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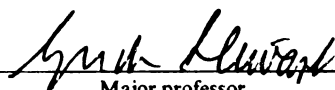
The United States and India's Independence:
The Role of- Images and Perceptions

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**THE UNITED STATES AND INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE: THE ROLE
OF IMAGES AND PERCEPTIONS**

By

Neerja Chaturvedi

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ABSTRACT

The United States and India's Independence: The Role of Images and Perceptions

By

Neerja Chaturvedi

This study examines the evolution of ideas and opinions about India in the United States, and evaluates their impact on America's relationship with India. It traces the development of American thought on India from the 1920s to the 1950s. The crucial period began in 1942 when the British sent the Cripps Mission to negotiate with the Indian nationalists. At this time American official and popular interest converged on India as never before. Consequently, India was comprehensively studied and reported, and the perceptions formulated became politically meaningful. British representations of India played a major role in influencing American views. However, opinions of American journalists, writers, officials and intellectuals became critical in establishing a distinctively American reading of India. Before the outbreak of the Second World War American observers had generally concurred with the British view of India. However, during the period of the war various strains of thought emerged ranging from opposition to British imperialism to the promotion of American interests. Nevertheless, an overpowering image of India had been established in the United States. India became synonymous with the Hindu--driven by its religion, caste system and a Hindu mentality--breeding passive, otherworldly

and hierarchical traditions. Indian nationalism was confined within this image. India continued to be studied from this perspective even when the Americans reassessed their own objectives.

This study, while focusing on America and India, is situated in the broader context of western perceptions of non-western cultures. It illustrates the difficulties in overcoming deeply embedded habits of perceiving other cultures.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The evolution of perceptions and images of India in the United States has contributed significantly in establishing India's place in American political thought. American involvement in the Second World War, and subsequently in India's nationalist movement, marked a crucial period during which India was, for the first time, comprehensively studied and discussed. It was during this time that a well defined image of India emerged and gained prominence. Many of the assumptions about India being formulated during this period rested on readings of its cultural, religious and social institutions, and patterns of behavior, within which the nationalist movement and India's aspiration for independence were understood. These perceptions not only influenced the American response to Indian nationalism but had a considerable impact on American understanding of independent India as well.

The major emphasis of this study is on the examination and evaluation of ideas and images about India that developed in the United States during the era of the Second World War. This period is significant in many respects. First, it marks the birth and development of an official American interest in India where none had existed previously. This interest arose as a result of America's need to evaluate both India's capacity to contribute to the war effort and the validity of its claim for independence, a condition on which the Indian nationalists' willingness to aid the Allies depended. Consequently, perceptions of India became meaningful at the political level in the United States during this period as they never had before. Additionally, American opinion of India was influenced by a reevaluation of British imperialism, accompanied by both a reassertion of an American identity distinct from that of Britain and an

awareness of America's emerging role in world politics. India, as a colony of the British, became a likely site for the Americans to express their distinctness. In light of these developments, American perceptions of India were shaped and refined. This study further shows that America's relationship with India has been influenced not only by national interests, economic and strategic goals, military considerations and global politics, but also by personalities as well as social and cultural characteristics.

Until the outbreak of the Second World War American official interest in India had been largely nonexistent. India had remained a remote outpost far removed from American concerns-- a bastion of British power and prestige. Americans were aware of India, but from a distance, and they generally condoned British rule there. There was a widespread acceptance of the British in India as the providers and keepers of western values and interests. American missionaries, consuls and travelers generally praised the British presence in India and reiterated images of India as constructed by the British. One of the best known images portrayed by an American was *Mother India*, written by Katherine Mayo in 1927.¹ Mayo presented negative images of the Indian people--primarily of the Hindu society, religion and culture and recommended the continuation of British rule in India.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 produced a significant change in American attitudes towards India. It drew the United States into the war, while Japan's military successes in Asia made India's active participation in the war a necessity. But the problem confronting the Americans was the unwillingness of the Indian nationalists to participate in the war unless they were granted independence. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's

¹Harcourt Brace first published *Mother India* in May 1927. By December 1927 the book was in its 11th printing.

administration was forced to reevaluate the British empire's position in the face of the rising tide of nationalism in India. There was a marked increase in the number of discussions which took place between Washington and London regarding India. Likewise, American journalists, writers, military and political officials, made their pilgrimage to India. They wrote about and discussed India extensively, resulting in a plethora of information being made available to the American public. Consequently, India gained notoriety in both the popular arena and the political forums. Even though the war remained their primary focus, Americans managed to construct an image of India which acquired a significant place in political debates.

Major debates regarding India's political future took place between American policy makers in the State Department and their British counterparts. They primarily focused on the evaluation of wartime strategies and the political situation in India, but topics regarding Indian society and culture frequently emerged in the discussions in an effort to assess India's political will to fight in the war. In addition, India was examined by those not overtly connected with the political process--mainly, the media and military professionals, who had the capacity to reach large audiences, as well as the capability of creating and shaping opinions. American writers, journalists, and others associated with the war effort made a significant contribution in presenting a political, cultural and social understanding of India. Together, the official opinions and popular representations created a dominant image of India within which India's ability to participate in the war and achieve independence was appraised.

The outbreak of the war forced the Americans to abandon their disinterest in India's politics and evaluate the country from a new perspective. Wartime observers were presented with the opportunity and motivation to

examine India independently. Thus, it was possible for a different perspective to emerge, since American observers in India were not representatives of the colonizing nation. They did not profess paternalistic affection towards the subject nation, which had come to be associated with and popularized by the colonizers. Furthermore, they were not seeking romance and adventure in remote parts of the world, as is often visible in colonial literature, nor were they seeking to escape in an empire to enhance their social and financial status. Therefore, the American venture into India was seemingly untainted by colonial interests. Instead, Americans were chiefly in India to fight and report the war, to examine India's independence movement, and to evaluate its contribution in the war. India had directly influenced the lives of its colonizers but not those of the Americans. Yet, from this vantage point, it can also be reasoned that America's lack of sustained contact with India could impede its ability to evaluate India from a new perspective. Unfamiliar with India and operating under time constraints, American observers might easily have relied on already established and easily accessible images of India, which had been provided by the British and advanced by Americans like Mayo. Under these circumstances, their perceptions of India could have become more stark and more sweeping. In any case, the opinions formulated and generated by American observers and commentators would become an important means of assessing India's capabilities.

Viewing the situation in India from a distance policy makers in Washington also had to grapple with this issue of how to seek out information about India as a prelude to raising their own opinions, without relying on British intermediaries. Roosevelt tried to signal America's assertiveness by appointing two special representatives, Louis Johnson and William Phillips, to explore India's political situation. Johnson and Phillips became involved in

Indian politics and wanted America to dissociate itself from Britain. The ideological opposition towards imperialism advanced by Americans from a distance had become immediate reality to the two representatives. They advanced opinions which deviated from the accepted opinions of India which had been perpetuated in Washington by the British and the American media. However, their vision was not shared by most officials in Washington who either adhered to the maintenance of traditional comaraderie with the British, or conceptually opposed imperialism in India but placed the conduct of the war in the forefront.

An important factor that contributed significantly to America's assessment of India was its own self image and self identity.² Americans' perception of themselves as Westerners was central to their observations and evaluation of a non-western culture. American policy makers in Washington and American observers in India, even though viewing the country from different perspectives, converged in their perception of an alien society like India. Furthermore, even while acknowledging and defining their own uniqueness and separate identity from the British, the Americans remained

² A defined collective American identity may or may not exist within the boundaries of the United States. But a national and cultural identity emerges as an important factor in the international arena in establishing and acknowledging an affinity with the familiar but also in distancing from the unfamiliar. Anthony P. Cohen, *Self Consciousness: An alternative Anthropology of Identity*. (New York: Routledge, 1994) 120. It is this aspect of the American identity that is the subject of this investigation. The more this cultural difference is acknowledged, the more magnified a collective identity becomes in such a comparison. In relation to India, American journalists, writers, political and military officials and intellectuals, by imposing a collective identity on an eastern culture, may have also assumed a collective western or/and an American identity. Kalpana Ram contends that the Indian identity is positioned in relation to an entire tradition of western thought and emerges as what the western 'man' is not. "Modernist Anthropologists' 'Comparative' Project : The Construction of Indian Identity as Tradition" in Alberto Gomes ed. *Modernity and Identity: Asian Illustrations*. (Bundoora: La Trobe U. P., 1994) 123.

culturally and racially tied to the British. India's social and cultural alienness became as politically meaningful to the Americans as it was to the British.

Images and perceptions held and conveyed by the British, and those developed by the Americans became critical in assessing India's short term value in terms of the war effort, and its long term political and economic viability. It is important to note the distinction between American official records and popular literature on India. Official records may not contain explicit representations of a particular culture or reveal opinions overtly, but they certainly can, and do, reflect cultural attitudes. The officials may not have used the same vocabulary or imagery as employed by the popular media but shared similar assumptions, although their expression took a different form. Popular images, on the other hand provide a more explicit and graphic understanding of American images of India. Collectively, these written images present an encompassing view of India's political, economic and cultural makeup within which Americans evaluated India's ability to participate in the war and establish self rule. A composite image emerged encompassing popular views of India and those of the policy makers, who were certainly in tune with the images with which they were surrounded.

The most significant period in which the Americans defined their interest in India began in March 1942, when the British sent a mission, headed by Sir Stafford Cripps, to discuss constitutional reform in India. This period is the focal point of this investigation because, for the first time, American popular and political interests actively converged on India. During this period, India was extensively discussed by the American and British political elite, and also by American journalists, writers, and military officials. A variety of opinions on India were presented, ranging from India's social, religious and cultural habits to its political will. It was during this period that a

comprehensively defined image of India and a vocabulary with which to discuss Indian cultural and political characteristics emerged.

Overview

The major players selected for evaluation are the American policy makers and those who presented popular images which influenced both policy makers and public opinion. The latter category consists mainly of journalists, writers, and political and military officials who were either posted in Asia or were visiting India. Some opinions of American missionaries and intellectuals have been included primarily to evaluate the pervasiveness and continuities in the images of India. British official and popular representations of India are also included herein because of their contribution to American thought on India.

The method of treatment is both topical and chronological. Popular representations and official discussions have been examined separately. Chronology is maintained within each topical division in order to evaluate the progression of thought on India. It is difficult to treat this subject as a straightforward historical narrative because ideas about India were expressed and developed by people of different backgrounds and biases, under different circumstances and in different formats and also, with a different focus. Topical divisions also provide more opportunity to include opinions which fall beyond the purview of the period selected but are essential to establishing the development of opinions on India, especially in regard to popular representations. Diplomatic and policy records have been examined from the perspective of the evolution of American official ideas about and attitudes towards India.

The current chapter lays out the analytical/conceptual context for this study and reviews the literature on Indo-American relations and images and perceptions of the East in the West. Chapter Two focuses on popular images of India constructed in the United States before the outbreak of the Second World War. These images have been included in order to determine their impact on the construction of wartime pictures of India. Chapter Three examines images constructed during the war and after India achieved independence. Chapters Two and Three concentrate on the memoirs and writings of journalists, writers, and military and political officials who observed India from within. A more explicit understanding of India is visible in their writings than the one available in the public records. India has often not received much consideration in these writings which itself reflects the level of interest India generated in the United States. The purpose is to evaluate what aspects of India became central in these evaluations, what images became dominant and how they were deployed to explain India's political behavior.

Two salient images emerge, one which establishes India as rooted in the past, unable to free itself from its stagnant traditions. The other establishes an insurmountable gap between the 'real' India residing in villages, rooted in the past, and the 'nationalist' India aspiring towards a unified nationhood. In this period, Americans' evaluation of themselves and of the British underwent a noticeable change which also influenced their evaluation of India's political future. Their views ranged from acceptance of British rule in India to criticism of colonialism. However in most discussions, the images of India remain more or less consistent, even after India achieved independence. The observers affirmed India's political deficiencies through the use of graphic descriptions of Indian society, culture and religion. In their descriptions,

Indians were generally denied any individuality, and were lost in a collectivity, which these observers defined as India.

Chapter Four introduces the development of American official ideas about and interest in India. The focus is primarily on discussions within the State Department and with British officials especially at the time when the Cripps Mission was sent to India. This period was the most active regarding American involvement in India. British representations of India played a critical role in creating an understanding of India among American policy makers. During this time Louis Johnson was appointed by Roosevelt as his Personal Representative in India. As noted earlier, Johnson recognized American interests as distinct from those of the British which influenced his reaction towards Indian nationalism. However, Johnson's opinions about India constantly competed with representations of India provided by British officials and the American media. Some opinions expressed by commentators in newspapers and magazines are included herein in order to evaluate the ideas that had begun to emerge in popular forums regarding India in the context of the Cripps Mission.

Chapter Five deals with the period after the Cripps Mission failed to resolve the Indian problem and when Gandhi initiated a civil disobedience movement demanding that the British quit India. This chapter introduces a wide range of ideas that emerged in the United States regarding India. During this period William Phillips was appointed by Roosevelt as his representative in India. Phillips represents those voices which promoted American interests as distinct from those of the British and recommended an independent approach towards India. However, in contrast to Phillips' advocacy of active American involvement in India, the American official response remained noncommittal while the media, in general, flayed the India nationalists for

failing to endorse the Cripps plan. India's social and cultural peculiarities became the primary means of demonstrating its political immaturity and irrationality. This chapter concludes with the official anticipation of an India's independence and the various opinions that surfaced regarding American expectations of independent India. Observations on an independent India are examined in the concluding chapter.

During the period under review some shifts are apparent in the development of the American opinion of India. Before the outbreak of the Second World War American observers generally endorsed British rule in India and reiterated British representations of India. However, in the period of the war, American observers' view of the British changed. Even though their ideas about India remained consistent they wanted to be viewed as being distinct from the British colonizers. Relatedly, some Americans even embraced Indian nationalism as a way to oppose British imperialism. In contrast, American official understanding of India was largely influenced by the information provided by their British counterparts. However, different strains of thought had begun to emerge in the official, intellectual, and media presentation of India. The basic stereotypical image of India remained, yet fluctuated with a reevaluation of British imperialism and the emerging American role in world politics. American understanding of independent India was influenced by the different perspectives that had begun to emerge.

Review of Literature

I - Political Relations

The study of Indo-American relations is a relatively new field and has acquired significance only in the recent past. Within the body of scholarship

on Indo-American relations, the greater concentration of writing has been on the American relationship with an independent India. The Cold War imperatives became central to this evaluation. Consequently, the focus has been on the examination of American role in South Asia in the context of American global concerns, strategies, and commitments. Political, economic, and strategic aspects of this interaction have acquired significance in order to examine the tensions and conflicts between India and the United States.³

Regarding American interest in India prior to India's independence, the available literature can be classified into two broad categories. One concentrates specifically on the American role in India's independence and the other examines India's place in the overall Anglo-American relationship during war. In general, the concentration of the scholars is on the study of policy records to examine diplomatic and political aspects of this interaction.

One of the earlier studies is A. Guy Hope's *America and the Swaraj*.⁴ Hope provides a favorable assessment of the American role in India's independence struggle. He concludes that American official and unofficial influence on the British government to grant independence to India was significant. On the other hand, Gary Hess represents a more widely accepted

³ Some of the major works dealing with American interaction with independent India are M. S. Venkataramani, *The American role in Pakistan, 1947-1958* (New Delhi: Radiant, 1982); Kilaru Ram Chandra Rao, *India, United States and Pakistan: A Triangular Relationship* (Bombay: Himalay, 1985); Dennis Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot: the United States and India's Economic Development, 1947-1963* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); H.W. Brands, *India and the United States: the Cold Peace* (Boston: Twayne, 1990); Srinivas C. Mudumbai, *United States Foreign Policy towards India, 1947-1954* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1980); Robert J. McMahon, "Food as a Diplomatic Weapon: The India Wheat Loan of 1951," *Pacific Historical Review* LVI.3 (August 1987) 349-377. For bibliographical information regarding scholarship on Indo-American relations see Gary R. Hess "Historiographical Essay: Global Expansion and Regional Balance." *Pacific Historical Review* LVI.2 (May 1987) 259-295.

⁴ A. Guy Hope, *America and Swaraj: The U. S. Role in Indian Independence*. (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1968).

view of the American role in India's independence. In *America Encounters India*, he contends that even though Roosevelt adhered to anti-colonial convictions, he failed to assert himself against the British to transfer power to the Indians. Hess believes that while policy makers remained divided over India, public opinion and the press were generally sympathetic to the nationalist cause, and to Gandhi, at least until 1943.⁵ Kenton Clymer argues that the United States had traditionally championed independence and self-determination and that Roosevelt was part of the anti-colonial tradition which influenced his interest in India. Clymer suggests that Roosevelt put pressure on Britain when he sent Louis Johnson as his Personal Representative to India in 1942, at the time of the Cripps Mission. But the conduct of the war prevented Roosevelt from antagonizing Britain, particularly Churchill, by pursuing the Indian cause.⁶ On the other hand, two Indian scholars, M. S. Venkataramani and B. K. Shrivastava, present a general American indifference to colonial aspirations and a deference among the policy makers towards the British. They contend that Roosevelt knew and cared little about colonial peoples and did nothing to support the nationalist position.⁷

These studies show that American attitudes towards India were closely related to America's relationship with Britain. However, ideas about India

⁵ Gary R. Hess, *America Encounters India, 1941-1947*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971) and "Historiographical Essay: Global Expansion and Regional Balance." *Pacific Historical Review* LVI.2 (May 1987) 259-295.

⁶ Kenton J. Clymer, *Quest for Freedom: The United States and India's Independence* (New York: Columbia U. P., 1995) "Franklin D. Roosevelt, Louis Johnson, India, and Anticolonialism: Another Look." *Pacific Historical Review* LVII.3 (August 1988): 261-284 and "The Education of William Phillips: Self Determination and American Policy towards India, 1942-1945." *Diplomatic History* 8.1 (Winter 1984): 143-161. Also see Harold Gould in "U.S.-Indian Relations: The Early Phase." in *Hope and Reality: U. S.-Indian Relations from Roosevelt to Reagan* (Boulder: Westview, 1992).

⁷ M. S. Venkataramani and B. K. Shrivastava, *Quit India: The American Response to the 1942 Struggle* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1979) and *Roosevelt Gandhi Churchill: America and the Last Phase of India's Freedom Struggle*. (New Delhi: Radiant, 1983).

conveyed by the British, and those constructed by the American observers themselves have not received much attention in terms of their impact on American understanding of India. Venkataramani and Shrivastava provide some discussion of British propaganda in the United States, and of the American press coverage of India and its nationalists. Unlike Hess, they do not discover any significant sympathy for India in the American media. Still, the major thrust of their discussion is on the political aspect of this interaction. Images of India remain subordinate to them and, at best, are presented as reflections of and commentaries on policy decisions. The language and images used to describe India and the political significance of the perceptions formulated about India's culture and society are not the primary focus of their study.

Regarding Anglo-American relations and India's place in them, David Reynolds, in his analysis of Anglo-American relations during the war, contends that American pressure on the British in 1942 to grant independence to India was a major challenge put forth by the United States to the British empire.⁸ Christopher Thorne believes that there was a basic dislike of British imperialism in the United States and that it challenged Britain in 1942 not just for military reasons but to preserve American prestige and influence in Asia. Thorne also presents the prevalence of racist views in Britain and the United States regarding the Asians, but regarding India he believes that the United States kept its distance from British politics.⁹ Akira Iriye, on the other hand, believes that the importance of Asia increased for the Americans essentially to

⁸ David Reynolds, "Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Wartime Anglo-American Alliance, 1939-1945: Towards a new Synthesis." the *'Special Relationship': Anglo-American Relations since 1945*, eds. Wm. Roger Louis and Hedley Bull (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

⁹ Christopher Thorne, *Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain and the War against Japan, 1941-1945* (New York: Oxford U. P. , 1978).

prevent German-Japanese access to the British empire and that the policies they formulated in Asia were not unilateral but in alliance with the British.¹⁰

The focus of these studies is primarily on the political, strategic, and military discussions within which the scholars generally conclude that American interest in India's independence was put on hold in order to preserve the wartime alliance with Britain. They have become valuable works since introducing India into the study of American foreign relations and have substantially enhanced the study of India's independence movement. Two important ideas emerge in these discussions which are particularly useful for this investigation. First, they confirm American suspicion of British imperialism and a growing desire to challenge Britain's political and economic position. Second, the conduct of the war seemed to take precedence over the other concerns. Related to this issue emerges the relative marginality of the Indians themselves. The conclusion that can be derived from these assessments is that the Americans challenged the British position in India but withdrew their challenge in consideration of the war. However, America's opinion of India in terms of broad cultural readings does not emerge as a factor in these studies.

The question that needs to be addressed is how the Americans perceived the colonized and what impact it had on their interest in India. Even though America's concern was directed to the war, perceptions of India had begun to infiltrate into the discussions. American interest in India in 1942 has generally been considered a questioning of the British imperial position in India. But when official and popular impressions as well as descriptions of India and the Indian nationalists are examined, the American challenge to British imperialism does not translate into the acceptance of the aspiration of

¹⁰ Akira Iriye, *The Cold War in Asia* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1974).

the colonized. Nor does it mean, on the other hand, an unconditional acceptance of the British interpretation of India, but emerges as something new and more complex. In this period the foundation for a distinctively American reading of India was laid down. The war had created American interest in India; India's capabilities would be measured by the evolving American images of its society and people.

