowed (unevenly) out of the Radhakrishnan Commission of 1948, which invited two Americans to join its deliberations to build on New Deal-era reforms, as well as the enthusiasm for U.S.-style land grant universities in the 1950s.<sup>10</sup> As Tim Livsey has shown, the 1950s also saw a "university age" in Britain's (after 1947) largest colony, Nigeria, including the development of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, on the model of the land grant college with the support of the Carnegie Foundation.<sup>11</sup> The Rockefeller Foundation played an important role in the journeys traced by Nicole Sackley in Chapter 10, as Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Fori Nehru, Kitty Shiva Rao, and Pupul Jayakar

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<sup>8</sup> For a different, but parallel, entanglement of rising U.S. power with decolonizing Asia, see Mark Philip Bradley, *Imagining Vietnam and America: The Making of Postcolonial Vietnam, 1919-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), especially 146-192.

<sup>9</sup> Henry Ford's meteoric rise coincided exactly with the passage of global financial power from Britain to the United States during the Great War, as pointed out in Adam Tooze, *The Deluge: The Great War and the Remaking of Global Order, 1916-1931* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), 200-201, beginning a process only accelerated during the Second World War.

<sup>10</sup> The inclusion of Arthur Morgan from the Tennessee Valley Authority points to the global resonance of this project as discussed in Kiran Klaus Patel, *The New Deal: A Global History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 294-295.

<sup>11</sup> Just as the Radhakrishnan Commission published its findings, in 1949, the *Southern Nigeria Defender* proclaimed "Nigeria has reached the University age": quoted in Tim Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age: Reframing Decolonisation and Development* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 2. Livsey's chapter 6 (pp. 119-144) describes the entanglements of U.S. land grant universities, foundations, and Nigerian anti-colonialists in seeking to establish new universities, parallel to Chapter 9's history of Uttar Pradesh Agricultural University.

went back and forth across the Atlantic and Indian Oceans to bring Indian handicrafts to U.S. consumers.

Indians like Kamaladevi and Jayakar could adopt such a posture in world affairs – India could take its place in world politics, as Taraknath Das had dreamed in 1925 – because of the independence won in 1947. Likewise, Rammanohar Lohia could travel to the United States in 1951, not settle for correspondence with W.E.B. Du Bois, as in 1936. However, he travelled as a citizen not of the “India” of 1857, or even 1946, but a partitioned space known from 1950 as the “Republic of India,” as against the “Dominion of Pakistan.” One of the last, and most lasting, British bequests to India, Partition presents another question for Indo-U.S. entanglement. By its very name, “the United States” attests to its *non*-partition twice over – first in the eighteenth century, when the colonial union held, and second in the 1860s, when the American states briefly, and nearly permanently, partitioned themselves. As the U.S. Revolutionary and Civil Wars (not to mention the numerous U.S. wars of expansion) show, unity can be bloody, just as Partition was and is bloody in India.

To return to the opening observation, then: two specific spatial-political configurations, the United States and India, became entangled over a specific chronology. This chronology, from 1850 forward, roughly corresponded to the unification of space around the world under political regimes shaped by European colonialism – and in these two cases, specifically British and Britannic settler colonialism. The technological changes accompanying and enabling the creation of these spaces as discrete units – which came to be naturalized as “nations” over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – also facilitated their inter-connection, with greater numbers of people, things, and ideas flowing from one to the other as the intermediary layer of British imperialism receded.

Imperial power, especially British power, created the spaces to entangle, but it was people themselves who moved within and across those spaces to actually do the entangling. As Michael Geyer and Charles Bright emphasize, in describing these processes, “the metaphors matter here: this was no longer quite a ‘thrust’ or ‘projection’ of force but an exercise in ‘webbing’ or ‘enveloping.’”<sup>12</sup> The strength of these webs and envelopments is demonstrated in the acceleration of Indo-U.S. entanglement in the years after the rapid decline of British imperial power in the 1940s. Even though the trellis of Britain’s “complex patchwork of interacting and dynamic agencies and locations” (to use Shope’s phrase from

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<sup>12</sup> Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, “World History in a Global Age,” *American Historical Review* 100, no. 4 (October 1995): 1047.

