

Kris Manjapra. *Age of Enlightenment: German and Indian Intellectuals across Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014. 442 pp. \$49.95 (hardcover). ISBN: 97806744725140.

In 1921, 1926, and 1930 the Nobel prize-winning writer Rabindranath Tagore made celebrated visits to Germany. His lectures contrasting eastern spiritualism with western materialism drew great interest, and he took advantage of the attention to meet with politicians, educators, scholars and such figures as Stephan Zweig, Thomas Mann, and Albert Einstein. These tours intertwined ideas with politics. A forceful critic of the Raj's repressive institutions, in 1921 Rabindranath had founded his own university to provide an autonomous base for Indian intellectual production. While in Germany he hoped to draw the support of the leading lights of German research and encourage exchanges. His efforts bore fruit in part because Germans could use Indian partnerships to escape international marginalisation in the post-Versailles era and even to re-imagine Germany's place in the world.

For Kris Manjapra, Rabindranath's visits were paradigmatic examples of "cultural diplomacy" carried out by Bengali and German intellectuals between the 1880s and 1945. He sees this era of "high imperialism" not as the apotheosis of European global dominance but rather the moment when the ideal of a unified "Europe" began to splinter in the face of counter-hegemonic forces. German and Indian intellectuals became "entangled" as they challenged British global dominance, not least by undermining the enlightened liberal universalism that was its epistemological foundation. Their "insurgent" dialogues demonstrate that Indians' intellectual horizons were not bounded by the Empire, nor Germans' by Europe, and that such transnational exchanges were central to the rise of new epistemologies and national consciousness.

Manjapra traces a narrative of intellectual relations determined by shifting geopolitics. In the early nineteenth century, lacking a powerful state or empire of their own, Germans could accrue soft power through intellectual support for the British imperial project and, in the process, became Europe's premier experts on India's culture and history. By the 1880s, seeking to establish their autonomy on the global stage, German intellectuals developed new post-Enlightenment epistemologies (Foucault's "counter-sciences") in diverse fields and turned their Indian contacts to different purposes. They enchanted the world through the search for driving forces invisible to the prevailing empiricist order (quantum mechanics, the subconscious, culture), and provincialised northwest Europe through a comparativist methodology incorporating other parts of the world. For many, like economist Werner Sombart or art critic Stella Kramrisch, study of India's traditions helped them orient the global flow of cultural influences around a different pole than western Europe or the classical Mediterranean. For others, like Marxist activist Franz Josef Furtwängler and physicist Walther Nernst, connections with Indian scholars and activists could help them advance political or professional goals.

In turn, Germans' efforts to redraw the map of intellectual power provided an opportunity for Bengali nationalist intellectuals to develop Indian institutions as global centres in their own right, with authority outside the bounds of the Empire. Looking to promote Indian research in the face of imperial neglect, Nobel prize-winning physicist C.V. Raman modelled his Institute of Science on the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes, and the activist Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and the economist Benoy Kumar Sarkar became central figures organising academic exchanges with Germany. Filmmaker Himanshu Rai's collaboration with German director Franz Osten produced a genre that burst the imperial frame and helped lay the foundation for an autonomous Indian film industry after 1945.

The real strength of Manjapra's work lies in the many case studies that demonstrate the "entanglement" in the book's title, that is to say, the processes of dialogue, feedback, and cross-identification that implicated Germans and Indians in each other's intellectual and political struggles. One example is the collaboration of psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud and Girindrasekhar Bose. Manjapra shows the mutual benefits; Freud could claim a global reach for his controversial ideas, and Bose's accomplishments enhanced India's international prestige. Manjapra also shows that psychoanalysis was not merely a "European" invention exported to the wider world but rather grew out of a transnational dialogue that could be turned to nation-building projects. Bose participated creatively in the construction of psychoanalysis in the language of science, but when he translated its insights for Bengali audiences, he adapted its frame of reference to make it align with an ancient Indian heritage, asserting the universal relevance of Indian culture. Another example is the considerable cross-pollination between the geopolitical thinker Franz Thierfelder and the expatriate activist Taraknath Das, who worked together for a time in Munich. Each saw his own political oppression reflected in the other's situation and developed theories of political legitimacy that challenged the current, ephemeral political order. To do so, they explored the ancient greatness of the other's homeland to establish a basis for eternal, "natural" regional units (e.g. *Volk* and "Greater India") defined by a long-standing culture tied to particular geographic features.

Manjapra's attention to the diverse projects facilitated through German-Indian encounters makes the book stimulating, but occasionally the author over-reaches in reading these projects as expressions of a coherent geopolitical struggle. For example, the discussion of the pre-1914 period presumes an inherent Anglo-German antagonism that is not always backed up in the details, and the sophisticated discussion of various exiles' and Nazis' engagement with India defies easy categorisation. The suggestion that the transitory partnership of

insurgents ended after 1945, as Germans were integrated into their Cold War blocs and Indians sought out alliances within the rising “Third World,” is intriguing but could be qualified with more attention to counter-cultural figures.

More generally, Manjapra occasionally elides the distinction between post-Enlightenment epistemological challenges and challenges to Britain’s global hegemony. There is an important difference between actors who registered shifts in global knowledge production that happen to benefit an insurgent center and those who pursued advancement in those insurgent centers in order to achieve a more narrowly defined political project. Put another way, did every Indian who studied the latest advances in chemistry in Germany necessarily contribute to the nationalist political project? Is it productive to place the nationalists Nernst and Sombart in the same frame as Einstein and Freud, whose efforts to establish a counterweight to British domination were implicit at best?

But these criticisms only highlight the ambition and important contributions of Manjapra’s work. His focus on the geopolitical implications of intellectual developments reminds us that ideas are inescapably intertwined with contests for power and structures of authority. His close and sophisticated analysis of German-Indian partnerships breaks down the myth of a coherent Europe that innovated in isolation from the wider world and an India that simply imported innovations. As such, *Age of Entanglement* shows us how to trace new constellations of intellectual politics in the Age of Empire.

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