Also, within the body of literature on Indo-American relations, American interaction with colonial and independent India have generally been studied independently of each other. However, despite the different political imperatives created by the Second World War and the Cold War, within which Indo-American relations have been presented, a unifying element can be discerned in the images which guided American perceptions of India in both periods. Kilaru Ram Chandra Rao in his examination of tensions between the United States and independent India claims that the United States did not understand the Indian way of life or its political ideology. However, he also suggests that American interest and involvement in India's nationalist struggle had created goodwill for America in India.¹¹ Rao's analysis is problematic in that he does not take into account America's vision of pre-independence India and its long term implications. In contrast, this investigation addresses the paradox present in Rao's analysis. This study contends that America's response to India even before 1947 was problematic and was based on and reinforced by stereotypes. An examination of American images of India during the period of the Second World War has a twofold significance; it provides another dimension into examining America's role in

¹¹ Kilaru Ram Chandra Rao, *India, United States and Pakistan: A Triangular Relationship* (Bombay: Himalay, 1985) 2, 239.

India's independence and also affords an opportunity to establish the long term impact of images on America's understanding of independent India.

II- The Image of India in the United States

Only a handful of scholarly works have examined the image of India in the United States, generally concentrating on America's interaction with independent India or presenting images from a cultural perspective without relating them to their political role.¹² Harold Isaacs study, *Scratches on our Minds*, is one of the work most often cited in this area of study. This study is based on interviews conducted in 1957 with what Isaacs terms the 'official types' of India in which an exotic, mystic, poverty stricken India dominates the American understanding of India.¹³ Isaacs study introduces a more favorable image of China in contrast to India. A lack of sustained interaction between the United States and India, and American's reliance on the images portrayed by the British, can be construed as possible reasons for the differing perceptions of the two Asian peoples. Charles Heimsath arrives at a similar conclusion--negative images of India have continued to influence American policy.¹⁴ A distinct image of India emerges in these studies, which is

¹² In the 1950s, when relations between India and the United States were most contentious, there seems to have been a spurt of studies on the American image of India. Two dissertations, Earl Robert Schmidt's *American Relations with South Asia, 1900-1940* Ph.D. thesis (University of Pennsylvania, 1955) and Bernard Saul Stern's *American View of India and Indians, 1857-1900* Ph.D. thesis (University of Pennsylvania, 1956) have delineated some American images of India. Their studies are particularly useful regarding the views of the American missionaries in India. In his dissertation *Some Aspects of the Development of American Opinion on India, 1918-1947*, Walter Charles Mackett has surveyed American press opinions with a focus primarily on their reports on the political developments in India. Ph.D. thesis (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1957). These studies do not examine the language or the images used to describe India or explore their political implications.

¹³ Harold A. Isaacs, *Scratches on our Minds: American Images of China and India* (New York: John Day, 1958).

¹⁴ Charles H. Heimsath, "The American Images of India as Factors in

further developed and to which other perspectives are added, in Nathan Glazer's edited volume, *Conflicting Images*. It provides valuable insights into a wide range of images of India, such as American views of Gandhi, India in American fiction and anthropology, and perceptions of Indian women.¹⁵ A noticeable element in these studies is the American emphasis on the essential difference between the two societies and an obvious lack of competitive accounts available to counter the burgeoning negative image of India. This concentration on negative images of India and a comparative framework to examine India can possibly be extracted in the present study as well.

There is a general acknowledgment among scholars that American perceptions of India were largely influenced by British interpretations. Andrew J. Rotter introduces a gendered analysis to evaluate American policy makers' view of the East in contrast to the West. He contends that the British representation of India greatly influenced American views of India and created assumptions founded on perceptions of gender. The British conferred feminine traits on India within which Indian politics and leaders were perceived as passive and emotional; traits which made Indian society antithetical to the West in absolute terms.¹⁶ Regarding America's contribution to the perception of India, most studies consider the images provided by Katherine Mayo in *Mother India* as most critical. Mayo may have contributed significantly in establishing the image with which to examine India, but it was the prolific writings on India by lesser known authors during the period of the Second World War which are crucial in a more definitive and

U. S. Foreign Policy Making." *Asian Thought and Society* 2.3 (December 1977). 271-289.

¹⁵ Sulochana Raghavan Glazer and Nathan Glazer, *Conflicting Images: India and the United States* (Glenn Dale: Riverdale, 1990).

¹⁶ Andrew J. Rotter, "Gender Relations, Foreign Relations: The United States and South Asia, 1947-1964" *The Journal of American History* 81:2 (September 1994). 518-542.

comprehensive establishment of India's place in American thought. Furthermore, with the outbreak of the war, the Americans no longer defined India apolitically, and only to justify British rule in India. India was no longer a British concern alone and images of India had become politically meaningful to the Americans as well. The images of India, constructed by the Americans during this period, contributed substantially to the understanding Americans acquired about Indian nationalism.

The established images of India are related to a more general American interaction with the Third World, as set out in recent scholarly writings. These studies have accepted and further developed the images popularized in the period under discussion to explain the problems in relations between an independent India and the United States. In the earlier description of India these images were discovered and viewed with obvious disapproval, requiring India to adopt the western norms in order to win acceptability. Now these images have become indisputable facts creating a firm cultural and political boundary between America and India.

Indian cultural images have acquired a significant role in explaining political differences between an independent India and the United States. Harold Gould, for instance, considers India's non-aligned policy rooted in Hindu and Buddhist faith based on the "efficacy of diversity and pluralism as opposed to the Judeo Christian moral absolutism thus creating dissonance in the Indo-American interaction."¹⁷ Similarly, Selig Harrison believes that rejection of culture-centered political identity in America's 'melting pot' ethos contributes to problems with the Third World. It is the Hindu concept of time which has led the Indians to adopt relativistic foreign policy attitudes

¹⁷ Harold A. Gould, "U. S.- Indian Relations: The Early Phase" in Harold A. Gould and Sumit Ganguly ed. *The Hope and the Reality: U. S.-Indian Relations from Roosevelt to Reagan* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992) 31.

while the Americans are concerned with the revealed dogma which requires the world to conform to their own beliefs and perceptions of their own interests.¹⁸ In *Negotiating Across Cultures*, Raymond Cohen established the effects of cultural differences on diplomatic negotiations. Regarding India, he believes that the Indians, humiliated by British rule and governed by the elite Brahmin caste, find the prospect of subordination insufferable.¹⁹ In these discussions a comparative framework is deployed to examine India and India's difference from the West is confirmed. India's political philosophy does not emerge as a product of political imperatives but is rooted in its social and religious traditions. The implications are that India's past continues to dictate the present, from which India apparently cannot escape. The explanation of political tensions in cultural practices lends permanency to the discord, leaving no scope of growth or change. To Ainslee Embree, *Mother India* is a forgotten title among Americans, but it is not among Indians.²⁰ But *Mother India* seems as much a factor to the Americans as Embree claims it is to the Indians. The image of India has acquired a permanent place in such discussions which emphasize problems in this relationship in the essential and insurmountable differences between the two cultures.

Besides the predominant influence of cultural traditions on Indian politics, India's colonial experience has become another means of explaining tensions between India and the United States. Alvin Z. Rubinstein, in analyzing anti-Americanism in the Third World, believes the root causes of

¹⁸ Selig S. Harrison, "Dialogue of the Deaf: Mutual Perceptions and Indo-American Relations." *Conflicting Images*, ed. Sulochana Raghavan Glazer (Glenn Dale: Riverside, 1990) 56-60.

¹⁹ Raymond Cohen, *Negotiating Across Cultures: Communication Obstacles in International Diplomacy* (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1991) 13, 33.

²⁰ Ainslee Embree, "Anti-Americanism in South Asia: A Symbolic Artifact," in Alvin Z. Rubenstein and Donald E. Smith eds. *Anti-Americanism in the Third World* (New York: Praeger, 1985) 140.

this sentiment are cultural, ideological and historical factors.²¹ He believes that perceptions formed by the Third World leaders, educated in centers of colonial power, led them to admire the cultures of the colonizers. Moreover, they had no prolonged exposure to the American culture or politics. In India, the "brown Englishman," whose acquired English culture separated him from the traditional culture of the masses, also made him distant from the United States.²² Rubinstein exemplifies a shift that has taken place in the manner in which Americans perceive India. Even though he reiterates entrenched opinions of the Indian leadership, however, unlike most wartime observers, he does not view America and Britain as equal representatives of the West, rather he affirms America's distinctness from Britain. Writing in the post war era, Rubinstein's analysis represents an independent American reading of India.

Rubinstein's analysis is limited in the sense that instead of placing India's political concerns in the current political scenario, the answers to India's political philosophy and behavior are sought in the past. There is truth to Rubinstein's contention that the Indian leaders were not exposed to American culture. However, what he fails to examine is whether the Indian nationalists considered the United States distinct from Britain or perceived the two powers as equal representatives of western ambition in India. During the period of the nationalist struggle, India may have been more suspicious of Britain and given the Americans an opportunity to distance themselves from the colonizer. Suspicion of the United States may have emerged in India

²¹ Alvin Z. Rubinstein, "Preface" Rubinstein et. al. eds. *Anti-Americanism in the Third World*, xi.

²² Rubinstein and Donald E. Smith, "Anti-Americanism: Anatomy of a Phenomenon." in Rubinstein et. al. eds. *Anti-Americanism in the Third World*, 5-7.

during the period of the independence struggle when the Americans defined their attitudes towards India.

These studies have explored many facets and aspects of American images of India covering a vast period of time. Despite the diversity of themes, a unifying element can be discerned in the tangible cultural gap they present between India and the United States. These studies have not only established the impact of British influence on American opinions but have also introduced independently constructed American opinions of India. The period selected for review in the present study, however, is still left largely under-explored. The Second World War was a period of transition in which the Americans made a conscious effort to distance themselves from the British and attempted to study India independently and possibly with some sympathy. The images constructed during this period acquired political significance more forcefully and meaningfully.

III-American view of other cultures

The leading question regarding American interest in India, drawing from the scholarship discussed above, is whether it developed within the framework of the general American perception of non-western cultures. The issue that will be explored is whether American policy makers, as part of the western world, shared the same attitudes with the British regarding a non-western society. The Americans may have begun to establish a distinction from the British but may still have shared their assumptions regarding India's cultural and social makeup and understood its nationalist movement within it. They may also have still adopted or developed similar views as those of the British even when opposing British imperialism.

The issue that requires some discussion is how non-western societies were perceived in the American public arena and popular forums and evaluate whether these perceptions played any role in policy formulations regarding India. One of the earlier views available is that of President Theodore Roosevelt. He stated in 1909 that "successful administration of the Indian empire by the English has been one of the most notable and most admirable achievements of the white race during the past centuries."²³ This statement highlights America's identification with Britain at the height of European imperialism. Public figures like Theodore Roosevelt promoted the notion of the superiority of the white race and approved the colonizer's role in spreading western values while neglecting the aspirations of the colonized.

Many scholars contend that this belief has been the guiding force of American foreign policy.²⁴ According to Michael Hunt, American policy in the twentieth century has been guided by an active quest of national greatness, promotion of American values, a sense of Anglo-Saxon superiority and limited acceptance of political and social changes in other parts of the world. The Anglo-Saxons were united by the common quality and common

²³ Cited in M. S. Venkataramani, *Quit India* 10-11.

²⁴ American perception of other cultures can be studied in the period of American expansion begun in 1898 with the Spanish-American War. The ideas of the expansionists are presented in Julius Pratt's *Expansionists of 1898 : The Acquisition of Hawaii and the Spanish Islands* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1936), Walter LaFeber's *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansionism, 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell U. P., 1963), Ernest May's *American Imperialism: A Speculative Essay* 1st ed. (New York: Atheneum, 1968). Historian John Fiske, minister Josiah Strong and President Theodore Roosevelt emerge as prominent proponents of American racial and cultural superiority and advocates of the British empire. In Howard Beale's *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U. P., 1956) Roosevelt echoes the popular British sentiment that expansion was essential to preserve the vigor of a society and to prevent its physical and moral stagnation and degeneration. For an evaluation of American views of the Native Americans see Richard White's *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1991) White discusses the use of the ideas of race, birth and progress by the Americans to establish domination over the native population.

interest and viewed the "oriental" with racial superiority. The American policy-makers often worked with the colonial powers to win time until the 'natives' were ready for independence.²⁵ Martin Weil similarly contends that the State Department officials were racially arrogant, and had little respect for members of those races customarily dismissed by Anglo-Saxons as inferior.²⁶

Hunt has presented American racial and cultural affinity with the British but the notion of America's uniqueness in terms of its own values and beliefs also emerges as a major factor in the development of an American identity. David Reynolds has presented both aspects of an American identity in his study. He argues that in American history, Britain had been central to the definition of American values and American sense of identity. But the Americans also considered Britain an old society and criticized British colonialism even though their understanding of the empire was vague and distorted. Reynolds believes that it was towards the end of the war that the Americans recognized their superiority which in turn enhanced their sense of their own Americanness.²⁷ Reynold's contention is based on the response of the American GIs posted in Britain, but similar recognition can be anticipated in the American observers in India, especially among those associated with the war. However, Americans in India had an added opportunity to recognize and express their distinctness in relation to a non-western culture as well.

Regarding the role of American values in the international arena, Emily Rosenberg presents the argument that American policy was guided by the belief that American values were meant to uplift the world which included

²⁵ Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U. S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1987) 77, 161.

²⁶ Martin Weil, *A Pretty Good Club* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978) 90, 125.

²⁷ David Reynolds, *Rich Relations: The American Occupation of Britain, 1942-1945* (New York: Random House, 1995) 22-35, 442.

spreading American ideas and capital throughout the world.²⁸ This self recognition and self image had significant political implications regarding American attitude towards other cultures. Phillip Darby contends that their self image led the Americans to reject other forms of political and social organizations and their incentive to observe and inquire overseas was lessened by this reliance on their own experience and values.²⁹

This duality in an American identity, one expressing America's uniqueness and the other identifying with the British especially in observing another culture, played a significant role in defining an American attitude towards India. During the course of the war, Americans recognized and asserted their own interests and challenged the British position, but their belief in the general superiority of western traditions continued to influence American perceptions of India. Darby believes that the affinity between Britain and the United States led them to share the same assumptions, mental pictures, and their purpose towards other cultures.³⁰ This shared belief with the British, along with the emerging American self image, had a considerable impact on American view of other cultures. According to Akira Iriye, Americans had an image of Asia because they had an image of America which led them to establish a stark contrast between American liberty and Asian tyranny. They believed that the Asians were potentially capable of improvement but were been constrained by their own despotic institutions

²⁸ Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982) 203.

²⁹ Phillip Darby, *Three Faces of Imperialism: British and American Approaches to Asia and Africa, 1870-1970* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1987) 143, 170, 186-187.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 3 Darby points out that the Americans and the British were unified in their western rationalism and viewed the East as mystic, superstitious, lazy and fatalistic. 41.

and foreign conquests.³¹ In this respect, British imperialism was bound to become an impediment to the realization of American interests. American perceptions of India may have been guided by the same assumptions as those of the British, but envisioned a world order different from the one already established by the British.

If considered from this perspective, American attitudes towards Indian nationalism were bound to develop within the context of their own superiority and would, therefore, subscribe to a British interpretation of India whether unilaterally or in alliance with the British. Indian aspirations could easily be subordinated to American values and beliefs. The American opinion of India developed on the assumption that the Indians were inferior, and the observers were inclined to focus on those aspects which confirmed India's inferiority. The image of India constructed by the British could be invoked but usually as a means to subordinate India to American values and beliefs. According to Augelli, when American policy makers confront people, who because of their race, culture, or behavior, could be convinced of the superiority of the American system, then policy-makers can work to convert them. If they reject or deny the American value system, repression is used.³² American perceptions of India's political and cultural behavior and the willingness of the Indians to conform to American values could decide India's future viability and influence policy decisions.

³¹ Akira Iriye, *Across the Pacific: An Inner History of American-East Asian Relations*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967) 4, 7, 23.

³² Enrico Augelli and Craig Murphy, *America's Quest for Supremacy and the Third World* (London: Pinter, 1988) 59.

IV-Orientalism

Recently there has been a spurt of academic activity in the area of colonial discourse concerning the West's image of the East and the impact it had on their relationship. This approach, which has sharpened the analytical issues partially present in the earlier scholarship, has turned attention to the study of how the colonized were represented, and what language, images, metaphors, and myths were used to describe their culture and society. What has generally been identified as Orientalism is a vast set of images in scholarship, literature, art and other media that conjures up the essence of the East.³³

Edward Said establishes the argument that the knowledge the West developed and accumulated of the Orient led to its "dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient" which meant for 'us' to deny autonomy to 'it'. The accepted basis of this knowledge was the establishment of a distinction between the East and the West as a starting point for elaborating theories and political accounts, and describing the people, their customs, their mentality. The oriental was fixed in a stereotype: gullible, devoid of energy and initiative, and at the same time cunning and irrational as opposed to the direct and rational West.³⁴ Homi K. Bhabha elaborates on the objective of colonial discourse. He believes that this discourse construes the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction. Necessity of such rule is justified by moralistic and normative ideologies, recognized as

³³ David Ludden, "Orientalist Empiricism: Transformation of Colonial Knowledge" in Carol A. Breckenridge ed. *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993) 251.

³⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) 2, 3, 32, 38.

the "Civilizing Mission" or the "White Man's Burden." But within the same apparatus of colonial power coexists the notion of a modern system and science of government--progressive 'Western' forms of social and economic organization which also justify colonization.³⁵

In the above discussion, orientalism is intrinsically tied to imperialism. Knowledge is power. But knowledge can be detached from an overt form of power--that is, colonialism. This knowledge did originate in the writings of the orientalists associated with colonialism, but contributions to this knowledge were also made by those not formally associated with colonialism. Ludden's contention that only by separating knowledge from power can orientalism elsewhere be explained³⁶ is relevant to the study of the American perception of India. Americans never colonized India, but they reproduced and developed knowledge of India which may not have led to territorial acquisition but which had, nevertheless, significant political and cultural implications.

Furthermore, Britain, the colonizer, within the Orientalist context, could not only use its knowledge to maintain control over India but also to educate the Americans to assume similar attitudes. Also, by providing negative images of India, Britain aspired to make itself indispensable in any discussion about India, thereby limiting American involvement. On the other hand, the United States, although, not a colonizer of India, may already have harbored the same attitudes as those of the colonizer, thereby demonstrating its own superiority, in the process marginalizing the Indian society and its aspirations

³⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, "Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," *The Politics of Theory*, ed. Francis Barker (Colchester: University of Essex, 1983) 198, 209.

³⁶ Ludden, 252.

unless they were subordinated to the western norms and values.³⁷ In light of this, the shared sense of superiority with the colonizer over India would reflect in the perceptions Americans developed of India. Spurr terms it the West's "essential narcissism," idealizing itself and subordinating the world of its subject.³⁸

The scholars of Orientalism have presented the pervasiveness of this sentiment in the West by including novels, travel literature, and journalistic writings in the domain of politics. Spurr argues that the media normally relies on institutional sources, their place in the market economy, and their standardized discourse produces an ideology that is fairly easily explained in terms of national policy and public opinion.³⁹ In this respect, popular representations of India in the United States can be considered vital to understanding the American view of India, not only from a cultural perspective, but for its political impact as well.

American images of India can be considered as significant as those of the British in the context of India's independence movement and also in view of the dominant role the United States assumed after 1945. By expressing their own understanding of India the Americans were in a position to contribute new vitality and authority to the knowledge about India in the West. Ludden argues that Orientalism, as a body of knowledge, drew material sustenance

³⁷ Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993) notices the tendency in Americans to expand and extend and not spend time "reflecting on the integrity and independence of Others..." 289.

³⁸ David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire* (Durham: Duke U. P., 1993) 110.

³⁹ Spurr, 8-9. Edward Said is particularly critical of American/western media. He believes that while the European culture was associated with white man's physical presence in a particular area, the new American controlled international media insinuates itself over a wide area and sheepishly follows the government policy model. *Culture and Imperialism*. 291, 295. In these analyses the media is generally presented as a reflector of government policies and ideologies. In the case of India, the media had also become significant educators about India to a largely uninformed public and the policy makers.

from colonialism but became objectified by the ideology of science as a set of factualized statements about a reality that existed and could be known independently of any subjection or colonizing will.⁴⁰ This argument becomes evident in Augelli's contention that Social Darwinism gave white Americans a scientific basis for their racism. The competitive struggle could be identified as a war between the whites and the rest of the world and could provide an incentive to the Americans to impose their values on the rest of the world.⁴¹

As early as 1927 Jawaharlal Nehru had recognized this trait in the colonizer. He stated that India is to England a "part of the mysterious and *effete* East, which always plots and intrigues most irrationally against the God-ordained might and majesty of England and ungratefully forgets the many favours which England has bestowed on her."⁴² Nehru had deployed the orientalist knowledge against the British and this opinion could be transferred to the Americans once the American position became apparent to the Indians.

There is a general consensus among scholars regarding the persistence of the notions of the backward East and the progressive West in post colonial literature and political thought. According to Spurr, the ideology of 'modern' has replaced the ideology of 'civilized,' but the function and motive have remained the same; to maintain authority and to classify people according to Western standards of technological and political progress.⁴³ Said believes that since the Second World War the United States has dominated the Orient and approaches it as France and Britain once did, always demonstrating the strength of the Occident. "What counts is not what people are or think, but

⁴⁰ Ludden, 252.

⁴¹ Augelli, 46, 64-65.

⁴² Sarvepalli Gopal. ed. *Jawaharlal Nehru: An Anthology* (Delhi: Oxford U. P., 1983) 7. Nehru wrote this in an article, "The Psychology of Indian Nationalism," in the *Review of Nations*.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 69.

what they can be made to be and think." Now they [the Americans] try to see the Orient as the imitation of the West and when they discover otherwise, it only testifies to the 'incurability' of the oriental.⁴⁴ But an overt form of domination is not a requisite for images to become politically significant. The Americans may have already harbored similar sentiments. By constructing negative images of India they may have deflected the aspirations of the Indians from becoming prominent, and abetted the cause of the colonizer, and reasserted the greater strength of the Occident.