Chapter 1) rotted and collapsed, vines of motion across the newly traversable spans of global space meant that Indo-U.S. entanglement survived and intensified despite the end of their original context.

As Britain's global power dimmed, Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru turned to the United States to imagine a new world, at least terminologically: both used the failed U.S. presidential candidate Wendell Willkie's slogan, "One World," to describe their goal for a postcolonial world order.<sup>13</sup> In the 1960s, S. Radhakrishnan, then President of India, and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, who represented India on the UN Human Rights Commission in the mid-1960s, both articulated their vision of India in the world as the pursuit of "One World."<sup>14</sup> As early as the 1940s, through to the 1960s, and certainly today, Indo-U.S. entanglements have been only one facet of a deeper global process of entanglements linking each part of the globe to the rest. But as this volume shows, there is something particular to be gleaned from examining Indo-U.S. links in focus. Forged in the fire of British imperial state-making, the United States and India have connected along lines dictated by that original connection, while also transcending the connection, albeit in ways that placed the United States in a new hegemonic role, with all that role's complexities and ambiguities.

Where this tangled story will proceed is a question hanging over Asian and international affairs, especially as India and the United States join Australia and Japan in an anti-China club, "the Quad," framed around a relatively new geopolitical concept, the "Indo-Pacific." While the Quad appears new, as an alliance oriented against the People's Republic of China, it reflects the deeper Indo-U.S. connections described in this volume. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe popularized the Indo-Pacific as a geopolitical concept during his 2007 visit to India, quoting from Swami Vivekananda's 1893 address to the Chicago Parliament of Religions.<sup>15</sup> Hence, the Indo-Pacific returns via Chicago, and ten years after Abe's address it would circulate through Washington and back to the sea: in adopting this concept as a part of U.S. national security policy, President Trump's White House defined the Indo-Pacific as "the region, which stretches from the west coast of India to the western shores of the United States," explicitly entangling California and Kerala, Maharashtra and Alaska

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<sup>13</sup> Manu Bhagavan, *The Peacemakers: India and the Quest for One World* (Delhi: HarperCollins Publishers India, 2012), 4-5, 25-31, 66-67, 83, 109-111, and 115.

<sup>14</sup> Bhagavan, *Peacemakers*, 165-166.

<sup>15</sup> Hansong Li, "The 'Indo-Pacific': Intellectual Origins and International Visions in Global Contexts," *Modern Intellectual History* (2021), 2 note 1, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244321000214>. As Li notes, the German creator of the Indo-Pacific concept, Karl Haushofer, hoped it would create "an anti-American project," not one oriented around the United States (p. 21, and pp. 19-24 for the broader vision).



across and through oceanic expanses.<sup>16</sup> By bringing Australia into the Indo-Pacific club along with Japan, India and the United States are tied to a country shaped by British colonialism, even as the entanglements of Japan with India and the United States go back to the same moment of their own formation as singular units, in the 1850s.

In this sense, the “long twentieth century” starting in the 1850s continues into the present: Indo-U.S. entanglements are not only deepening, but they are also widening, “both in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.”<sup>17</sup> As planetary crises compound regional crises in the coming decades, perhaps a new era of spatial reconfiguration will disrupt this entanglement as it exists today, but otherwise, the practices of people-in-motion, things-in-motion, and ideas-in-motion will doubtless continue to link South Asia and North America in webs woven by many hands.

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<sup>16</sup> *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, December 2017, 45-46, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Point 2 of the Leaders’ Joint Statement, “The Spirit of the Quad,” March 12, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/quad-leaders-joint-statement-the-spirit-of-the-quad/>.