Regarding the impact of orientalist knowledge on India, Ronald Inden agrees with Said's contention that while, once this knowledge enabled the West to gain trade concessions and to colonize, now it authorizes the area specialists and their colleagues in government and business [primarily in America] to aid and advise, develop and modernize, arm and stabilize the countries of the Third World. Even independent India has not regained the power to know its past and present.⁴⁵ Similarly, Gyan Prakash believes that the Indians were, to the British, an inert object of knowledge, to be managed and changed. Now caste driven and otherworldly India has been reformulated as 'traditional India,' and old projects of modernizing by the colonials have been renovated and deployed as economic development.⁴⁶ According to Hunt, now it is no longer race but attributes of modernity and tradition that fix a nation in the hierarchy. The American model is used to rebuild traditional societies and stagnant economies, all with an abiding sense of superiority.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Said, *Orientalism* 4, 291, 321.

⁴⁵ Ronald Inden, "Orientalist Construction of India," *Modern Asian Studies* 20.3 (1986) 401-446.

⁴⁶ Gyan Prakash, "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32.2 (April 1990) 383-408.

⁴⁷ Hunt, 162.

These scholars present certain images which have become dominant in Western discourse on India and can be anticipated in the present discussion. In his discussion of Indological discourse, Inden believes that the 'irrational' institution of 'caste' and the 'Indological religion' [Hinduism] that accompanies it have displaced human agency and define India. Caste, conceived as India's essential institution, became both the cause and effect of India's low political and economic development and its failure to prevent its conquest by outsiders. He cites the opinion of James Mill that the Hindus are 'timid beings' who run away from danger with more trepidation and eagerness than has been almost ever witnessed in any other part of the globe; the "mental habits of the Hindu" are implicated in "India's inherent political incapacity."⁴⁸

These were accepted notions among the British, and once they were popularized, they could become the accepted norm of discussing India by the Americans as well. The acceptance of these opinions during the course of the war would make the Indians immaterial in the war and undermine their aspiration by questioning their political abilities. A marked distinction was established between the East and the West in which the former could win acceptability by adopting the latter's values and beliefs. The survival of these perceptions is visible in Maurice Zinkin's understanding of India. He considers Eastern thought other worldly while Western thought promises that the world can be changed for the better. He believes that it was the influence of Western ideas that made Indian politics dynamic.⁴⁹ Following the same reasoning, David Gordon praises Nehru for his impatience with suffocating

⁴⁸ Inden, 409.

⁴⁹ Maurice Zinkin, *Asia and the West* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1951) 75, 90.

traditions fostered by Gandhi, in order to reconstruct and rediscover India.⁵⁰ It is the rejection of the Indian traditions and acceptance of western values which seem to be a prerequisite for India to win acceptability. But this capacity also hinges on the western perception of India's ability to step out of its traditions and emulate the West.

The scholarship on Orientalism has created opportunities to examine the interaction between the West and the East not only in terms of policy objectives and national interests but also in terms of the impact of cultural expressions on political thought. By incorporating opinions of writers, journalists, missionaries and intellectuals, scholars of Orientalism have made it possible to explore the collective perception the West developed about other cultures. In the context of the role America played in India's independence, this field of study has widened the scope of examining perceptions and interests not only to include the political elite but also opinions generated in the popular media reflecting and creating a more encompassing opinion of India. This approach makes it possible to investigate the American involvement in India not only in terms of American advocacy of anti-colonialism, but also in relation to their opinion of the colonized.

⁵⁰ David C. Gordon, *Self-Determination and History in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton U. P. , 1971) 49.

Chapter 2

Early Perceptions, 1920s-1930s

In the 1920s and 1930s American official interest in India was largely nonexistent, however, images of India were available for public consumption. These representations are an important introduction into ideas about India circulated by the Americans in the period before the war. Collectively, they lay the groundwork upon which future American observers built their opinions of India. In the examination of the role America played in India's independence, American perceptions of India have generally received cursory attention and have been subordinated to an indepth investigation of political debates and diplomatic discussions. Undoubtedly, strategic and economic interests and global politics play a major role in policy decisions, but opinions of peoples and cultures are also relevant in the decision making process. Similarly, opinions presented in popular forums play a critical role not only in reflecting dominant perceptions but also in shaping and manipulating opinions. The political and ideological roles of the intellectuals, journalists and writers have to be recognized and their implicit or explicit alignment with or against the institutions of power must be explored.

Edward Said, as previously noted, has made a compelling argument for the recognition of the privileged role of culture in the modern imperial experience.¹ However, the role of culture need not be limited to the imperialist powers alone but can be broadened to include other western

¹ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993) 5. John M. MacKenzie contends that imperialism on the domestic scene in Britain has been discussed largely as a debate of an elite while 'popular imperialism' is ignored. *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester U.P., 1984) 2. MacKenzie's contention is relevant in terms of popular representations of India in the United States.

nations, who have also expressed their opinions about non western cultures from a vantaged position.

As a colonial power, Britain's representation of India has received considerable attention in the study of Orientalism. Some discussion of British images of India is necessary in order to evaluate their influence on America's understanding of India. Francis Hutchins' study, *The Illusion of Permanence*, is particularly useful because it delineates the evolution of British thought on India and presents images whose impact on the Americans is markedly noticeable. Hutchins points out that the British perception of India was based on assumptions of racial, political, and religious superiority. These assumptions led the British to envision a permanent raj in India. In order to justify their prolonged rule in India the British created a conventional stereotype of the Indians. They singled out the alleged Indian laziness, fatalism, feebleness, and preference for despotic institutions--all of which, in turn, confirmed India's cultural, political, physical and mental inferiority. These traits were explained as consequences of climate and diet to the eventual adoption of the scientific explanation of racial difference. The scientific proof, in particular, provided confirmation of the fact that the Indians were inherently inferior and, therefore, required protection.² Consequently, the peasants and the minorities, who conformed to this image, acquired prominence in British writings. The emerging Indian middle class, which did

² David Ludden, "Orientalist Empiricism: Transformations of Colonial Knowledge" in Carol A. Breckenridge ed. *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993) Ludden contends that European superiority became more theoretically pronounced in Europe. Hegel and Marx considered India's stagnant backwardness a consequence of traditional village economy, despotic government, religion based social life and sacred caste divisions. Knowledge had become detached epistemologically from colonialism. 265 American representation of India can also be viewed from this perspective.

not fit the conventional image of the childlike, was ignored.³ The British delegitimized a class, schooled in western thought, which had begun to emerge largely as a consequence of the British initiative.

Hutchins contends that after the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the British approach underwent a noticeable change. Instead of promoting their mission to reform and educate, the British singled out the Hindu majority and associated an unchangeable 'Hindu mentality' with it. This characteristic denied the Hindus the capability to change and reform. The 'Orientalizer' reasoned that the British rule should be made agreeable to suit the Hindu mind. Consequently, an India of the imagination was created, associating the Hindu culture with social and political stagnation.⁴

The English constructed the 'real' India, which existed in the countryside, among peasants, princes and minorities, who were all dependent on the British. India was assumed a static society which was introduced to real history by its confrontation with the modern colonial world. The emerging Indian nationalism was obscured by the argument that India was not a nation. It was not only the caste system but also religious differences between Hindus and Muslims which conveniently confirmed India's fragmentation.⁵ Scholars

³ Homi K. Bhabha observes that colonial discourse creates a space for a 'subject peoples' through production of knowledge in terms of which surveillance is exercised and seeks authorization for its strategies by the production of knowledge of the colonizer and the colonized. "Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism" in Francis Barker et. al. eds. *The Politics of Theory* (Colchester: University of Essex, 1983) 198. Such strategies can create a comparative framework to study other cultures, leading one culture to establish superiority over the other. A comparison between two different cultural systems can be anticipated in the American observers of India as well.

⁴ Francis Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence* xii, 57, 61-67, 73, 141, 154-157, 179.

⁵ Peter van der Veer, "The Foreign Hand: Orientalist Discourse in Sociology and Communalism" in Carol A. Breckenridge ed. *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993) Nationalism is an ideology that emphasizes a collectivity of political will, common history and territory. A nation is not

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of Orientalism have generally presented the British representation of India as a systematized knowledge which silenced competitive accounts. The British surveyed and bound India within villages and its politics within religious institutions.⁶

The pervasiveness of these representations is visible in the British novels of India as well. Allen Greenberger, in his study of British novelists of the empire, points out that the Indians never emerged as individuals but remained a collective 'mind set.' Most novelists did not recognize Indian nationalism as a factor and ignored or underplayed its relevance.⁷ Imperial writers like John Buchan reasoned that the Indians were childlike and needed protection. He claimed that Indian nationalism was inconsequential and advocated the postponement of independence indefinitely.⁸ Said, in evaluating the privileged role of culture in imperialism, examines the representation of the natives by a number of imperial novelists. In his analysis of Joseph Conrad's vision of Africa in *The Heart of Darkness*, Said

built on common religion and religion was what the British considered a unifying element in India. 24-31. Also in the same anthology see Breckenridge, "Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament." She argues that the British created a pervasive view that India is a land of difference, unfathomable and ungovernable. The Orientalist strategy was to constitute a particular space as inherently timeless or confined to the past. 2, 17.

⁶ Ludden, 252, 263, 266. In the same anthology Arjun Appadurai points out that hunt for data about caste created an unmanageable flow of information, that only "numerical majorities" were given prominence which led to essentialization of groups. After 1931 the idea of politics as a contest of essentialized communities became popular. Colonial body count created not only types and classes but also homogenous bodies. "Number in the Colonial Knowledge." 315-335.

⁷ Allen J. Greenberger, *The British Image of India: A Study of the Literature of Imperialism* (London: Oxford U. P., 1969) 203-204.

⁸ Juanita Kruse presents Buchan as needing the empire in order to escape from his own society which stifled and dwarfed him. It was only when out of Britain and observing others in Asia and Africa that Buchan could appreciate his own culture. *John Buchan and the Idea of Empire: Popular Literature and Political Ideology* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1989) For the Americans the empire was not a material necessity as it was for Buchan but they may still have shared his views based on their racial and cultural superiority.

believes that Conrad could not conceive the natives as capable of independence and effectively silenced them. E. M. Forster in *A Passage to India* made everything in India seem incomprehensible and unidentifiable. If someone did come to terms with India he/she could not recover from that experience. Forster may have expressed his disillusionment with the British Raj, however, in his descriptive narrative he adhered to orientalist images of India. Said's discussion of Kipling's *Kim*, which was written after the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885, is particularly notable because Kipling is most frequently cited by American observers in India as their source of information on India. Said presents Kipling's India as an uncontested empire, where the Indians were placed in the protective orbit of the British rule. This India had the essential unchanging qualities, with no conflicts and with no reference to any social change or political menace. Kim could express love and fascination for India but from the vantage of a controlled observer.⁹

These cultural expressions could independently create assumptions about India without being overtly tied to political institutions and political processes. These writers shaped and were shaped by their histories and ideologies, which they presented in popular media. Two critical factors seemed to influence these writers in their study of eastern cultures like India. To begin with, a distance from India seemed requisite for the celebration and preservation of western values. Having established a distance, these writers found India mysterious and incomprehensible. However, they felt compelled to demystify India by simplifying it and reducing it into distinct categories. Consequently, Indians were depicted not as individuals but merely as socially and culturally driven entities, rigidly bound within their caste and religious

⁹ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 23, 166, 201-203, 132-160.

affiliations. Elements which threatened to undermine the stability of the empire were disregarded or discredited. These cultural expressions contributed significantly to justifying British imperialism especially when the enterprise was threatened or questioned. John MacKenzie and Phillip Darby point out that, after the First World War, the argument about the benefits of colonialism had to be spelled out in great detail, especially with the rise of nationalism in Asia and the growing criticism of imperialism as the cause of the war. In the 1920s, the propaganda of the empire had to be made vigorously, because the English public lacked an ideological commitment and vested interest in the empire. In this respect, the propaganda in the form of popular literature, games, documentaries, and exhibitions had a lasting effect. It never showed the updated view of the world, rather, it remained entrenched in the nineteenth century and, therefore, froze the images of the public's view of the world--a world of military advances, oriental fascination, and racial condescension. It contributed to a complacent habit of superiority which created, what MacKenzie has termed, the 'protected markets of the mind.'¹⁰

In MacKenzie and Darby's analyses, Orientalism does not emerge as a monolithic, uncontested, self propelling discourse. Their arguments suggest that the knowledge about the Orient had to be reinvented, modified, and reasserted in order to reeducate people about the benefits of the empire and to counter the emerging criticism of British imperialism. It seems that such resistance and reassertions had emerged in the aftermath of major upheavals like the Indian Mutiny and the First World War, creating a need to reassert the benefits of colonial rule. This necessity could be anticipated in the era of the Second World War as well.

¹⁰ Phillip Darby, *Three Faces of Imperialism: British and American Approaches to Asia and Africa, 1870-1970* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1987) 101-107 and MacKenzie, *Propaganda...* 61, 91, 257.

These cultural expressions, promoting imperial ideology, could not remain rigidly bound within a given territory. Given that the Americans shared racial and cultural affinity with the British, these opinions could have found fertile ground in America as well. Here, too, the 'protected markets of the mind' could be created and the Americans bound within the nineteenth century view of the empire. In this respect, popular literature about India, produced in the United States following the First World War, is significant.¹¹ According to Jayant Lele, Orientalism, while it serves the purpose of control, can do so by insulating common people of the occident from a self-examination that can result from contact with the rest of the world.¹² With limited political interest in India and subjected to views which condoned British rule in India, Americans easily adopted the orientalist's vision as well. It may not have led to overt domination, but knowledge without the trappings of imperialism is powerful in its own right. The perceptions of Indian society and culture developed in the United States had a significant impact on American assessment of India's political will. It was possible for the Americans to assume racial superiority and cultural authority but without the love and fascination which Kipling could express through *Kim*.

The influence of British opinions on American perceptions of India is apparent in American missionaries and the American cinema. This study does not include missionary writings and cinema for detailed analysis because missionaries were not a major factor during the era of the Second World War or a part of the mainstream discourse selected for evaluation in this study. Cinema had been excluded because the focus of this study is on the printed

¹¹ In the United States, *India in Ferment*, written by Claude H. Van Tyne, and *Mother India*, written by Katherine Mayo were published in the 1920s. Both condoned British rule in India.

¹² Jayant Lele, "Orientalism and the Social Sciences," in Breckenridge ed. *Orientalism...* 45.

word.¹³ Nevertheless, some comments are warranted here in order to establish the general trends in the American image of India and the influence of the British on these representations.

The films made in the United States and Britain, according to MacKenzie, all expressed racial stereotypes and projected the supremacy of Europe and America's triumph of the civilized over the rest of the world. MacKenzie believes that imperial epics flowed from Hollywood because they gave the American filmmakers the opportunity to relive and celebrate America's imperial past.¹⁴ One example that stands out in Isaacs' evaluation is the film *Gunga Din*, made in 1939, which introduced a 'cringing and rather pathetic creature' with 'doglike' devotion to his British master.¹⁵ Like the British novels, the films also ignored the nationalists. According to Dorothy Jones, the only rebellions recognized by Hollywood were those of the hillsmen or the frontier tribes which the British always won for India's greater good and safety. Jones points out that these films were produced in the 1930s when the Indian nationalist movement had become most vocal and visible.¹⁶ Such depictions may have catered to the public's appetite for adventure in exotic places but could also reinforce stereotypes and prevent alternative thoughts and images from emerging.

¹³ India had been examined by intellectuals like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau who contrasted Indian spirituality favorably with western materialism. But as Kenton Clymer points out, by the turn of the century the United States had become a colonial power and accepted England as a model to be imitated. The opinions of American missionaries and consuls, who condoned British rule in India, had a greater impact than those presented by intellectuals. *Quest for Freedom*. (New York: Columbia U.P., 1995) 3-4.

¹⁴ MacKenzie, *Propaganda...* 69, 88.

¹⁵ Harold A. Isaacs, *Scratches on our Minds: American Images of China and India*. (New York: John Day, 1958) 241-242.

¹⁶ The 'creature' was probably the 'childlike' Indian created and popularized by the British transformed into a sub-human category.

¹⁶ Dorothy B. Jones, *The Portrayal of China and India on the American Screen, 1896-1955* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1955) 55-59.

American missionaries were some of the earliest commentators on India.¹⁷ F. De. W. Ward for example wrote his observations of India in 1850. The influence of British opinions is most evident in his analysis, an example of which is Ward's observation of Indian laziness. He reasoned that the "tropics," unlike "our own more vigorous clime" created "idleness" in the Indians. Further, Ward blamed the caste system for preventing the Indians from uniting against their foreign rulers. However, he also praised the British for improving the mental and moral being of the Indians. He believed that despite their painful and galling state of servitude and debasement, Indians were better governed by the British and the masses did not desire a transfer of power to native rulers.¹⁸ As a Westerner and a Christian, Ward could not accept the Indian people, their society, culture or religion, and held them responsible for their own servitude. Although, ideologically uncomfortable with imperialism, he concurred with British representations of India and praised the benefits Britain brought to India.

William and Charlotte Wiser, two members of the American Presbyterian Society, spent five years in an Indian village in North India and recorded their observations in 1930. Their primary interest was to help the lower caste Indians overcome prejudices and fears in order to achieve better things in life.¹⁹ A shift is visible in the views expressed by the Wisers from those of Ward. Whereas Ward had emphasized racial and climatic deficiencies in the Indians, carrying with it implications of permanency, the Wisers focused on social reforms, suggesting a potential for improvement in India.

¹⁷ For an examination of American missionaries in India see Sushil Madhava Pathak's *American Missionaries and Hinduism: A Study of their Contact from 1813-1910* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967).

¹⁸ F. De. W. Ward, *India and the Hindoos* (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1850) 79-81, 206, 270, 284, 310.

¹⁹ William H. Wiser and Charlotte Viall Wiser, *Behind Mud Walls, 1930-1960* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971 c1963) 15, 38, 113, 129.

But like Ward, the effort of the Wisers was primarily to transform the Indian society from within, with western help. The issue of the impact of imperialism on the Indian condition was left largely unattended.²⁰

Even though American film makers and missionaries were not representatives of the colonizing nation, they certainly found an outlet in India to promote western values and proclaim the validity of their own cultures. Their observations of India were not different from those of the British, which, in all probability, prevented them from giving serious consideration to India's subjugation.

Writers, Journalists and Consuls--1920s-1930s

Opinions expressed by some American journalists, writers and consuls in India in the period before the outbreak of the war will help delineate the prominent images of Indian culture, society and politics in order to evaluate their influence on wartime observers of India. These observers cannot be considered experts on India but are good indicators of the commonly shared discourse on India.²¹ Their opinions and perceptions were definitely

²⁰ Margaret Strobel also presents such limitations among British women in India who could not transcend maternalistic hierarchy to establish real affinity with Indian women. They attributed problems in India to its society and not to imperialism. *European Women and the Second British Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana U. P., 1991).

²¹ Claude H. Van Tyne, Head of the Department of History at the University of Michigan, acknowledged that he was not an authority on Indian history and institutions, yet he believed that he could provide an understanding of India by recording the facts accurately. But he also concluded that because of the diversity of race, religion and caste, a lifetime would not suffice to gain fullness of knowledge about India. However, he proceeded to authoritatively define the country and its people. He considered the British incorruptible, just, alert, incisive and positive and categorized the Indians as 'dark skinned,' 'timid, cowering herd' and described his Indian guide as a 'miserable rat.' Based on these observations he wondered if the Indians could ever win and maintain self rule. x, xi. 4-5, 16. *India in Ferment*. (New York: D. Appleton,

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influential and far reaching. The discussion in this chapter will focus primarily on the writings and memoirs of these observers. Some of the observations about India were written and published in the period under consideration and reflect not only the writers' personal biases but also the current trends in American thought. Moreover, such literature provides a more unrestrained and more comprehensive picture which is often lacking in newspaper and magazine reports as these tend to focus on the analysis of particular events and are often limited by constraints of space. Also, the views of these writers were not reproduced instantaneously, in order to satisfy deadlines, but were written with reflection and introspection.

Writers

In 1927 Katherine Mayo presented her version of India to the American public. Mayo went to India to discover her 'truth,' and her opinion is established early in the book which helped define the 'Hindu mind.' According to Mayo, India suffered from "inertia, helplessness, lack of initiative and originality, lack of staying power and of sustained loyalty, sterility of enthusiasm, weakness of life-vigor itself."²² The only redeeming element in India was the presence of the British. Mired in illiteracy, suffering from material and spiritual poverty "... it is only to the British that the Indian villager can look for sympathetic and practical interest and steady, reliable help in his multitudinous necessity." As far as the Indian nationalists were

1923). The notion of India's incomprehensiveness is visible in the *National Geographic* acknowledging that it was "difficult for the Occidental mind to gain an accurate concept of India." July 1926, (v. L no. 1) 60. Van Tyne represents the opinion of many British and American observers who acknowledged that India was beyond comprehension but at the same time believed it could be understood by describing and simplifying it and provided the observer maintained a distance from India.

²² Katherine Mayo, *Mother India* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1927) 11.

concerned she considered them wasting their energies in "sterile, obstructionist tactics while the rest...sat apathetic."²³ Like the British, Mayo discovered the real India residing in villages where, she believed, the influence of the nationalists was negligible. She discredited Indian nationalism, and like the British, focused on those groups and classes which confirmed the necessity of British presence.²⁴

Mayo was accused of writing this book at the behest of the British, in order to justify their benevolent rule in India.²⁵ In India this book caused an uproar and resulted in the publication of a number of books in answer to her criticism. One such book was, *A Son of Mother India Answers*, by Dhan Gopal Mukerji. He countered that vices like opium, syphilis and alcohol were

²³ Ibid., 215, 296.

²⁴ Van Tyne marginalized Indian nationalism by focusing on the educated classes. He found only the high-spirited Indians and fanatically loyal disciples of Gandhi aspiring for immediate independence. But the judicious, cautious, and conservative educated Indians did not agree with Gandhi and believed India was unprepared to assume political responsibility and urged delay. *India in Ferment*. 2, 86, 107. In Mayo and Van Tyne's analysis, the subservient masses and the educated classes needed and wanted the continuation of British rule. Nationalism as a force could be delegitimized because the nationalists were sterile and fanatical.

²⁵ Mayo's book was written when, in the aftermath of the First World War, British imperialism had begun to be questioned in the United States. Publishers William Randolph Hearst and Robert R. McCormick publicized Gandhi's challenge to British rule. It suited both to use Gandhi to promote American interests and discredit those who admired Britain and its empire. Gandhi had also become a hero to the pacifists in America. Lloyd I. Rudolph, "Gandhi in the mind of America" in Nathan Glazer ed. *Conflicting Images* (Glenn Dale: Riverside, 1990) 145-148. John Haynes Holmes, minister of New York Community Church 1919-1949, became an admirer of Gandhi and publicized his cause. He presented Gandhi as a spiritual force in India. *My Gandhi* (New York: Harper, 1953) 42. Before Mayo, Van Tyne had published his observations on India and justified British rule in India. Van Tyne's concern was that in the United States, a consistent and powerful enemy of Britain, particularly the 'parlor Bolsheviks,' were spreading among 'ignorant' Americans stories of British misrule in India. He undertook a trip to India to seek out the truth. He commended the British for leaving their home and families to come to a land of excessive heat and unsanitary conditions and urged people in Britain to let the British officials in India prepare the Indians to assume the burden of responsibility. (New York: D. Appleton, 1923) viii, 166-167, 239.

brought to India by 'civilization' and accused Mayo of perpetuating white domination in India by arguing that India was unfit to rule herself.²⁶ Nevertheless, *Mother India* became a bestseller in the United States and introduced Mayo's version of India to a large chunk of the American population. Henceforth, India would only be viewed as a land languishing in material and spiritual poverty.

A notable aspect of Mayo's construction of India and the Indians was the image of the Hindus. She presented them as weak and unreliable, sexually depraved, beyond the scope of self uplift, led by purposeless and unfocused nationalists, whose real needs were met only by the British.²⁷ In this evaluation, Indian social, cultural and mental habits subordinated and imprisoned its nationalists as well.

Mayo's sentiments regarding the British rule in India were not original. Theodore Roosevelt had praised the achievements of the white race and believed "If the English control were [now] withdrawn from India, the whole peninsula would become a chaos of bloodshed and violence."²⁸ Even

²⁶ Dhan Gopal Mukerji, *A Son of Mother India Answers* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1928) 46-47, 74.

²⁷ According to Veena Das the constitution of "otherness" in the missionary mode was rooted in an obligation to bring the gospel to the infidel. In contrast, Mayo saw herself as representing the interest of the Americans who needed to be protected against the sickness of lands like India. "The Imagining of Indian Women: Missionaries and Journalists" in Nathan Glazer ed. *Conflicting Images*. 213. This aspect is evident in Van Tyne's account of India as well. He considered it necessary for the West to maintain its distance from India for self preservation. He contended that any race that came to India from the North West [that is, by land] conquered India and built an efficient government before the climate sapped its strength. But the British came by the sea and returned to their home and renewed their strength. *India in Ferment*, 2, 231. This odd explanation can be interpreted as an expression of Van Tyne's relief at the geographical and intellectual distance between Britain and India. The need to maintain a distance from India for self preservation would definitely not encourage intimacy with the Indians. Consequently, western observers would not discover individuals but view India as a vast alien mass.

²⁸ Quoted in A. Guy Hope, *America and Swaraj* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1969) 6.

Franklin D. Roosevelt foresaw the possible independence of colonial peoples only after a period of tutelage by the 'parent' state.²⁹ Historian Van Tyne had applauded the British for giving India habits of peace and order, sanitation and hygiene. Without the British, India would remain medieval, barbaric--belonging to the dark ages of superstition. In the final analysis, Van Tyne had accepted Kipling's warning to all 'lovers of efficiency' that 'You can't hustle the East.'³⁰ Mayo seemed to have articulated popular sentiments regarding the continued necessity of the West to train and instruct those cultures considered uncivilized according to western standards. Her contribution, in this respect, was not only in popularizing this notion in the United States, but in providing graphic descriptions of 'Hindu' India, making India more stark and its nationalistic aspirations more questionable.

Other observers of India, who followed Mayo, presented similar views when evaluating India's quest for independence and assessing its leadership qualifications vis-à-vis the British, although they prefer to cite Rudyard Kipling as their source of authority on India. Probably due to the notoriety Mayo had achieved in India, she was not a declared source of reference, but the images she presented influenced how India should be studied in the future.³¹ India seemed to be imprisoned by its religious and social structures symbolized by the 'sacred cow' which became the metaphor for Hindu India,--superstitious, docile, idle, passive, obstructing the path of modern advancement. Whether such an India was ready for independence? Would it be willing and capable of fighting with the Allied forces? These would become

²⁹ Wm. Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay* (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 1977) 4.

³⁰ Van Tyne, *India in Ferment*, 160-161, 193-195.

³¹ Journalist Negley Farson observed India in the 1930s. He believed that Mayo had corrupted American opinion of India which journalists like himself were attempting to correct. "Indian Hate Lyric" in *We Cover the World* ed. Eugene Lyons (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937) 137.

the leading questions among those who ventured into India. The abilities and capabilities of India were beginning to be defined during this period and India's social and cultural characteristics contributed vitally towards this assessment.

Mayo's contribution in providing a focus and direction with which to study India becomes apparent in writer Patricia Kendall's criticism of India, particularly of 'Hindu' India.³² Kendall presented an extensive account of India's history and explained its culture and politics. She presented and reaffirmed her opinions about India primarily by relying on observations made by some American and British nationals based in India and those Indians who confirmed her vision of India. She cited observations made by an American missionary who informed her that the Indians never contributed a science, a religion, a philosophy or art to the growth of the world beyond its frontiers except Buddhism. In fact, according to the missionary, the Aryans lost their physical and mental stamina and some of their culture after moving to India. He believed that India's "instinct is static." Kendall further contributed to this image by pointing out that the Hindus lacked the concept of cleanliness and health. Their physical debasement affected their mental qualities as well.³³ Once again, in Kendall's assessment the debilitating influence of India had emerged prominently. In Kendall's examination of India, like Mayo, the influence of the British representation is obvious. Both

³² Kendall is known primarily for her study on India. In her obituary, the *New York Times* described her as a writer on customs of India. February 7, 1973. In a report in the *New York Times* on October 30, 1931, Kendall had argued that modern India needed evolution instead of revolution. It was impossible for the Indians to take their place in world affairs until their physical and mental poverty was removed. She expressed the same views in her book as well. 383. Like Mayo, Kendall had diverted attention away from nationalism to Indian character and cultural deficiencies.

³³ Patricia Kendall, *Come with me to India* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1931) 137, 386-387, 391.

writers considered India rooted in the past and its people physically and mentally retarded, and used this information to explain India's nationalism as well.

Kendall used the opinion of the missionary to reaffirm the fact that the Indian [Hindu] mind was fluid and elastic, but not creative. The people reflected an inability to grasp the realities of life which was often falsely labeled, "spirituality." They made elusive comments which were "a mixture of realness and unrealness which is inseparable in the Indian mind."³⁴ India seemed to destroy any positive influence of the West as is apparent in case of the degeneracy of the Aryan race itself. The missionary confirmed that the Indian mind was unreliable and illogical which rendered the Indians untrustworthy and suspect. These essentialized and collectivized social, cultural, mental, and physical characteristics of the Indians had the potential to assume political relevance when applied to the Indian nationalists. The nationalists could either be ignored, as is apparent in the American films, or submerged in the dominant image of an emasculated India. Kendall contended that the Hindu mentality saw no purpose in change and believed that Gandhi stagnated India by denouncing material progress and western education.³⁵ If the British prevented the Indians from emerging as individuals, American writers also followed the same trend and presented the Indians only as a 'mind set.'

With these insights into the Indian mentality, Kendall questioned the appeal of "many Indians" to "our people" to aid them in shaking off the "yoke" of the English government. She reasoned that India was such an alien country and we have so few means to assist us in judging whether these supplicants

³⁴ Ibid., 135, 137-139.

³⁵ Ibid., 270, 397.

were true representatives of the Indians. Kendall believed that very few Indians were politically conscious and concluded that all her evidence favored the British position in India. The missionary concurred with her opinion by pointing out that Indians were childlike and needed nurturing.³⁶ Kendall's assessment indicates that, even though ideas about India were present in the United States, an interest in Indian politics was lacking. She may have contributed to this disinterest by imprisoning the Indian nationalists in India's stagnation and submerging them in an all-encompassing vision of a retarded and debased India.

It is noteworthy that Kendall's examination of India continued the trend of projecting an inherent difference between the West and the East. India remained incapable of assuming independence and required continued western assistance and presence. Kendall believed that British rule was impartial and promoted freedom and liberty among the Indians because "They cannot comprehend democracy." She warned that if Gandhi's strategy of dismantling banking, shipping and transportation--symbols of material progress--was implemented it would ruin not only the British but the American economy as well.³⁷ In Kendall's analysis, like Mayo, there was no recognition of American distinction from the British. She not only justified British rule in India but also adopted their reasoning to confirm it.

Kendall attributed the failures and problems of India to the Hindu mentality. Thus, she justified colonialism as instructing the natives to learn the norms of the West and the colonizer as performing a duty to the natives in preparing them for eventual independence. But her assessment of the Indians also denied them the capability to overcome these deficiencies. The mental

³⁶ Ibid., 142, 301.

³⁷ Ibid., 142, 427.

habits of the Indians were presented as an inherent condition, making the people incapable of change. By blaming the Indians for their own debasement, writers like Mayo and Kendall absolved the British of any blame for India's condition. Kendall did not anticipate the independence of India or present a critique of imperialism. Like many British women travelers, Kendall conducted her research in India, maintaining her distance, reiterating the difference between the two worlds. She seemed unable or unwilling to establish any identification with the indigenous people or to sympathize with their colonized state.³⁸

It should be noted that for the purpose of this investigation the focus is on American representation of India in non fictional genres like popular journalism, travel writings and memoirs. This kind of literature has been selected primarily because of its explicit rendition of opinions of other cultures unmediated by the aesthetic and interpretive requirements of imaginative and creative writing. Moreover, the impact of such writings on political debates is generally more direct and more immediate.

Creative literature, too, is a powerful medium and its contributions to cultural representations are undeniable. Fictional writing has a longevity and reaches a more diverse audience, and like cinema, can contribute to the sustainability of images beyond the time and space in which they are conceived. Fictional representations can reflect a standardized version of a given culture but can also freeze an alien culture into defined images and categories for an extended period of time. The literature available on India's representation in American fiction is extensive and for that reason alone

³⁸ See Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana U. P., 1991). In the case of the British women in India, Strobel discovered an attempt by some to establish an identification with Indian women. Kendall, on the other hand, illustrates a complete distance from India by the American observers.

constitutes a full subject of study in its own right. However, one novel has been reviewed in order to examine the manner in which India was represented in American fiction and assess the impact of entrenched images on American literary writers.

Louis Bromfield, a Pulitzer prize winning novelist, traveled to India in 1932 and again in 1935. His impressions of India are available in his well known novel *The Rains Came*.³⁹ Bromfield's novel has to be studied in the context of his vision not only of an Eastern culture but also of the Western society. Bromfield seemed to be disenchanted with Western materialism and industrialism and its dehumanizing effects. In India, he discovered the possibility of creating a better society and also redeeming those Westerners who had lost faith in their own civilization.⁴⁰ Bromfield's critique of the West could mean that, unlike writers like Mayo and Kendall, he would not project Western superiority over the East and would avoid establishing a confrontational relationship between India and the West.

Bromfield visited India and wrote about a period in which Indian nationalism had become active and vocal but, following the trend of British novels and American films, it does not impinge on the story and is rarely mentioned in the novel. The novel is centered in the fictional princely state of Ranchipur which is ruled by a benevolent king. The king has acquired his enlightened ideas of promoting health, education and hygiene and lifted himself out of the "malarial apathy and superstition of ancient India" with the help of his English tutor.⁴¹ It is apparent that Bromfield may have expressed

³⁹ Louis Bromfield, *The Rains Came: A Novel of Modern India*. (New York: P. F. Collier, 1937)

⁴⁰ David Anderson, *Louis Bromfield* (New York: Twayne, 1964) Preface, 77, 99.

⁴¹ Bromfield, 20. This fascination with the enlightened princely states pitted against an overpowering apathetic, superstitious India is visible in reports published in magazines like the *National Geographic* as well. John and Frank

disenchantment with Western materialism, however, he also established the fact that enlightened ideas emanated from the West and benefited other cultures.

Bromfield's understanding of India emerged through the observations of his main character Tom Ransome, a rich American with ties to the British aristocracy. Ransome had become disenchanted with western materialism and escaped to India. He is introduced as a waster, living an apathetic life. Ransome seemed to mingle freely with the Indians, but in his observations a distance is apparent. In the first few pages of the novel Bromfield established an overpowering and an all-encompassing image of the Indian landscape, an image which persisted throughout the novel. India emerged as alien and threatening, at the mercy of a primitive and an undefinably savage "nature." Ransome observed a "primitive terror in the Indian sunset" when the jackals and vultures emerged to prey on men and sacred cows, while the mongoose, lizards, snakes and mice rattled about the whole night. The chaos of the night was replaced by the wild cacophony of sacred monkeys in the morning. Lady Esketh, a former love interest of Ransome, now married to a British Lord, was frightened by India's vastness, heat, dust and jackals. She believed that the hostility was shared by both people and animals, by nature itself. This undefinable nature seemed to encompass more than the Indian landscape. It seemed to represent the basic core of man and beast alike, trapping both in a primitive and savage state. Throughout the novel India retained an air of sinister mystery. Like most western observers of India, Bromfield concluded that this mystery was generated by the lying and intrigue of the Orthodox

Craighead in "Life with an Indian Prince" found the state of Bhavnagar one of the most modern and progressive states in India because of its modern hospital, roads, sanitation vying with the mud villages, bullock carts, wandering goat herds which represented the primitive and the ancient. Jan. 1942 (v. LXXXI no 1 336-237.)

Hindus. It was the Hindu religion, with a devastating indifference which had managed mysteriously to swallow up everything human--ambition, faith, conquerors, and glory.⁴²

Having established the Hindu culture as enervating and primitive, Bromfield introduced some characters who could effect change in India. In this respect, Bromfield broke away from the general trend of depicting Indians only as a collective entity. He not only selected westerners as agents of change but included some Indians as well. However, these Indians were different from the rest because they seemed to have escaped India's primitiveness and acquired civilized qualities. One such Indian was Major Safti, the fair skinned, blue eyed, western educated Hindu Brahmin surgeon who was free of the controlling "nature" of India. Safti believed that this nature stifled and suffocated the human spirit. He identified problems in India with earth, life, an overfertile country filled with snakes and wild beasts. Safti was convinced that nature was a monster and conceded that despite educating and feeding the people, eventually this nature will continue to triumph. He believed that it was the drought, the monsoons and the earthquakes, leprosy and plague which lay at the root of terror in India.⁴³ In Bromfield's estimation, what distinguished Safti from the other Hindus was his western education which shaped his enlightened ideas and prepared him to uplift the savage and diseased land and its resistant culture.

The other agent of change was the Muslim head of the police, Raschid Ali Khan. Once again, like most western observers, Bromfield distinguished Raschid from the Hindus. He reaffirmed the fact that the Muslims were frank, positive and visionary while the Hindus possessed tact and intrigue, were

⁴² Ibid., 1-11, 30, 54, 106, 160, 200 258.

⁴³ Ibid., 261.

passive and mystical. Raschid could not understand the sinister mystery of India and considered it responsible for making the Hindus cowardly and treacherous. Bromfield may have placed Raschid in India, but presented him as an outsider, uncorrupted by India's debasement. He considered Raschid intelligent, physically strong, a descendent of the Arabs, Afghans and Turks, who did not understand the slow pace of India's growth. Bromfield presented Raschid in glowing terms--as the warrior, the Muslim, the enemy of the British empire.⁴⁴

The third group of people whom Bromfield distinguished from the larger Hindu society were the Untouchables. They seemed to be vital for the running of the households of the enlightened king and the numerous western residents. In contrast to the Hindus, Bromfield considered the Untouchables active and purposeful. Mr. Jobenekar, the Untouchable leader, had the smoldering vitality special to the Untouchables. They ate meat and, unlike the deformed Hindus, were tough. In the maternity ward of Miss MacDaid, a Scottish nurse working with Safti, this difference became most apparent. The untouchable woman appeared to be vibrant and healthy and gave birth to healthy children while the Hindu patients gave up easily and resigned themselves to their fate. Miss MacDaid dreaded her Hindu patients and considered their silly superstitions [possibly vegetarianism] responsible for their thinness.⁴⁵

Life in Ranchipur was disrupted when an earthquake caused the dam to break and flood the state. The dam seemed to symbolize the worst aspect of the West but also reaffirmed the childlike nature of the Hindus. Bromfield points out that the dam was built by a crooked westerner because the Hindus were

⁴⁴ Ibid., 60, 141, 259, 383.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 17-18, 24, 27, 64.

gullible. They had placed their mystical and childlike faith in western achievements, in things they could not conceive themselves. The dam was a symbol of oriental faith in occidental practical achievement and honesty. In this moment of crisis, Bromfield's hero Ransome, the disenchanted westerner, discovered a purpose in life. But he did not find similar awakening among the Indians. Ransome observed a stranded servant, "a thin ugly little man," "very black", a monument of patience and erosion to whom the British empire meant nothing. "He was not quite an animal, for he was made in human shape." Ransome believed that this man was India, which went on breeding and breeding, symbolizing animal pleasure and superstition. Life was cheap in India, millions sprang up somehow from the dead villages like fungus from rotten wood. Ransome understood how complicated were the problems of bringing light to these people.⁴⁶ In a rare look at an average Indian, Bromfield's hero was unable to dissociate him from the animal world. This seemingly human Indian represented Hindu India and its insurmountable problems. Like most western observers Bromfield could not envision that such an India was ready to assume responsibility.

In view of the devastation in Ranchipur, the two westerners, Ransome and Lady Esketh, and the Muslim, Raschid had singlemindedly become involved in tending to the miserable and helpless Indians. But the transformation was not easily achieved by the Hindu, Major Safti. He was on the verge of succumbing to the terror induced by India--the "thing" clung to him, and it came from his past. Naturally, Raschid could not understand Safti's terror and despair. Safti's hope for rejuvenation lay in relying on Ransome for strength and avoiding Miss MacDaid lest she accused him of having "turned Hindu". Eventually, Safti's spirit won and he emulated the strength

⁴⁶ Ibid., 311, 314, 359, 397, 457.

displayed by Ransome and Lady Esketh. In observing Safti's turmoil, Ransome reasoned that perhaps in grief and emotion the differences between their cultures become more apparent.⁴⁷ In the moment of crisis, even when the two worked towards the same goal, the distance between them instead of narrowing had become wider. Safti's reliance on Ransome seemed to symbolize enlightened India's need for western, presumably American support.⁴⁸

Bromfield could not envision a rapid transformation in India. Even though Indians like Safti and Raschid represented hope for the country's revival, considering the immense problems in India's innate nature, that possibility lay in a distant future. Ransome was convinced that India's awakening would not occur in his lifetime. Like most western observers, Bromfield identified problems in India strictly with the Hindus. He distinguished the enlightened princes, Muslims and the untouchables as active agents, free of the debilitating "nature" of India. Bromfield may have opposed British imperialism, but he certainly did not acknowledge the Indian nationalists as bearers of change. He singled out all those groups whom the British claimed needed protection. But Bromfield assigned them active agency to change India and challenge the British. However, the problems Bromfield identified within India were so enormous that they seemed to overshadow British imperial rule in India. The task of uplifting India seemed overwhelming in view of the not quite "animal" nature of the Hindus. Hope for India lay in the future, in Safti's promise to the king to breed healthy children.⁴⁹ Ultimately, Western, particularly American ideals and values,

⁴⁷ Ibid. 582-585.

⁴⁸ Bromfield introduced a character, Colonel Moti, who in observing Ranchipur's devastation and Hindu passivity, wanted to destroy the old India and emulate the Americans who had changed 'awful places' like Cuba, Panama and the Philippines. 550.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 119, 499.

represented by Ransome, emerged as essential for India's awakening. Muslims and Untouchables seemed to possess the necessary qualities and Safti had acquired them.

Bromfield acknowledged India's real and potential capabilities, an aspect which was absent in the accounts of Mayo and Kendall. However, his larger vision of India conformed to the pervasive orientalist images. The problem with such representations is that they can overpower the alternative vision that the author(s) may have intended. However, Bromfield's vision of India also indicates that even those author(s) who sought an alternative vision of India may not have looked at India alternatively because they appropriated old images. These images when projected in the public arena, whether in sympathy or contempt, tended to become larger than the author's purpose or bias.

Journalists

In the memoirs of the journalists, in contrast to Mayo and Kendall, India received negligible attention, which perhaps was a symptom of a lack of America's political interest in India. But their observations, however limited, contributed to establishing an image of Indian nationalism and the Indian society. Their opinions of the two Indian nationalists, Gandhi and Nehru, although rudimentary, influenced the tone for future investigations as well.

Negley Farson, a correspondent with the *Chicago Daily News*, visited India in 1930 and acknowledged Kipling as his source of information on India. Farson's reliance on British representations as his guide to India become apparent in his observation of the "naked men in loin cloth," "naked *fakir*" [ascetic] and "through all this placidly wandered a sacred cow."⁵⁰ Farson's

⁵⁰ Negley Farson, "Indian Hate Lyric" in *We Cover the World* ed. Eugene

representations showcase the inability of the Americans to view India outside the confines of the established images or to adopt a different perspective. The coexistence of the bizarre, the mystical and the superstitious seemed to define India in its totality and once again confirm the insurmountable gap between India and the West.

Farson was not enamored of the British, but nor was he with the Indians. The British, he observed, were complacent and the 'natives' obeisant, "living with a fearful, irremovable inferiority complex that Englishmen have given to India." Even the Indian leaders were unable to rise above this subservience to lead the people purposefully. The British may have constructed the image of the Indians as lacking virility and demonstrating feminine traits of passivity and timidity, but these images had been accepted as factualized statements by Americans like Farson, and as Ludden has observed, known independently of any subjugation.

Farson, in contrast to Mayo and Kendall, did not condone British imperialism and distanced himself from the British. However, the problems he highlighted were not associated with British imperial rule but with the inability of the Indian nationalists to develop a cogent resistance against the British. He considered Gandhi dignified but spent the major portion of his account discrediting his philosophy and strategy. He believed that Gandhi was playing up the inferiority complex to the point of masochism in passive resistance. Gandhi wanted the English to beat the Indians and the Congress was using this tactic to blackmail them to leave.⁵¹ Farson seemed relieved to

Lyons (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937) 129, 132-133.

⁵¹ Ibid., 135-137. Gandhi had some admirers in the United States like the Reverend John Haynes Holmes. Holmes met Gandhi in London in 1931 and recognized the difficulty the West would have in understanding Gandhi. He believed that it was impossible to understand Gandhi unless one understood the basic religious aspect of his life. *My Gandhi*, 58. *Time* magazine made Gandhi, the "little half naked brown man," Man of the Year for 1930. (January 5, 1931,

discover that not all Indians subscribed to Gandhi's passive resistance and wanted to retaliate against the British for denying them equality. One such leader was Nehru, whom Farson considered a Harrow and Cambridge educated "brilliant communist leader" of the left wing of the Congress who was driven into extremism by a boorish alien ruling class, refusing social equality even to men like himself. However, in his narrative Farson merely mentioned other forces within Indian nationalism. He did not examine their strength or popularity but concentrated primarily on describing the beatings Congress leaders and other "Hindus" invited on themselves in order to shame the British to leave India.⁵²

Farson acknowledged that little attention had been given to the Indian problem in the world press. The information the press conveyed was of "beatings" given to Indians by the British but they soon became old news to the West.⁵³ Clearly, the struggle of the Indian nationalist had not acquired any sustained interest or credibility. Farson's account brings into focus the limitations within which Americans perceived India. As students of Kipling, reproducing British images of India, the American observers were unable to create an alternative vision. Even though Farson found diverse elements within Indian nationalism he did not examine them. India's strangeness, exemplified by Gandhi, seemed more compelling and newsworthy. The tendency on the part of American journalists and writers was to concentrate on visually appealing and marketable images rather than on a substantive examination of the political philosophies of the nationalists and their validity in the Indian context. Instead, they highlighted those aspects which

v. xii no. 1 14-15) But as Lloyd I. Rudolph points out, Gandhi remained a powerful, pervasive, intrusive version of the other in Glazer ed. *Conflicting Images* 165.

⁵² Ibid., 127, 129, 132, 136, 138.

⁵³ Ibid., 137.

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reaffirmed India's deficiencies.

Another journalist who ventured into India in 1936 was Webb Miller, foreign correspondent with the United Press. Like Farson, he too was perplexed by "a rebellion based upon a strange philosophy of non-violence and nonbloodshed" led by Gandhi "...a wizened, 104-pound Hindu lawyer..." who "...inspired millions of underfed, illiterate, unarmed people..." Once again he singled out the lack of vigor as a predominant Indian characteristic, as is visible in his emphasis on the underfed figures of Gandhi and the people he inspired. On witnessing non-violent resistance, Miller "felt an indefinable sense of helpless rage and loathing almost as much against the men who were submitting unresistingly to being beaten..." Miller believed that if the British were driven out of India or forced to relax their supervision, some other power would enter India in the chaos that would inevitably ensue. Miller thus concluded that at this point the British were better equipped than the Indians to govern India.⁵⁴

Farson and Miller, in contrast to Mayo and Kendall, attempted to distance themselves from the British, but reiterated views constructed by the British about India. It is worth noting that they did not ignore Indian nationalism or deny a link between the people and the nationalists. It was the political strategy of the nationalists which was incomprehensible to them. They did not view Gandhi's non-violent philosophy as an effective political weapon but saw it as a symptom of India's inferiority complex. In these representations India's

⁵⁴ Webb Miller, *I Found no Peace* (New York: Garden City, 1938) 189, 194, 218. Unlike Miller, John Haynes Holmes found Gandhi a man of infinite grace and charm. He opposed Miller's desire to bring Gandhi to America because Gandhi's policies were still regarded as fantastic and believed that Gandhi's personality would evoke vulgar curiosity and ribald jesting. *My Gandhi*. 40, 49-54. Holmes highlights the image Gandhi had acquired in mainstream representations in the United States. His recommendation also reflects the inability of people like Holmes to challenge these assumptions and had resort to sheltering Gandhi from being exposed to ridicule.

character and personality traits overshadowed its political aspirations and imposed limitations within which India's nationalism had to function. Another important issue that emerged in their representation of India was the conviction of India's inherent incapacity of defending itself. The nationalists and the illiterate and underfed masses they represented both seemed to lack initiative, judgment and vigor. The lack of masculinity and virility associated with the Hindus would become an overpowering image once India's participation in the war became an issue. None of the observers held imperialism responsible for India's poverty and illiteracy but believed it to be almost entirely an Indian responsibility.

Arthur Goodfriend, a foreign serviceman who later served as a member of the United States Information Agency (USIA) in India, observed India between 1936 and 1958. In 1936 he found himself like the others "plunging into Kipling's India." He too observed streets "thronged with sacred cows" and "half-starved, half naked seemingly human masses" who "suffused the land with their sadness." Even his initiation into the Indian culture in the form of a "three thousand year old ritual dance of Vedic India," evoked revulsion, which he considered "debased, denatured and burlesque." Like Kendall, for Goodfriend, India's cultural debasement could easily have described the entire society and explained India's political susceptibility as well. Like the other journalists, Goodfriend's opinion of Gandhi was one of incredulity that the British power could be challenged by "this little man in a wrinkled *dhoti*." [loincloth] With this insight into India, Goodfriend wondered "how a handful of Englishmen could rule so vast, so populous, so mysterious a land" and concluded that it was the wealth and power of the British which sustained the empire. Consequently, Goodfriend concluded that "odds against

independence seem too great."⁵⁵ The mental and physical limitations of the Indians translated into their political susceptibility as well. By focusing on Gandhi's stature and attire and not on his political philosophy, observers like Goodfriend could not conceive Gandhi as a political force but only as a symbol of India's emasculation. Consequently, most observers were left uncomfortable with and unconvinced by India's political aspirations. Whether such a society could succeed in winning the respect of the American policy makers would remain questionable. In the eyes of these observers, India's problems lay in its social and cultural retardation making it responsible for its own colonization.

These American journalists deployed the same images and arrived at the same conclusions about India. The sight of the sacred cows and the underfed masses, in essence, described and explained India. In fact, these observers seemed to have come prepared to find certain familiar sights and focused almost exclusively on them in order to understand India. Unlike Mayo and Kendall, Farson, Miller and Goodfriend did not seem to be overt admirers of the British but rather reluctant endorsers of their rule. However, in their assessment of India, they did not differ from the two women writers.

From the Western perspective, it seemed that India would become capable of self rule only by abandoning the 'sacred cow' and the 'wrinkled *dhoti*.' Yet, at the same time, Indian tradition and culture seemed to enervate the Indian will, thereby making it impossible for the Indians to emerge as a dynamic, modern people. India, in fact, seemed to make the British seem capable and needed administrators. The concepts of 'self-rule' and 'democracy,' derived from the West and deployed by the nationalists, were never given

⁵⁵ Arthur Goodfriend, *The Twisted Image* (New York: St. Martin, 1963) 51-53, 57-62.

credence because they fell beyond the image of an India with which the American observers seemed comfortable. A vigorless, culturally debased, otherworldly, slow-moving, politically infantile image of the Hindus dominated these discussions.

In the opinion of these observers, there was no acknowledgment of a current American interest or even an anticipation of any future interest. The issue of India's independence remained primarily a British problem. The Americans were detached observers who, in viewing India, tended to emphasize their Westernness more than their American identities. Said has observed that Kipling's India had an essential quality because he deliberately saw India that way. He did not dehumanize the Indians, but placed them in the protective orbit of the British rule. He also established absolute distance between the whites and the non-whites.⁵⁶ Unlike the colonizer, who had devised a paternalistic view of the Indians, the Americans did not have to make this deliberate choice. Yet they accepted Kipling's image of India without question. However, even when they adopted this vision of the Indians, they did not acquire the affection for them in the manner of Kipling and could describe the Indians only as "seemingly human."

Consuls

Until 1941 the United States did not have any representatives in New Delhi, the seat of the British government in India after 1911, which was possibly a symptom of India's political irrelevance to Washington. American consulates, located in the three major cities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras dispatched reports periodically to Washington about India. These reports, in general, did not sympathize with Indian nationalists or their struggle.

⁵⁶ Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 132-161.

American officials remained ardent admirers of British rule in India. They mingled primarily with the British and shared with them their reasoning which confirmed India's inabilities. This close association and affinity with the British, in all probability, insulated the American consuls from the Indians and prevented them from establishing independent opinions or independent political interests.⁵⁷

The reports presented by American consulates in India are another indicator of American opinion of British rule and of the Indian nationalists. In 1920, Consul General in Calcutta, James Smith, reported that "India is governed wisely, justly, humanely" and the British civil servants demonstrate "unselfish spirit of sacrifice in the interest of India..."⁵⁸ Smith did not present the self serving and exploitative aspect of imperialism, but rather emphasized the duty and sacrifice performed by the British towards India. Smith's justification of British rule illustrates the complete identification the consuls made with the British.

The consuls not only endorsed British rule in India but also reiterated British representations of Indian nationalism. Regarding the Indian demand for independence, Consul General in Bombay, Charles H. Hathaway, reported in 1921 that historically there was no sense of unity in India and the Indians were not yet fit to govern themselves. He noted that Gandhi was "purely a

⁵⁷ Earl Robert Schmidt, in his dissertation *American Relations with South Asia, 1900-1940*, presents the financial state of the American consulates. He points out that the consuls could not keep up with their German, French and Russian colleagues, even though in Rangoon, Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras they had their own clubs. Their informational work was directed from South Asia to Washington, but the publicity of American ideals and policies was left to the missionaries and American public opinion groups. 40-44, 370. Ph.D. thesis (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1955). This division of responsibility could have removed any motivation from the consuls to establish relations with the Indians, thus preventing them from expressing American ideals and in the process recognizing their distinct identity.

⁵⁸ Cited in Manoranjan Jha, *Civil Disobedience and After* (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1973) 23.

religious leader" who was opposed to western industrial capitalist civilization and who, by attacking the British, criticized the very "spirit of European civilization." He also warned that if Gandhi's views were endorsed, it "would make completely impossible the rule of any western power," and the faith in the superiority of Asiatic idealism would largely exclude western influence in the further development of Asia.⁵⁹ What seemed primary to officials like Hathaway was the continuation of western influence in India. He did not distance himself or American interests from the imperialist rather, he aligned the Americans and the British as representatives of western civilized ideals. Since American interest was lacking in India, the task of preserving western influence was delegated to the British. Consequently, Gandhi could not be observed as a nationalist trying to dismantle colonial rule but as a threat to western influence in Asia. Like the other observers, these officials did not develop an American perspective to evaluate the possibility of American interest in India.⁶⁰

The consuls further undermined Indian nationalism by presenting it as a factionalized religious idea. Consul Wilbur Keblinger reported from Bombay on May 26, 1927, that leaders of both Hindu and Muslim communities showed a

⁵⁹ Ibid., 24-25.

⁶⁰ Suspicion of western imperialism and racial inequality were dominant in the minds of Indian leaders. At the time the consuls and other observers did not distinguish themselves from the British, the Indians, too, did not notice a difference between the two western powers. As early as 1917, Lajpat Rai, an Indian nationalist identified an imperialist tendency in the United States. Regarding racism he equated the plight of the 'negro' with that of the Indians, both valued by the whites for their labor and services, but not their leadership. *The United States of America: A Hindu's Impressions and a Study* 2nd ed. (Calcutta: R. Chatterjee, 1919) 117-118, 331. In 1927 Nehru articulated similar thoughts about the United States. At the International Congress Against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism held in Brussels, he stated that the problem in the near future will be American imperialism, even more than British imperialism, or the two will join together to create a powerful Anglo-Saxon bloc to dominate the world. in Sarvepalli Gopal's *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography* v. 1 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975) 104 These ideas seem to have aroused no concern among the consuls.

"woeful lack of sincerity." He believed that the communal trouble was only another symptom of the lack of life in the country.⁶¹ Keblinger emphasized not only the religious divisions among the nationalists, but also their lack of vision. The 'lack of life,' inherent in the Indian society seemed to infect its political behavior as well. Similarly, on April 30, 1927 E. Verne Richardson reported from Karachi that politics in India was a ceaseless struggle between a few leaders of the two chief religious communities for the "realization of selfish interests regardless of any consideration of true nationalism."⁶² It should be noted that at this time the consuls seemed to criticize Indian nationalism in its totality and did not favor either community. With the outbreak of the Second World War, this image was modified when the British presented the Muslims as loyal to the British and, unlike the Hindus, a "martial race," willing to fight in the war. Such representations were accepted by the wartime American observers, as we shall see.

The influence of British justifications to deny nationhood to India is evident in the opinions expressed by the American consuls. On March 17, 1928 Consul Robert Frazer reported from Calcutta that India was not one nation but was comprised of four stocks--Aryan, Dravidian, Semitic, and Mongol--representing diverse cultures. He wondered if India was made a self-governing dominion whether all these groups would continue to maintain

⁶¹ United States Department of State, *Records of the Department of State: Decimal File relating to Internal Affairs of India and Burma 1910-1920* (henceforth *U. S. Consular Despatches*) 845.00/591.

⁶² According to Peter Van der Veer the Orientalists defined religious community as a 'nation.' Indian civilization was supposedly founded on a Hindu religious ideology and the Muslims were seen as not belonging. This knowledge denied India and its inhabitants unity of common history and common territory and questioned India's claim of nationhood. 24, 28 According to Talal Asad, historically, boundaries between the religious communities in South Asia had been fluid and the identities of members of neighboring communities had overlapped. "Religion and Politics: An Introduction" in *Social Research* v. 59, no. 1 (Spring 1992) 11. The consuls had accepted the orientalist definition of India.

harmony among themselves. Whereas the British had emphasized religious and social differences in questioning India's unity, Frazer added racial divisions to deny nationhood to India. Frazer believed that the worst indictment that critics of Britain could make against them was the insignificant progress they had made in the education of the masses.⁶³ Frazer's criticism was not aimed at British imperialism in India but its imperfections.

Another image which had acquired widespread acceptance among the Americans was that of the physical weakness and docility of the Indians. In maintaining the idea of this "gender identification" the British played up their need to be more masculine. While the British may have created the image of effeminate and passive Indians, Americans posted in India readily adopted this notion. This stereotype served well Britain's political purpose of justifying their masculine assertion over the passive Indians. American observers in India tended to include themselves in this separation. Cyril L. Thiel, vice consul in Calcutta, on June 8, 1925 reported on the subject of physical culture and outdoor recreation in India. He believed that physical culture was neglected in India and that it had taken the western world to demonstrate that the pursuit of physical culture is an art that brings real happiness to mankind.⁶⁴ Francis Hutchins has provided insights into the value attached to sports by the British colonial officials. Sports were not viewed as merely frivolous activities but served a larger moral purpose. Games provided the best training in leadership and prepared the British to fit into the masculine society of British India.⁶⁵ A lack of interest in physical exercise provided

⁶³ United States Department of State, *U.S. Consular Despatches* 845.00/618.

⁶⁴ United States Department of State, *U.S. Consular Despatches* 845.4063.

⁶⁵ Hutchins, 43-45. Hutchins points out that the notion of sports as providing training in leadership may have had its origin among the British in India. It is logical to assume that the Americans posted in India would adopt this

more proof of India's lack of masculinity and leadership qualities. These characteristics which gave the British definition and helped distinguish them from the Indians were also accepted by the Americans. Not only did it enhance their own self definition but it also increased the distance between themselves and the Indians.

Following the trend established by the British and adopted by the Americans, the consuls reiterated India's lack of dynamism and innate inability to change. On June 30, 1923 T. M. Wilson, the consul in Bombay, in his report on matters of economic interest there, concluded that only after spending time in this city was he convinced that the "rush and hurry" he first noticed was artificial. It was more a "disordered haste" with which people had seized upon the new modes of living but in fact they were "slow to initiate and adapt."⁶⁶ Wilson's observations bring to light a denial of any aspect in India which could disprove India's established characteristics. For the colonizer, this approach could have been adopted deliberately, as Said has discovered in Kipling. But for the Americans, the motives were not so tangible. The attitudes adopted by the consuls suggest the controlling power of the knowledge created by the colonizer. American observers, in keeping with British attitudes, tended to define themselves by emphasizing their difference from the Indians. This necessity could have prevented an American or any Western observer from formulating alternative thoughts on India. An acceptance of any positive element in India seemed to threaten the very image the West had built of itself in this comparison. In this respect, the consuls aligned themselves with the British, and while living in a colonial environment they seem to have adapted themselves to the colonial frame of mind.

reasoning to define their own identity as westerners.

⁶⁶ United States Department of State, *U.S. Consular Despatches* 845.50/9.

American officials, like the writers and journalists discussed previously, clearly endorsed British rule in India as keepers of western influence in a society which needed and required this intervention. They agreed with the British that the Indians were unfit to rule themselves. Commenting on communal riots between Hindus and Muslims, Consul Edward M. Groth reported from Calcutta in 1935 that it was a "difficult and thankless task which Britain faces as a peace-maker in this country."⁶⁷ American interest in India's independence was definitely lacking at this time. In 1937, Cordell Hull, the American Secretary of State, exemplified this view when he stated:

...I, nor my country, would in any circumstances see anything said or done which would weaken a single link in the British empire; that it was the greatest stabilizer of human affairs in the world today; that it meant everything to the future of human progress and civilization for the British Empire to continue to function for the service of the human race, as well as itself.⁶⁸

The United States' lack of interest in India during this period is reflected in this image of India. The acceptance of the British as propagators of human progress helped solidify American approval of British rule in India. Clearly, the Indian nationalists did not possess attributes of progress or civilization. The inert masses and unlikely leadership meant that India's impulse towards independence was lacking and misguided. For the Americans, this was not a familiar world with familiar political behavior. A British brigadier informed Goodfriend that the British flatter, bribe and sometimes frighten the leaders--*maharajas*, upperclass, and the educated,--while the rabble do as they are told.⁶⁹ The consuls may have endorsed British rule in India wholeheartedly,

⁶⁷ Jha, 235.

⁶⁸ *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1937 v. 2 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954) 13-14. Memorandum by the Secretary of State (Hull) of his conversation with a Canadian Minister on the question of Empire Preference on February 18, 1937.

⁶⁹ Goodfriend, 57.

but the journalists seemed at best resigned to British justifications. These assessments highlighted certain aspects of Indian society, which became the focus for all observers, thereby, making it practically impossible to examine India outside the framework of these images.

The impact of entrenched images is visible even among those who seemed sympathetic to India. Writer John Gunter is one such example. His assessment of India, published in 1939, establishes a link between pre-war and wartime observations of India. Unlike most observers, Gunther found Gandhi an astute politician and recognized his non-violent philosophy as a practical weapon in an unarmed nation. But he also considered Gandhi a "slippery fellow," and a "unique kind of dictator" who ruled by love. These epithets could easily reinforce the accepted perception of the Indian mind as elusive and Indian traditions as undemocratic without necessarily converting Gandhi into a legitimate political force. Like the other observers, Gunther described India as a land of caste, holy cattle, religious fanaticism and dissociated the Muslims from this India. Gunther's distance from an eastern culture became apparent when he distanced a westernized Indian, namely Nehru, whom he considered a modern man of reason and rationality, from the colossal medievalism of India. Gunther's opinion of the British was also ambiguous. Regarding British attitude towards communal tension in India, Gunther argued that as humanitarians and men of the West the British deplored it, but as imperialists they found it a useful convenience.⁷⁰ Gunther, like Bromfield, even though critical of British imperialism, associated positive ideas with men of the West and with men trained in western ways.

The opinions expressed by these observers in India were mostly

⁷⁰ John Gunther, *Inside Asia* (New York: Harper, 1939) 344-346, 354, 401, 403, 408.

adaptations of British views on India, primarily of Hindu India, and no meaningful American distinction from the British is apparent. At this time, the Americans seemed to observe India more as Westerners than as Americans. Their opinions may not have directly contributed to the imperial condition, but they certainly hindered any serious questions being raised about British imperialism. The British, as colonizers, may have made a deliberate choice to expose certain aspects of India, but the American observers seem to have accepted these opinions unquestioningly, consequently making the images more stark and uncontestable. In the process, these Americans may have added a new vitality to the knowledge about India in the United States.

Americans accentuated differences with the "other" in order to make a firm distinction between themselves and the Indians. This practice resulted partially from the Americans being enamored of the British. But the acceptance of their differences with India were also expressed by those who were ideologically opposed to British imperialism and the decadence brought on by that imperialism. American opposition to British imperialism never became related to their opinion of the imperialized. The western popular image makers wrote about the Indians as if they were entirely devoid of life and culture, thereby defining them collectively, but without acknowledging their humanness.

Before the outbreak of the war the Americans' justification of British colonial rule can easily be considered within the framework of Said and Bhabha's discussion of colonial discourse and within the framework of racist ideology discussed by Hunt. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, these observers had assumed superiority over India and focused on those images of India which not only confirmed India's inferiority, but also their own cultural superiority. They did not dispute the benevolence of the West in providing

'progress' to the colonized and they gave credit to Britain for preventing a society from disintegrating into chaos. Consequently, nationalists like Gandhi were denied legitimacy because their rootedness in India's stagnation seemed a requisite for the West to retain its superior position. Before the outbreak of the war, the United States may not have participated in the colonization of India but the Americans certainly endorsed British rule in India.

Chapter 3

Perceptions Formulated in the 1940s

America's involvement in the Second World War produced a change in the American perspective on India. No longer was it feasible to observe India only as a ward of the British. The necessity of India's cooperation in the war and America's disillusionment with British imperialism held the possibility for the wartime observers to reevaluate their existing notions about India. The question to be addressed in this chapter is whether in light of these developments, America's understanding of India deviated from the established course. Were the wartime observers able to translate their misgivings about the British to articulate distinct interests rather than continuing their identification with the British and condoning their rule in India?

Journalists/Writers and Military Officials--1942-1945

With the coming of the war more correspondents, military and political observers visited India and wrote comprehensively and extensively about the Indian political situation. In fact, India's growing importance led to a deeper probing into the Indian culture and society in order to evaluate the Indian capability to contribute in the war and to understand Indian nationalism.

The manner in which these Americans observed India may not have changed but some change had definitely occurred in the American attitude towards the British. If the wartime observers continued to find India incapable and unprepared for self rule, many also articulated problems with British imperialism. Opinions of some military officials and journalists have been selected for evaluation in this section. Whereas, the attention of the military officials centered mainly on the impact of political problems in India on the

conduct of the war, the journalists and writers extensively examined the Indian society in order to assess India's ability to achieve independence. Those observers who questioned British imperialism developed a different perspective on America's role in India. The military officials, in particular, separated themselves from the British colonial culture and professed a distinct American self image and interests. In this respect, in contrast to the pre-war observers, their evaluations of India produced different strains of thought. However, in their basic conceptualizations of India, these observers assumed a more encompassing Western identity which often blurred their self professed distinctions from the British.

Military Officials

In general American military officials, posted away from the center of power, did not view the British with admiration. Their misgivings about British imperialism in India became more pronounced with Britain's reversals in the war. To Fred Eldridge, who served with General Joseph Stilwell in the China-India-Burma Theater, the British were not a distant but an immediate reality, and his criticism was based on this reality. Unlike American consuls, the military officials assessed the British not as colonial administrators but as soldiers. Consequently, their major concern was not British colonial rule in India but British performance in the war. According to Eldridge, the "*burra sahibs*" [British lords and masters in India] spent most of their time second guessing their defeats in the war over glasses of gimlet. They lived a good life and dismissed the Japanese as 'bloody rats' who would not last long against a white man's army even if that army was using brown men as cannon fodder.¹ Evidently, Eldridge believed that the colonial rulers, instead of maintaining

¹ Fred Eldridge, *Wrath in Burma* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1946) 18, 32.

western ideals of masculinity and purposefulness, had regressed into a decadent mode of behavior, rejoicing in being "*burra sahibs*" to the natives, blind to the war. On the other hand, Americans, unscathed by colonialism, had retained their vision and purpose.

But if Eldridge presented a critical perspective on British colonial rulers he also confirmed a lack of American interest in India. He pointed out that Americans posted in India probably did not think much about the contradictions of fighting a war to free and democratize the white people while maintaining imperial status quo for the imperialized brown people. In this indifference Eldridge recognized a major threat to the influence of the West in Asia. He pointed out that John Davies, Stilwell's political advisor, feared the effectiveness of the Japanese propaganda of 'Asia for the Asiatics.' The incompetence of the British in the war and the growing anti-white sentiment made Davies and Eldridge recognize the need to dissociate themselves from the colonizer.² Unlike the consuls, and most pre-war observers, Eldridge had separated American interests from those of the colonizer's. However, they did not seem to accept 'Asia for Asiatics.'

The problems Eldridge encountered with the British are visible in most

² The fear of Pan-Asianism was expressed in both England and the United States. Churchill on February 3, 1942, was concerned at the possible consequence of Chiang Kai-shek's visit to New Delhi. He foresaw a spread of 'pan-Asian malaise through all the bazaars of India.' In a memo, Lord Privy Seal Clement Attlee stated that with Russia's defeat by Japan the acceptance of the superiority of the European over the Asiatics had sustained a severe blow. He believed that the reverses sustained by the Allied forces would contribute to the process that the East was asserting itself. (Nicholas Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power*, v. 1 110-111, 114) The rise of Pan-Asianism had concerned the Americans as well. Hull wrote in his memoirs that American position among the Asiatic peoples would be adversely affected by a belief on their part that 'we' were helping Great Britain maintain her imperial policy in the Orient. (Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* v. 2 (New York: MacMillan, 1948) 1482.

The war had created this awareness among the Americans, which was frequently expressed by American military officials posted in Asia.

American observers associated with the war. John King Fairbank, who served as Special Assistant to the American Ambassador in Chungking and the Office of War Information from 1941 to 1946, points to problems in the Anglo-American alliance due to American disenchantment and suspicion of British colonialism. He believed that the "outward show" of "servants and empire" was accompanied with "fever and diarrhea." But the Indians figured no better in his assessment. His criticism was not directed at all Asians but specifically at the Indians. Unlike the vigorous, smiling Chinese, he found the Indians timorous, cowering creatures, too delicate to fight. Unlike the Chinese, who met the Americans on equal terms, the Indians remained servile to the British.³ Isaacs presents the pervasiveness of this sentiment among the American servicemen posted in Asia who addressed the Indians as 'wogs.' "Wogs were all those brown unsmiling people who cluttered up in a hot and stinking country." To these men, Isaacs points out, adaptation to life in India usually meant, in some form or another, a gradual acceptance of the idea that "these miserable people were less than human."⁴ By referring to the Indians as 'creatures,' these servicemen, like many American observers, had lowered the Indians below the level of the accepted 'childlike' to a subhuman level.

Fairbanks seemed frustrated with India for not challenging its colonial rulers aggressively. He distinguished the attitudes and characteristics of the two Asian peoples but not their political and historical circumstances. His assessment showcases the inability of Americans to relate their opposition of British colonialism to its impact on the condition of the colonized. These

³ John King Fairbank, *China Bound* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982) 189-192.

⁴ Harold A. Isaacs, *No Peace for Asia* (Cambridge: M. I. T. Press, 1967) 10-11. William Fischer recorded in *Life* magazine that American enlisted men did not like life in India though he contends that they were friendly to the Indians. "Yanks Make a History in India" (January 1, 1943) 11-14.

observers seemed to criticize imperialism for its debilitating impact on the British character rather than show sympathy for the imperialized. Regarding India, it was the inherent Indian trait of passivity and servility which remained central to American criticism. It prevented men like Fairbanks from regarding Indian nationalism as a symbol of resistance against the British. Indians, fixed in the image of cowering creatures, from a political perspective demonstrated their inability to meet the West on equal terms, and from the military point of view, could not be of material use. It is not clear whether these Americans formulated their opinions independently or with the help of British propaganda, but their opinion was likely to become a factor in Washington. These officers would become inadvertent cohorts of British colonialism even as they professed their differences from the colonizer.

John Davies' discussion of India focuses on a period in which Cripps Mission led to a debate on India's prospective independence. This period has generally been considered the most active phase of American involvement in India. But Davies pointed out that Stilwell had no one on his staff well informed about India, yet counted on India as a vital staging and production area for China. Americans were vaguely aware of India's disaffection from the British Raj, but had little knowledge of how seriously the British position was being challenged.⁵

Davies, stationed in India, considered himself better informed about the country. In his estimation, he was at the center of action whereas the officials in Washington, observing India from the periphery, lacked a true perspective on India. Davies expressed his reservations about Roosevelt's suggestion to Churchill, made on March 10, 1942, that Britain constitute for India an interim government similar to the thirteen colonies in America under the Articles of

⁵ John Paton Davies, *Dragon by the Tail* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972) 235.

Confederation. Davies reasoned that what had been good for American colonists would not be good for Indian colonials, smoldering with "ancient explosive antagonisms of race, religion and caste." Davies, with his insight into India, disagreed with Roosevelt's acceptance of India as a nation because Indians, with their "diverse outlook, subjectivity, persecution complexes, yielded no coherent explanation of what India was."⁶ .

Davies' assessment of India suggests that the opinions about India expressed by the war time observers had not changed. However, his views also indicate that American interest in India had become linked to the change in American perception of the British. On June 4, 1942, after the collapse of the Cripps Mission, when the general American opinion of India had deteriorated, Davies informed Stilwell that American presence in India contributed to British domination and led the Indians to anticipate no political support from the United States. On June 18, 1942, he informed Laughlin Currie, administrative assistant to the President, that the British would not conciliate unless prodded by Washington.⁷ The policies adopted by the American administration will be analyzed in the later chapters. But, recommendations made by officials like Davies were based more on a recognition of America's emerging differences with Britain in terms of their power and interests than in acceptance of the Indian aspirations. The policy makers were introduced to such criticisms of British imperialism, but these assessments remained unrelated to opinions about India that were conveyed to them. In their criticism of both Britain and India, Americans like Davies had discovered a distinct self image and separate national interests, and informed the political elite about this discovery. But their assessments, even though recommending a

⁶ Ibid., 235, 237.

⁷ Ibid., 238.

distance from the British, remained critical of India. Davies wanted to preserve America's image in India yet he criticized the Indians. These opinions prevented the policy makers in Washington from developing a defined and clearcut policy towards India.

Edmund Taylor, attached to the South East Asia Command (SEAC), examined the relationship between the British and the Americans in India in 1943, after the demise of the Cripps Mission. Like his fellow officers, his observations reaffirmed the problems American posted in Asia had begun to articulate about the British. Taylor pointed out that to the Americans associated with Stilwell's command, Lord Mountbatten was the "Glamor-Boy of South East Asia" and a "Chocolate Sailor," an image contrary to the rugged masculinity associated with the colonizer. The British may have created this image of themselves but seemed to have lost it to the Americans. Free of formal imperial trappings, Americans established a greater distance between themselves and the British in terms of their own self definition and national interests. General Stilwell, according to Taylor, did not believe in the goals of the empire and avoided the appearance of the war as being fought between white and yellow races. Taylor's view, that the Americans distrusted the empire, even those with greater race superiority and color prejudice than the British,⁸ summed up the general American attitude towards India. Even though acknowledging problems with British imperialism, Americans stationed in India assumed a prejudicial attitude towards the colonized.

Taylor's views about India are not neatly defined but filled with complexities and subtleties. He believed that political experts in the West had built up a mythical Indian world composed of questions and themes instead of

⁸ Edmond Taylor, *Richer by Asia* 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964) 32, 38-39, 95.

human beings. He acknowledged that the West was living in insulation in India, and that their only contact with the natives was through the bearer, who shaped their image of Asia.⁹ Taylor displayed an awareness of the bind the West had imposed upon itself regarding India. His observation are revealing in that Americans stationed in India may have developed an overarching image of the country based on preconceived notions and also their limited access into Indian lives.

Throughout his account Taylor was conscious of images of India popular in the West and seemed to resist the temptation to succumb to them. He resolved the problem by displaying deficiencies not only in India but also in Britain and America.¹⁰ Taylor was angered at the "cold, beefy arrogance and sterility of British imperialism in India." He disagreed with the British logic that Indians had no sense of public morality and were unfit to govern themselves. He recognized the loss of Indian dignity at being slighted by the British and in the process recognized the similar position the Negro was placed in America.¹¹ However, his criticism of British imperialism did not mean that the Indians and the Americans could be absolved of their shortcomings. He highlighted the American hypocrisy of fighting for democracy abroad while denying it to the Negro at home. He also pointed out the hypocrisy of the caste Hindu for crying against British oppression while he himself oppressed the Untouchable. India was the "pathological museum of modern society" which exhibited every form of human aggression, every aberration of human reason and every ideology of disunity. Whatever incurable separation of man the Asiatic mind had failed to produce, the western mind supplied it in the

⁹ Ibid., 150-151, 163-164.

¹⁰ Ibid., 28, 150-151, 169.

¹¹ Ibid., 5, 101-102.

institution of imperialism.¹²

In following this pattern of examination Taylor seemed to have freed himself from the limitations imposed by British as well as American attitudes towards India. Instead of merely targeting India he exposed inadequacies in each culture. However, in his exposition of India he seemed unable to escape from images to which he objected. Taylor reduced the stature of the British and the Americans but proportionately lowered the Indians as well. He was critical of western attitudes and practices, but regarding India, he focused his attention on unravelling the Indian mind. In the process, he constructed a psychological profile in which the irrational and aggressive tendencies became a permanent fixture in the Indian personality which imperialism merely compounded. Further, in a letter Taylor wrote home about India he described witnessing "promiscuous association" of man and beast. "There was no sharp dividing line between the human and animal kingdom." Cows and dogs were simply animal members of the Indian community.¹³ Perhaps subconsciously, Taylor had resorted to the notion of India's promiscuity with which many western writers of India were fixated. Mayo had concerned herself with the resultant disease and physical unfitness of the Indians. In contrast, Taylor let his observations stand on their own, open to interpretations and inferences. Taylor had reproduced an image, perhaps subtly suggesting what many American observers of India had overtly stated--India's subhumaness.

Taylor continued to highlight those aspects of India which were entrenched in the western thought. In the process he assigned to India larger Asian tendencies and also singled out some defined Indian characteristics. He

¹² Ibid., 168.

¹³ Ibid., 61.

believed that Asia was a land fettered by changeless tradition and misery. He seemed resigned to the fact that India was unable to challenge British imperialism and that it consoled itself with memories of ancient glory. Further, Taylor confirmed that in India progress was totally absent--Indians were content to use the tools their forefathers used. Yet he also added that that the slumber in Asia was constantly stirred by dreams of the future and nightmares of the past. In the case of India he believed that "we go to India expecting nightmares."¹⁴ However, despite acknowledging the trend in western thought Taylor reproduced the same nightmares.

Like most observers, Taylor highlighted India's unwillingness and inability to change. He reasoned that India's lack of progress was a result of its culture which the Asiatic people were loathe to change. This aspect of India had drawn relentless criticism in the West but Taylor chose to display tolerance towards it. He pointed out that it was impossible to possess "soul value" and at the same time devise methods of keeping track of efficient running of the locomotives. The same men who discovered the law of karma could not be expected to discover how the atom can be split. He believed that Gandhi's greatness was undoubtedly the byproduct of India's backwardness.¹⁵ Taylor's assessment can be considered a resistance to the British justification to reform the Indians and also an attempt to reinstate India's spiritual qualities which most western observers criticized. However, Taylor also imprisoned India in an image of inherent stagnation. Since India possessed "soul force" it could not achieve material growth. Undoubtedly, Taylor displayed tolerance towards a culture which possessed spirituality but which also exhibited "every aberration of human reason." Unlike most observers he believed that West

¹⁴ Ibid., 48-50, 186.

¹⁵ Ibid., 385, 394, 406.

could learn from India but his interpretations also implied that India could not learn from the West. By pitting India's spirituality against West's materiality Taylor subtly, but effectively, emphasized the "otherness" of India. Westerners could venture into a materially stagnant India for spiritual rejuvenation and then depart for their progressive and modernized cultures.

Among the military officials selected for an evaluation, Taylor is the only observer who provided a detailed assessment of Indian politics and identified the Indian nationalists. However, he reiterated the generally accepted opinions about them. Taylor considered Indian politics an emotional and intellectual muddle. He was confused by the fact that the Indians revered Gandhi but disagreed with his economics, admired Nehru but found him too westernized. What could have been interpreted as a healthy pluralism in a democratic society and a valid search for a national identity, was characterized by Taylor as a 'muddle' in India. Taylor's vision of a land chained to the past prevented him from accepting India as emulating western ideas and the nationalists employing rational concepts to oppose white domination. It should be remembered that Taylor wrote at a time when the Indian National Congress had been implicated for irrationally rejecting the Cripps Mission. He conceded that like most westerners he had considered Nehru self righteous and unreasoning and criticized the Indian nationalists for frivolously rejecting Cripps' proposals.¹⁶ Taylor blamed western interpretations of India for influencing his views. However, in his account, he failed to provide an alternative explanation. He atoned for West's misconceptions about India by bounding the country in another stereotype--in the realm of spirituality.

Taylor believed that the British had consciously and deliberately ~~maneuvered~~ to keep Indian politics divided. However, he also argued that

¹⁶ Ibid., 13, 95, 120-121, 126.

without deliberate attempt the British rendered the Indian character weak and filled the Indian mind with nightmares.¹⁷ Even though Taylor denounced British imperialism, he also affirmed the Indian character as irrational, weak and dillusional. Imperialism could be dismantled but a mindset became a permanent condition. Even though he acknowledged why not accept contradictions and tentativeness of India; why not practice the noble disciplines of bewilderment and irrelevance, he was unable to put these recommendations to practice.¹⁸ As an American, Taylor could criticize imperialism on moral grounds and question British right to rule India, but as a westerner, imbued with entrenched images of India, he could not escape from those interpretations. In the final analysis, Taylor shared his conclusions about India with most Americans. He could not escape from what he objected to--"When we despair of understanding Indian politics we are tempted to conclude that they are desperate and so we create negatives."¹⁹

However, unlike most observers, Taylor also articulated problems with American attitudes towards other cultures. He considered it an American failure to believe that people did things for or against the United States and as a consequence regarded India's refusal to cooperate in the war a betrayal.²⁰ This introspection remained more or less confined to Taylor. American withdrawal from active involvement in India's independence after the failure of the Cripps Mission was a result of their sense of betrayal by India. But, opinions constructed by thoughtful observers like Taylor could not have helped the Indian cause in America. Taylor was unable to bridge the gap between India and the West.

¹⁷ Ibid., 151.

¹⁸ Ibid., 166.

¹⁹ Ibid., 119.

²⁰ Ibid., 164.

A major feature in the assessment of the American military officials was their contempt for British colonial rulers and criticism of their performance in the war. These Americans were also conscious of the rise of anti-white sentiment in Asia and desired to dissociate themselves from the imperialists. But the Indian nationalists seemed unreasonable in their demands and equally inept. The image of weak and servile Indians, enmeshed in old traditions, surfaced repeatedly in most discussions. Most officials did not view Indians as individuals but lumped them together in this essentialized image. They criticized the British but also remained uncomfortable with the Indians. The two American opinions, one of the colonizer and the other of the colonized, developed separately, inviting disdain towards both. Importantly, in professing their distinctness from the British, these observers may have also assumed that their opinions of India as independent constructions. In the process, India had acquired an American perspective but one that was still infused with popular western conceptions of India's people and culture.

Journalists

The American journalists who ventured into India during the war concentrated on interpreting Indian nationalism. They relied on the study of Indian society and culture in order to evaluate India's aspiration for independence. Unlike the military officials, the journalists remained observers of the British and not their wartime colleagues. Consequently, they viewed the British from a different perspective. Their views developed more in the context of British colonial rule in India than in relation to their performance in the war. Their perceptions of India's culture did not change, however, their attitude towards British imperialism influenced their response to India's nationalism.

Eve Curie, a writer and journalist, visited India in 1942.²¹ Her trip coincided with the Cripps Mission. Much hope was placed at this time in the United States on the success of the Mission. Curie began her journey into India with her confrontation with 'Hindu' nationalism which, she believed, desired to establish Hindu domination in India. Interestingly, Hindu nationalism was progressively acquiring a threatening, undemocratic, emotionally charged image which was contrary to the passivity assigned to its followers. Curie was disappointed with the Indian nationalists for failing to recognize the significance of the war and for spouting bitter hatred against the British and Americans.²² But for Curie, the frame of reference was the committed French resistance, to which she referred frequently. It was not the British but the Axis Powers who were the real enemies. In view of this fact, the bitter hatred the nationalists spouted against the British and Americans, in her account, took on an irrational tone. Unlike the military observers, she did not criticize British performance in the war or separate American interests from those of the British. Instead she focused primarily on problems within Indian nationalism. By presenting the nationalists as threatening and irrational, Curie made the Indian aspirations even more suspect.

Even though the military observers questioned India's abilities, they did not dissociate the nationalists from common people. In fact, with the exception of Taylor, they did not even discuss the nationalist leaders. Curie, on the other hand, added another dimension to the problems in Indian nationalism. She presented two separate Indias, one obsessed by its 'mystical dream' and indifferent to the world, and the other, 'nationalist' India,

²¹ Eve Curie witnessed the fall of France in 1940 and worked for the cause of Free France. Because of her pro-ally activities she was deprived of her French citizenship by the Vichy government. She went to the United States in 1941.

²² Eve Curie, *Journey among Warriors* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran, 1943) 293-294, 413.

planning independence after the war. In the mystical India she found people apathetic and believed that their poverty was responsible for their indifference. Curie considered their poverty a result of poor administration and inexpensive government of the British which had created unemployment and illiteracy. However, Curie also pointed out that India's miseries were compounded by superstition and religious fanaticism.²³ Importantly, Curie criticized the imperfections of British colonial rule but did not oppose the institution of the British Raj. In fact, in view of her opinion of India, she believed that the country needed British rule otherwise it would remain trapped within its superstitions and traditions. Her observation of the "secure"²⁴ looking sacred cows confirmed India's obsession with the past and meaningless cultural traditions. Curie seemed unable to express any sympathy for India and in her descriptions maintained an absolute distance from its people.

In most evaluations, a powerful image of an indifferent and poverty stricken India, adhering to obsolete traditions, provided confirmation of the country's regressive culture. These images received disproportionate attention and prevented concrete debates about British colonialism from emerging. Most observers did not present Indians as individuals but bound them within a collectivity which defined India. But the presence of nationalism threatened to undermine the assumptions of India's cultural and political stagnation. Curie resolved the issue by presenting two distinct Indias, each unrelated to the

²³ Ibid., 409-410.

²⁴ Ibid., 297-298. Curie's lack of criticism of imperialism echoes the sentiment of J. S. Mill. Mill stated that "There are conditions of society in which a vigorous despotism is in itself the best mode of government for training the people in what is specifically wanting to render them capable of a higher civilization." Despotism is required where "...there [is] no spring of spontaneous improvement in the people themselves..." (J. S. Mill, "Representative Government [1861] *Three Essays* [1975] , p. 408-409. Cited in Talal Asad "Religion and Politics... 12

other. This perspective diminished the scope and strength of nationalism. She further presented the nationalists as firmly divided on religious lines, proclaiming different political futures. To the Hindu dominated Congress independence meant one India but not to the Muslim League. Curie further undermined the strength of the Congress by presenting the Sikhs, the untouchables and the princes as completely outside its fold, needing and preferring British rule. With this insight into India Curie seemed unsure whether the Cripps Mission could succeed.²⁵ Interestingly, Churchill used the same argument and the same language to describe the problem in India to Roosevelt. Curie could have acquired this vocabulary from the British in India. Importantly, by providing graphic images of apathetic and superstitious masses, and a deeply divided nationalist movement, Curie undermined those leaders who had so far been perceived as national spokesmen for India. Furthermore, by concentrating on the Indians she deflected attention away from the British.

Curie also presented the views of the nationalists, particularly the Hindu nationalists, but at the same time exposed the hollowness of their claims. She cited Gandhi's views, published in the *Harijan* on May 24, 1942, criticizing both the Americans and the British for lacking the moral basis to fight in the war until they withdrew their influence and power from both Africa and Asia. But Curie had already established the irrationality of the Hindu nationalists for demanding independence at a time the war was being fought to preserve democracy. The issue of growing anti-white sentiment in Asia, articulated by the military officials, did not concern Curie. She also introduced her audience to Nehru's beliefs and his impressions of the United States by citing from Nehru's own writings. In a letter Nehru had written to his daughter in 1933,

²⁵ Curie, 415, 438.

he had stated that the Americans were not colonizers but economic imperialists, interested in creating an invisible empire. But Curie marginalized Nehru's concerns by denying him the status of a viable political leader. She believed that Nehru, like most Hindus she encountered, was confused and evasive. He was unable to outline with precision a political chart to iron out differences between the Muslims, untouchables and the princes. She further undermined Nehru's legitimacy among his own people by distinguishing him from other nationalists as a modern thinker of a "purely western variety", "a Marxist socialist leader" of a medieval and deeply spiritual India. India was in the heart of Asia and he was trying to solve her problems with a western idea in a western way.²⁶

The association of Nehru's positive qualities with the West and his negative aspects as part of his Eastern personality became a part of the general American formula to understand Nehru. Nehru would be praised and criticized accordingly. Perhaps it was because of the perception formed by observers like Curie, that traditional and superstitious India would continue to defeat Nehru's 'western' attributes, which undermined Nehru's relevance in the West. Furthermore, by denying Nehru a political status among his own people, Curie delegitimized a leader who possessed those attributes which most western observers demanded from the Indian nationalists. Trained under the British system of education, imbued with Western ideas and values, Nehru could have emerged as a viable candidate to assume power. But Nehru was overshadowed by an even more powerful India made up of passive and subservient masses.

²⁶ Ibid., 420, 425, 428, 430. In an article titled "Nehru of India," John and Frances Gunther reported that Nehru detested the medievalism of India. He was not only fighting the British but the entrenched ritualism of his own people. *Life Magazine* (December 11 1939) 93-101.

Curie's arrangement of Nehru's personality is particularly significant. It introduces the reasoning applied by many Western observers to reaffirm their convictions about India. Most Americans assumed that as a westernized Indian Nehru would fail because he would not be able to identify with his own people. But Nehru's western attributes also challenged British justifications to continue their rule to further train and instruct the natives to adopt western ways. Consequently, Nehru's eastern personality and his Hindu mind were conveniently resurrected, to place him within the Indian tradition and raise doubts about his convictions. Curie may or may not have developed this argument deliberately, but her assessment does provide an insight into how single mindedly India could be observed in the West. India's incompatibility with the West and inability to change had been so overwhelmingly ingrained in the western thought that any element which could disturb this image of a changeless India was obscured or undermined.

Curie also presented the Muslim League and its leader Mohammad Ali Jinnah as a factor in Indian politics. Whereas the American consuls in the Pre-war period had described both religious factions and their political agendas as unreasonable, Curie believed that Jinnah showed that the Muslim problem was real and not a creation of British imagination. In view of these findings she concluded that the British did not follow the policy of divide and rule but had taken concrete steps to create a representative government in India.²⁷ Curie's arguments regarding the Muslim demands were made at a time when the British were introducing similar ideas to the American officials in Washington. In view of all the problems identified with Indian nationalism, American officials commended the Cripps Mission, questioned the claims of the Congress and rejected Louis Johnson's espousal of the Congress' cause.

²⁷ Ibid., 458, 464.

The images and ideas about India in the United States became more pronounced in American newspapers during the period following the collapse of the Cripps Mission. Herbert L. Matthews, correspondent for the *New York Times* covered India from July 1942 to July 1943. During this period Gandhi and Nehru were arrested for planning a civil disobedience movement. American interest in India had ebbed and Matthews commentary on the Indian society and political developments was a reflection of America's disenchantment and anger at India's failure to accept Cripps' proposals. Matthews wrote in a prestigious newspaper and his views found a receptive audience in both the official circles and in the general public.²⁸ His observations provide an insight into the investment Americans had made in the success of the Cripps Mission and in its failure discovered anew India's social, cultural and political deficiencies.

Comments made by Matthews are indicative of how firmly entrenched certain images of India had become in American thought. His impressions are a reiteration of the accepted characteristics of India, only more vociferously, comprehensively and authoritatively stated. In Matthews' account there was no ambiguity or introspection. The rejection of Cripps' proposals was an irrational act, a betrayal of American ideals and interests, an explanation of which Matthews found in the Indian society itself. In Matthews' analysis, the images of India, presented by the other observers came together in all their dimensions to explain India's political behavior. He inspected India from a superior and authoritative position and often lectured Indians on how to gain western acceptance. He argued that unlike the Indians, as a foreigner, he was

²⁸ Betty Miller Unterberger, "American Views of Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the Pakistan Liberation Movement," *Diplomatic History* 5.4 (Fall 1981) Unterberger considers Matthews' coverage balanced and objective. She also points out that the State Department paid close attention to Matthews' reports and respected his opinions. 313-336.

able to have some objectivity and to embrace a wide view.²⁹ In this respect, Matthews effectively silenced the Indians as subjective and inward looking and denied them the capacity to define themselves or their interests.

In Matthews' vision there seemed to be a firm demarcation and an impossibility of communication between India and the West. He pointed out that it was in India that he realized how little 'our' Western philosophy applied to the East, and how hopeless it was to try to foist upon the Asians a way of life and government that did not conform to their profound beliefs and customs. Asia's future was for the Asians to determine.³⁰ This statement, even though maintaining an absolute distance from the East, can be interpreted as an acknowledgment of the aspirations of another culture to determine its own future. Matthews may have re-evaluated his position because this acknowledgment is made in his later work. But in 1946 he seemed unable to accept, what can be understood as the failure of the West to reform the East. "It was not part of our world, and we just did not care about it".³¹

Matthews began his search for India in the "horrors of climate and disease, of ignorance and filth," within which he discovered the 'Hindu,' whom he considered both mild and full of hatred. The Hindu view was different from 'ours', they were inward looking, desiring an escape from life into nothingness. Like most western observers, he wondered how could a British or an American understand the sacredness of the cow. He concluded that India of Kipling's time was still with "us and our wisdom lies in recognizing that 'never the twain shall meet.'"³² In accepting Kipling's dictum, Matthews

²⁹ Herbert Matthews, *A World in Revolution* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1971) 154.

³⁰ Matthews, *A World in...* 153.

³¹ Herbert Matthews, *The Education of a Correspondent* 1st ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946) 215.

³² Matthews, *The Education* ... 226, 252, 263-264, 266 Indian nationalist Lajpat

unequivocally and completely affirmed his identification with the British. Concerns raised by the military officials about America's partnership with an imperialist power were absent in Matthews. After the failure of the Cripps Mission, American involvement in India was over. Matthews' assessment represented a return to the tone adopted by Mayo and Kendall--establishing a stark distance from India and a complete identification with the British.

However, the circumstance in which Matthews evaluated India was different from the one in which Mayo and Kendall had expressed their opinions. The war had made it impossible to ignore Indian nationalism. The development of American interest in India had also disturbed the one-dimensional views of India which Mayo and Kendall had constructed. But like Curie, Matthews could certainly marginalize the nationalists by describing their constituency as limited and by separating them from the 'real' India.

Matthews defined the 'real' India as composed of inarticulate masses who lacked the capacity to understand the concept of democracy. These masses represented overpopulation, malnutrition, religious taboos, and cow protection,³³ which prevented India from emerging out of its stagnation. He blamed the caste system for destroying the concept of human equality and inducing an enervating fatalism in the people.³⁴ Further, Matthews

Rai was an astute observer of the West. He had observed that Americans in general knew very little about India and mainly from Kipling and the missionaries. India was therefore seen by the world through western spectacles. He believed that the leaders of the Congress had never enlisted sympathy for their cause anywhere outside England. They had never realized the value of the world forces and the great sensitiveness of the English to what the world thought of them. Lajpat Rai, *Young India* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1917) 223. Rai had noticed this tendency as early as 1917 and Matthews in 1943 still relied on Kipling to understand India.

³³ Matthews, *The Education of...* 325, 329-330.

³⁴ In his discussion of Indological discourse Ronald Inden holds that the essence of Indian civilization is just the opposite of the West. Caste is conceived as India's essential institution which is both the cause and effect of India's low level of political and economic development. People in such a society lack the capability to shape or reshape their world. Ronald Inden, "Orientalist

questioned the idea of India as a unified nation by arguing that an average Indian knew little about his own country. With this assessment Matthews not only removed the masses from the reach of nationalism but made nationalism seem a minor intrusion on an otherwise indifferent India. Interestingly, he chose to provide evidence by reporting from the princely states which were mostly loyal to the British. He reported on December 25, 1942, from the princely state of Cooch Behar, that Gandhi and Jinnah were mere names to the people. He found no one who knew that Gandhi was in jail and none who could explain concepts of *ahimsa* and *swaraj* [non-violence and independence], none who wanted the British to leave. Matthews believed that the masses did not know what India was, the war had come vaguely to their ears, but they did not connect it with their lives.³⁵ Matthews detached the masses from their national identity and located them firmly in villages. He constructed the 'real' India, which, without exception was ignorant of its leaders and their political aspirations. As a correspondent of a prestigious newspaper, Matthews had recourse to a vast readership, who were introduced to his version of India.

Matthews effectively established the enormity of the 'real' India and affirmed its detachment from the nationalist forces. He denied the nationalists the capability of changing India by arguing that the old India, residing in villages, would continue to defeat the impulse of a unified modern India. Matthews provided proof by reporting from yet another princely state. He believed that the Maharaja of Dholpur, although a member of the high caste, was more in tune with the Indian peasants and artisans than the Cambridge trained Nehru. Caste, astrology, sacredness of cows were accepted by him

Construction of India," *Modern Asian Studies* 20.3 (1986) 401-446. Matthews seems to have adopted this interpretation of the Indian society.

³⁵ Matthews, *A World of...* 157.

unquestioningly.³⁶ The local prince had greater affinity with his people because he identified with the real interests and traditions of his people, whereas a westernized leader remained an outsider. Matthews' effort can be seen either as a deliberate attempt to confine India within a standard discourse or as the inability of an American, or a westerner, to represent India otherwise.

Further, Matthews rejected the Indian National Congress's claim that it represented India and that all of India wanted the British to leave. The Congress, according to Matthews, represented only the politically conscious Hindus in what he defined as 'British India.' Matthews proclaimed that his work led him inevitably to explode the 'myth' that the Congress was known all over.³⁷ He acknowledged that he did more harm in the United States by harping on this fact.

Having established a gap between the nationalists, particularly the Congress, and the masses, Matthews undermined the Hindu nationalists themselves by trapping them in the well publicized stereotype of the Hindus. Even though Matthews acknowledged the influence of the "despised West" on their political beliefs, he undermined them by rooting them in an essentialized India where religion controlled politics. Matthews argued that unlike the West, politics in India was not a specialized system and the Indians had different standards of honesty and morality. He believed that the Indian mind understood only a more personal and elastic interpretation of law and failed to appreciate western standards of logic. Naturally, Matthews found an answer to Gandhi's irrationality in his 'Hindu' character.³⁸ Gandhi's secret

³⁶ Matthews, *A World of...* 158-159.

³⁷ Matthews, *The Education of...* 274, 286, 288, 291.

³⁸ According to Partha Chatterjee the idea that "Indian nationalism" is synonymous with "Hindu nationalism" is not the vestige of some premodern religious conception. It is an entirely modern, rationalist, and historicist idea.

had been to use religion as a political instrument in a country where religion was the most powerful factor. Matthews believed that Gandhi's political following did not rise from his political success but from his religiosity.³⁹ However, Matthews did not specify the extent of Gandhi's following. Further, adopting an encompassing western perspective, Matthews argued that Lord Linlithgow and any other westerner would contend that Gandhi had no legal rights but "emotional Hindus" could see only his greatness and holiness.⁴⁰ David Spurr has recognized in the western observers, the celebration of their own culture and the requirement of a single standard of economic and political organization to which all must aspire.⁴¹ Matthews certainly adhered to this belief.

Matthews further undermined the Congress leadership by declaring Gandhi dictatorial and dubbing other Congress leaders Fascists and Nazis. During the course of the war, the association of the Congress with Fascism was bound to make the Congress seem a threatening and subversive organization.

Like other modern ideologies, it allows for the central role of the state in the modernization of society. Its appeal is not religious but political. 147 *Social Research* v. 59, no. 1 (Spring 1992).

³⁹ Matthews, *The Education of...* 292, 293-294, 296-297. Louis Fischer, an admirer of Gandhi, had made similar observations, only Matthews turned Gandhi's religious appeal into sacrilege. Images and impressions presented by people like Matthews, with which to discuss India have survived even today. Raymond Cohen in his study dealing with effects of cultural differences on diplomatic negotiations points out that United States founded in Age of Reason demarcated Church from State. The passionate belief in progress has relegated ritual to the sidelines. Raymond Cohen, *Negotiating Across Cultures* (Washington: Institute of Peace Press, 1991). 125. On the other hand, Talal Asad contends that in narrating the history of modern civilization we mark the separation of religion from the state as a crucial step in our liberation from bigotry and superstition. But the separation has always involved links between religion and public knowledge, moral identity and political processes. Even in Western liberal societies "modernized religion" and "secular culture" have supported each other in crucial, if often indirect, ways. "Religion and Politics: An Introduction" *Social Research* v. 59, no. 1 (Spring 1992). 3.

⁴⁰ Matthews, *A World of...* 170.

⁴¹ David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire* (Durham: Duke U. P., 1993) 62.

Matthews also believed that because of Gandhi, Nehru's great abilities, idealism, patriotism and commonsense has been frustrated. He was kept in jail because he followed Gandhi which Matthews considered Nehru's "weakness."⁴²

Like Curie, Matthews emphasized the differences between Muslims and Hindus and believed that the Muslim League was far stronger than any one in the United States had realized.⁴³ This difference between the two religious groups, and a favorable assessment of the Muslims had been presented by the British officials to their American counterparts at a time Cripps was negotiating with the Indians. The acceptance of these opinions is apparent in both Curie and Matthews. Bromfield had presented similar views in the 1930s. However, these views seemed to have gained widespread acceptance in the period of the Second World War. Matthews praised the Muslims for not having religious and social traditions of renunciation and non-violence. Although Matthews considered the Hindus brighter and more intelligent and even acknowledged that the Rajputs and the Marathas, two regional groups belonging to the Hindu community, represented the martial races, he still concluded that the Hindus were not as good soldiers as the Muslims.⁴⁴

Unlike the military officials, who feared the growth of anti-white sentiment in India and notified the officials in Washington of their concerns,

⁴² Matthews, *The Education of...* 300-304 Nehru had written in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1940 "India is far from America but more and more our thoughts go to this great country, which seems, almost alone, to keep the torch of democratic freedom alight, in a world given over to imperialism and fascism, and violence and aggression and opportunism of the worst type." Cited in Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography* v. 1 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975). 260-261. Nehru's aim to separate the British and the Americans had not won a convert in Matthews. In fact, Nehru's indecisiveness and lack of conviction could remove the mantle of westernized from his personality. His articulation of India's foreign policy objectives and opinions of the United States would fail to acquire significance.

⁴³ Unterberger points out that Herbert Matthews exposed the fact to the Americans that Jinnah, the Muslim League leader was one of the most important factors in the Indian situation. 313-336.

⁴⁴ Matthews, *The Education of...* 281, 289, 308.

journalists like Matthews neutralized these concerns by exposing the impracticality of Gandhi, and loyalty of the princes and Muslims to the British. Such arguments enhanced the necessity of British rule in India. Matthews was aware of the tensions between the Americans and the British, but agreed with General Archibald Wavell, British Commander-in-Chief, that the British had a long experience in India and had honorable intentions.⁴⁵ From the perspective of the war, Matthews could not blame the British. He concluded that the British picture was not all that black, they may not give India independence, yet were efficient, honorable and just.⁴⁶

A common element present in most assessments of India is that problems in India were seldom associated with imperialism, but almost entirely with the Indians themselves. The American critique of British imperialism in India had never overcome American misgivings about India's society and culture. Because India failed to live up to western standards, observers like Matthews were unable to recommend the end of British rule. Matthews could not fault colonialism but did question colonial attitudes. He pointed out that the British civil servants were respected, liked, dedicated but kept themselves secluded from the Indians.⁴⁷ They felt superior to all including the Americans. But Matthews argued that in the world of white people the superior attitude of the British was not taken seriously since it was a part of the British character. But in India they had adopted a condescending attitude. For the first time Matthews observed the British as an American but failed to recognize the similarity in his own attitude towards the Indians for which he criticized the British. This lack of recognition in Matthews provides an insight into the

⁴⁵ Matthews, *A World of...* , 176 The Congress had demanded from Cripps the transfer of the defense portfolio to the Indians.

⁴⁶ Matthews, *The Education of...* 288, 318.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 171.

general inability of the Americans to view India with empathy. Their criticism of the British remained unrelated to opinions they developed of India.

Another common feature among western commentators was their observation of India's subservience which they presented as an overwhelming trait. Matthews believed that the Indians had to outgrow their sense of inferiority, "Americans find their subservience embarrassing."⁴⁸ He echoed sentiments expressed by many American commentators that the Indians were living in 'pathetic contentment,' and would not find independence until they recognized that they were Indians.⁴⁹ Matthews also believed that when India achieved independence men like Nehru and Jinnah, with their western ideas, would assume power and the process of reform would begin, but would take generations to accomplish. Matthews did not go back to India but was certain the Indians could not have changed in any fundamental way.⁵⁰ This certainty about India's inability to change set the tone for observers of an independent India as well and will be examined in the next section.

Matthews' views were markedly similar to those of the colonizer and his justifications of the British rule similar to those provided by the British. Unlike the military observers, Matthews made no attempt to distance himself from the British or anticipate any future American interest. He only predicted the inability of India to change. Matthews' biases may have contributed to his opinions but they also reflect the general American opinion, especially after

⁴⁸ Ibid., 269 Matthews views are similar to those of Churchill who considered the Indians 'babooos,' (literally clerks, connotatively subordinate and subservient) gross, dirty and corrupt. Leopold Amery wanted to instill vigor in the Hindus. Amery believed that India needed an increasing "infusion of stronger Nordic blood." Cited in Christopher Thorne, *Allies of a Kind* (New York: Oxford U. P., 1978) 5-6, 356.

⁴⁹ Matthews, *The Education of ...* 347-348.

⁵⁰ Matthews, *A World of...* 179.

the failure of the Cripps Mission.

Opinions about India expressed by Matthews are similar to those presented by many British commentators. Beverly Nichols, a British novelist and a contributor to the *Sunday Chronicle*, has been selected for review to illustrate the continuing parallels in British and American views about India. Nichols' trip to India was a topic of discussion between Leopold Amery, the British Secretary of State for India, and Lord Linlithgow, British Viceroy in India. The former wrote on November 11, 1942, that Nichols would present British attitudes toward India in a popular form especially in the United States where he was considered a literary figure.⁵¹ After the publication of the book, on August 16, 1944, Amery wrote to Archibald Wavell, who had succeeded Linlithgow as the Indian viceroy, that he agreed with Nichols' description of the Hindus as 'sordid' and Jinnah as 'constructive.' Amery acknowledged that in Britain and in the United States, Nichols accounts would be useful for his frank opinion of the Congress and his 'flaying' of Gandhi.⁵² The correspondence between the British officials is significant because despite the favorable reports sent by observers like Matthews, officials in Britain seemed to want even greater exposure of such views in the United States.

In *Verdict on India*, published in 1944, Nichols reiterated popular images of India. He reaffirmed India's stagnation in untouchability, illiteracy, and in a pantheon of gods stocked only with "creatures of dream and delusion."⁵³ In contrast, Nichols believed that Linlithgow showed deep affection

⁵¹ Nicholas Mansergh, ed., *The Transfer of Power* v. 3. (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1971) 236.

⁵² Ibid., v. 4 1207. Amery believed that it would have been better if the book had been written more moderately and in better taste. Wavell agreed with Amery, but acknowledged that the book appealed to a large class of people in England and United States. Ibid., 1228-1229

⁵³ Beverly Nichols, *Verdict on India* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1944) 28, 71, 74, 112.

for India, and knew its people far better than the average Indian. Nichols' motive seemed to be to correct any misconception about British attitudes towards the Indians. Americans had applied epithets like duty, efficiency, and justness to commend British rule, but not considered them affectionate towards the Indians. Nichols' task seemed to be to demonstrate a relationship of affection between the British and the Indians. His motivation for writing the book became more apparent when he accused the British liberals of applying principles of western democracy to a country in which democracy had no hope.⁵⁴ Instead, Nichols emphasized the irrationality of the Indian leaders, especially the pacifist approach of Gandhi. He believed that the Congress was a fascist Brahmin organization, and only the Muslims and Jinnah could be trusted. Nichols also attempted to silence any opposition by establishing a unity between the United States and Britain, by pitting them against India's bitterness directed against both powers.⁵⁵

A common thread is visible in Matthews' and Nichols' assessment of India. Both justified the ability of the West to better understand and represent India. Both concentrated on exposing the Congress as a fascist organization and presented the Muslims favorably. They presented India's incapacity and unpreparedness to become independent, except that in case of Nichols, his image of the British was untainted, perhaps in an attempt to counter the growing resentment against British imperialism.

Nichols' account showcases the general tone western commentators adopted towards India. However, it also indicates the presence of alternate

⁵⁴ Ibid., 21, 168.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 37, 95, 184. Nichols was perhaps answering to criticism leveled at Britain by Louis Fischer, Frances Gunther and Pearl S. Buck. Buck believed that there were very strong unifying elements in India and that no people can learn to self govern until they govern themselves. *American Unity and Asia* (New York: John Day, 1942) 87, 89.

opinions which he attempted to address and correct. There were some journalists and writers who broke away from the standard norms of discussing India. They opposed British imperialism and expressed sympathy for India and its nationalists. One such journalist was Louis Fischer who spent a week with Gandhi in June 1942, after the Cripps Mission had failed to resolve the Indian problem. Whereas Curie had criticized the elusiveness of the Indian mind, Fischer praised the malleable and fluid mind of Gandhi and commended Gandhi for opening his mind and allowing Fischer to see how it worked. Unlike most observers, Fischer found Gandhi a wise and shrewd politician whose sole aim was to win India's independence. But it was Gandhi's profound religiousness in "the most religious nation in the world" which, according to Fischer, explained his preeminence. Fischer elevated Gandhi but at the same time criticized his followers for revering Gandhi's religiosity and not his political objectives and nationalist aims. In Gandhi's village, Sevagram, he observed that no one read newspapers or listened to the radio. In the final analysis, Fischer reiterated Curie and Matthew's assessment that Indians in general were oblivious of the outside world. But unlike Curie and many other observers who praised the British for shaking India out of its insulation, Fischer did not blame the Indians but considered it "one of the disservices of British rule." He argued that "the Indians see England first, and this picture close to their eyes prevents them from seeing the world and the war."⁵⁶

Fischer had broken away from the established opinion of Gandhi. Unlike most observers who questioned the rationality of Gandhi's philosophy, Fischer considered him a shrewd politician. However, he did not relate Gandhi's political astuteness to his ability to mobilize the otherwise inert and

⁵⁶ Louis Fischer, *A Week with Gandhi* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1942) 66, 116-119, 121-122.

passive Indian masses into a nationalist cause. In this respect, like Matthews, Fischer seemed unable to reconcile Gandhi's political role with his religious appeal. It seemed inconceivable to western observers to perceive Gandhi beyond his religiosity and to view him as instrumental in increasing the size of the nationalist force by appealing to and identifying with sentiments the masses best understood.

The accounts of both American detractors and admirers of Gandhi indicate that Gandhi's spiritual appeal and political philosophy was generally regarded in the West as outlandish and absurd. In 1931, the Reverend John Haynes Holmes, pastor of New York's Community Church had discouraged Gandhi from visiting the United States in order to protect him from the vulgar curiosity of the Americans and also because Gandhi's non-violent philosophy was considered strange by the Americans.⁵⁷ Journalist Vincent Sheean contended that any western mind acquainted with the ways of the world would concede that Gandhi's ethical and moral teachings were much too ascetic.⁵⁸ These admirers may have understood Gandhi's spirituality and political astuteness at a personal level, but seemed unable to display Gandhi's political viability in the context of India. Perhaps inadvertently, Holmes emphasized Gandhi's alienness by comparing him with Nehru. Holmes explained Nehru's differences with Gandhi by presenting Nehru's mind as systematically trained, more in tune with western than eastern ways of thinking. Holmes believed that Nehru could understand Gandhi only when he adopted Gandhi's way of thinking.⁵⁹ Holmes praised Nehru for this conversion but, in general, Nehru was criticized for accepting political directions set by Gandhi.

Journalist Frances Gunter, like Fischer, broke away from the standard

⁵⁷ John Haynes Holmes, *My Gandhi* (New York: Harper, 1953) 54, 58.

⁵⁸ Vincent Sheean, *Lead, Kindly Light* (New York: Random House, 1949). 242.

⁵⁹ Holmes, 145.

interpretation of India and presented an alternative view of Indian nationalism. Gunther not only criticized the British but also expressed sympathy for India. She found the English oblivious to the needs of the people they ruled. She disagreed with the accepted British representation of the inherent differences between Hindus and Muslims and considered Gandhi and Nehru 'great' politicians and praised the Congress for giving guarantees of equality to all. Gunther seemed intent upon establishing a complete separation between the British and the Americans. She believed that unlike the British, the American troops were friendly and sympathetic to the Indians.⁶⁰ Gunther's book was published at a time when American involvement in India was over. Her effort to present India and its nationalists positively was, in all probability, an effort to rekindle support for India in America.

Similarly, journalist Edgar Snow also presented views which opposed British imperialism. In contrast to Curie, Matthews and Nichols, Snow believed that the British had manipulated the Indians in order to maintain their rule. He remained unconvinced when informed by Lord Linlithgow that the Indians had no political sense, and that when the British withdrew India would break up. Many observers of India had agreed with this argument, but Snow doubted this reasoning. He believed that India would soon not be the same again, not for Britain, not for any white man. He believed that the era of privileges and pretensions of racial superiority was over. But, unlike most observers, Snow was not threatened by this proposition. In fact he seemed sympathetic to the aspirations of the Indians.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Frances Gunther, *Revolution in India*, (New York: Island Press, 1944) 15, 21, 27, 75, 88, 90, 105.

⁶¹ Edgar Snow, *Journey to the Beginning* (New York: Random House, 1958) 272, 383. According to Snow Nehru's argued that why should the Indians help vanquish the Japanese on the mere assumption that brown imperialism was

Snow may have questioned British imperialism, however, he was unable to present an alternative image of India. India continued to be evaluated within the framework of the established images whether by those who sympathized with or those who questioned India's political aspirations. Interestingly, Snow sympathized with India's nationalism but did not contest the established cultural image of India. He saw India as full of contradictions. It was the mother of civilizations and the harbinger of barbaric customs, of sacred cows and communal hatred. Within it 'caste' stood as a formidable barrier to understanding, fellowship, cooperation and exchange of social graces not only between Hindus and Muslims but also among the Hindus themselves.⁶² Snow once again demonstrated the inability of western observers to view India outside the confines of an overpowering image. Even though he opposed Linlithgow's argument, he yet presented the same reasoning to question India's ability. India may get rid of the British but lacked the capacity to change from within.⁶³

In the eyes of American observers of India, whether in sympathy or criticism, an overpowering image of India had been created beyond which no explanations seemed possible. These commentators trapped themselves as they trapped India, in an image. They assigned characteristics to an entire culture without discovering individuals or complexities in the relationship among various people. Instead, they rigidly compartmentalized Indians into caste and

worse than the white one. 22. According to John Maxwell Hamilton, Snow empathized with nationalist movements but also believed in America's superiority. He was exasperated with Indian belief that every problem in India stemmed from British imperialism. *Edgar Snow: A Biography* (Bloomington: Indiana U. P., 1988) 2, 138.

⁶² Edgar Snow, *People on our Side* (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1945) 8, 12, 20.

⁶³ David Spurr believes that the journalistic eye is not always so clearly or consciously the instrument of colonial authority, it can be used to resist authority. But even in sympathy his gaze is commanding, a product of deeply held colonial (in this case western) values. *The Rhetoric of Empire* 20.

religious affiliations. Most observers were disappointed with India for not following the norms they could understand. In contrast to the rational and balanced West, Hindu India emerged as mystical and otherworldly, operating under emotional extremes, at once both fanatical and passive. Their depictions of a fractionalized and divided nationalism and the domination of the Congress by a fascist Hindu leadership prevented the nationalists from emerging as reasonable and viable alternative to the British especially during the course of the war. The accepted premise that India was changeless, rooted in meaningless traditions seemed to make it impossible to view nationalism and even the western educated nationalists as representing change. The comparative framework which these observers adopted obstructed them from viewing Gandhi's strategies in the Indian context. Consequently, the concerns and opinions of the Indian nationalists could not assume any significance or create any concern. Such depictions of India left the United States ill prepared to deal with independent India except with the help of the established images.

However, an element that distinguished war-time observers in India from their pre-war compatriots was a shift in their opinion of the British. Ideologically Americans opposed British imperialism, and in this recognition emerged an American self definition, untainted and free of an imperial mindset. India's independence, in this context, was acceptable to some observers. In this respect, during the period of the war, different thoughts on India had begun to emerge. However, even when sympathizing with India's nationalism, these observers were unable to provide an alternative view of India's culture. In general American disillusionment with the British developed independently of their conception of India. Importantly, whether in questioning imperialism or in agreement with the British, American opinion of India was being constructed independently of the British.

Post-Independence Views--1947-1949

The pervasiveness of India's images in the United States can be best realized in the examination of American opinions of independent India, when the circumstance of both countries and the global situation had changed. Matthews did not expect India to change and his contention can be tested by examining the representations of independent India.

In this section, opinions of one American writer and one American official developed during the initial phase of India's independence will be examined. The intention is to assess whether India's independence evoked a fresh examination in the United States, or did perceptions already formulated continue to guide American understanding of India? The idea of India's independence had remained foreign to almost all observers, and the new observers now expressed their discomfort with independent India.

Writer

Two distinct impressions about India that had emerged in most discussions were its rootedness in the past and a gap between the masses and the nationalists. Both images had questioned India's ability to establish a stable government and make social and economic progress. Writer John Frederick Muehl, who presented his impressions of India immediately following India's independence, noticed both aspects in India. He discovered that even though India had broken away from the British it was still an India of the past. In *Interview with India* he observed that the independence day speeches he heard in Bombay were made in English which the masses could not understand, "...it was their independence, but not their language." Muehl reaffirmed the Indian leaders inability to communicate with the masses not

only in terms of ideas but language as well. Moreover, the leaders did not offer change, but reaffirmed the traditional order. The country was led by "degenerate traditional leaders," the feudal lords, brahmins and princes whose common interest was to preserve the status quo. They spoke of "Asian tradition" and damned the "materialism of the West" while they themselves adhered to traditional abuses. They had left the old order of the British empire intact vying with "spirituality," "leprosy", and "caste."⁶⁴ These leaders, according to Muehl, justified poverty, which they claimed, the villagers were accustomed to because they lived in the "realm of the spirit." The leaders were divorced from the people by barriers of caste and class--whether a Brahmin or a Maharaja--and the Congressmen [the Indian National Congress had assumed power with Nehru as the Prime Minister] blamed their ineptness on the Indian masses. Nehru spoke of freedom of the people yet jailed editors of newspapers for criticizing him.⁶⁵ In general, Muehl found the new government "weak, stupid and jealous of its new power."⁶⁶

⁶⁴ John Frederick Muehl, *Interview with India* (New York: John Day, 1950) 4, 8-9.

⁶⁵ Said in *Culture and Imperialism* points out that nationalist thought in India was influenced by realities of colonial power and led to an elitism of the intelligentsia. In the streets nationalism was led by those created by the colonial power who replicated old colonial structures in new terms. National identity struggling to free itself from imperial domination found itself lodged in by the state, armies, flags and national education. 217, 223, 264 In this sense there is validity to Muehl's argument. But he still continues to use old images to explain new realities. The nationalists were not old relics of India's traditional past but products of western education and western interpretation of India and had adopted western opinions to critique India. In that sense, the nationalists were attempting to dismantle what Muehl identifies as India's rottenness though he prefers to include the nationalists in it. Furthermore, Muehl, like other observers had totalized the masses as passive and inert, with no acknowledgment of any difference in regional or political groupings. The Subaltern Studies groups have challenged this totalizing vision. They are attempting to restore agency to common people in an effort to rectify the elitist bias. They accuse both the colonists and the nationalists of robbing common people of their agency. Their contention is that subalterns acted in history on their own and independently of the elite. See *The American Historical Review* (99:1 February 1994) for a discussion on Subaltern Studies.

⁶⁶ Muehl, 13, 17-18, 299, 300.

Muehl seemed impatient with India's inability to liberate itself not only of British influence but from its own cultural bind. As an American Muehl had dissociated himself from the decadence of both British and Indian social and political culture. The earlier observers may have been influenced by the British but opinions of independent India had become distinctly American. In emphasizing India's social and cultural deficiencies, like the other observers, Muehl ignored India's imperial past and the possible consequences of colonialism on its lack of development. India had barely achieved independence, yet Muehl had already predicted India's stagnant future.

Turning to the grass roots, Muehl found people as sick and as degenerate as their surroundings, a response similar to that of Matthews, who had also considered both the land and the people miserable and unappealing. Like all other observers, Muehl singled out Hinduism and the institution of caste as the cause of India's debasement and reinforced the irreversible distance between the culture he belonged to and the culture he observed. He was appalled at statements like "it was my fate to be born where I was" and "it is hard for a westerner to understand [but] this subjugation of the body is a tradition of Hinduism." He found no organized and responsible protest against the institution of caste. The whole country was emasculated by a "twisted religious law, deprived of its very will to live by an elaborately rotten social code." "A phenomenon of mass hypnosis, a constant suggestion of inferiority and guilt-living in superstition," resigned in the *Karma*, not concerned about economic development or questioning economic problems. Misery, squalor, death and disease were all accepted not as necessary evils but as laudable instruments of gods retribution. The cause of this debasement for Muehl lay in villages, palaces and especially temples.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Ibid., 30, 42, 190, 261-262, 301.

It was in India's inability to change and discard old tradition that Muehl discovered the reason why Britain had exercised power for so long. The image of India had not altered. Even independent India's politics and economic practices had been subordinated to its strangulating cultural, religious and social practices. Muehl had essentialized India, leaving no possibility of difference or deviance. The newly independent nation was denied the opportunity and ability to create a viable political, social and economic order. The difference was that the British no longer managed this society and the Americans had assumed the role, to criticize and instruct.

Muehl's solution was a revolutionary leader who did not harp on "the glorious tradition of India" but who could tear down the rotten props of old India. But like Matthews, Muehl concluded that "perhaps Asia was already beginning to prove that the progress of the race is not inevitable."⁶⁸ This image of India, reaffirming a cultural gap between the East and the West, has successfully survived in political and academic discussion even today. In *Negotiating Across Cultures*, Raymond Cohen has examined American relationship with non-western societies. Regarding India, he presents this interaction as a confrontation between America's individual and India's collective impulses. The former's adherence to a Protestant concept of predestination led to equality, a free market economy and democracy, while the latter's rural traditions emphasize caste, cooperation and subordination of

⁶⁸ Ibid., 300, 302. According to Bhabha this recognition of difference of race, culture, history as elaborated by stereotypical knowledges, racial theories, administrative colonial experience, institutionalizes a range of political and cultural ideologies that are prejudicial and discriminatory. Homi K. Bhabha "Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," in Francis Barker et. al. eds. *The Politics of Theory* (Colchester: University of Essex, 1983) 209. Regarding the Indians, Roosevelt had stated that "...racially the mass of Indians were really cousins of us Westerners." Thorne, *Allies...* 158-159 But Muehl did not share Roosevelt's ideas and seemed to have relied on the stereotypical knowledge about India and emphasized racial differences.

the individual. In America if the past obstructs progress, it is discarded while in non-western societies there is a pervasive sense of the past.⁶⁹ When such fixity is assigned to any society, Muehl's conclusion, that progress of a race is not inevitable, becomes an accepted fact. Every aspect of India can be explained as rooted in its past and a product of its cultural and social and even racial characteristics.

Muehl's India lacked progressive impulses. The cause of it was the suffocating effects of caste and the Hindu obsession with the otherworld. With an inept leadership and the masses trapped in the grips of suffocating customs, India could not take a leap into the future. Independent India continued to exist in ignorance and in passive acceptance of its condition. A lack of vitality was responsible for the prolonged British rule and could definitely inspire others to take control. The policy makers adopted this reasoning when fear of the spread of communism became predominant.

Official

George McGhee, Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East, South Asia, and Africa division of the State Department, was the first major official responsible for South Asian affairs who interacted with independent India and its leadership. The opinions he expressed about India in his memoirs showcase the official view and the context in which American policy makers understood independent India. McGhee acknowledged in *Envoy to the Middle East* that much of what the Americans had learnt of what he defined as the 'Middle World' was interpreted by the colonial powers. No one in the State Department had time for "these strange countries" which had been the outposts of other

⁶⁹ Cohen, *Negotiating Across Cultures* (Washington: Institute of Peace Press, 1991). 23-24, 29.

empires. McGhee did not fault British colonialism and commended Britain's withdrawal when the colonies had been prepared for self government. In this evaluation, McGhee ignored the role of Indian nationalism in India's independence. He acknowledged that Americans knew appallingly little of the people and their contacts were still with local officials trained in colonial patterns.⁷⁰

McGhee visited India in 1949 and expressed his opinions about India in a vocabulary used by the American writers and journalists and by the British. His description of India was short but authoritatively written, in which predominant images of India stood out starkly. He noticed the cows, which, he informed his reader, were holy to the Hindus. The cows were protected, but were a miserable looking lot. Holiness did not protect them from labor. Regarding the Hindu religion, he presented the *Brahman* as the "passive" universal spirit of the Hindus.⁷¹ Within this terse description of the Hindu, McGhee had summed up India in its entirety. There seemed no need to observe anything else. The image of the passive Hindu controlled by a passive religion, which sapped him of his worldly endeavors, had become the accepted norm of understanding India. The sacred cow seemed to reflect the very essence of the Hindu culture. McGhee's suggestion to limit American resources because of the failure of South Asians to make economic progress ⁷² can find a resonance in the failure of Hinduism itself.

McGhee's encounter with Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister, once again reveals the reliance Americans placed upon their understanding of Indian culture in order to decipher Indian politics. Opinions about Nehru, formed

⁷⁰ George McGhee, *Envoy to the Middle East: Adventures in Diplomacy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983) 6-8, 12.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 279.

over a period of time now find a ready audience in McGhee. Nehru's observers had to wrestle with two aspects of his personality, the man imbued with 'western' values and ideas versus the 'Hindu Brahmin,' a product of his familial traditions and beliefs. Most observers were unable to reconcile the two and the 'Hindu' aspect of his personality emerged whenever his policies or political philosophy became contrary to the western interests and were recorded with extreme negativity.

McGhee reported that Nehru "rambled on" while McGhee "kept waiting for something substantial that I would be able to report. There was nothing." McGhee sought an explanation for it in the peculiarity of the eastern mind. He wondered whether it was a result of the difference between the "inner working of the Indian and the Anglo-Saxon minds." Nehru's mind "just did not go from cause to effect or progress from a to b to c as mine did." McGhee reasoned that "Perhaps the Indian mind, particularly after centuries of coping with conquerors, has adapted a more cautious and circuitous line of reasoning than prevails in the West."⁷³ The understanding developed earlier by observers like Kendall, who did not find Indians forthright but elusive and illogical, "a mixture of realness and unrealness" was applied by McGhee to assess Nehru and in it McGhee reasserted a gap between the West and India. McGhee defined himself as an Anglo-Saxon in order to distinguish himself from the Indians. This self definition is perhaps an indication of the general attitude employed by the State Department officials to discuss non-western cultures. The irrationality and lack of logic that had been assigned to the Hindus had now found a place in defining Nehru. Nehru was no longer perceived as a product of western education, propagating western ideas and values. He was firmly placed in the Hindu orbit. His failure was no longer that

⁷³ Ibid., 100, 106.

of a westernized man, unable to establish an identification with his own people, but a man rooted in his own culture, unable to identify with the West.

At this time Americans expressed their disapproval of Nehru's adoption of a non-aligned policy, perceived as a threat to the American policy of containment of Communism. Nehru, according to McGhee, by professing the policy of non-alignment was "hiding his head in the sand." He believed that Nehru adopted this policy to maintain his "mystical role" as the leader of an ex-colonial developing nation.⁷⁴ A tradition seems to have been established to explain any contrary aspect of India in its culture. It could prevent McGhee and other officials from examining Nehru as a leader whose beliefs and interests may have been more 'practical' than 'mystical.' Following the established trend, McGhee accepted the Muslims easily and favorably. He was impressed with the Muslim leaders of Pakistan. He liked Pakistan's Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, "As a man you could do business with him." "They sought our aid on our terms compared to the wishy washy neutrals they were a breath of fresh air."⁷⁵ With his insight into India and its leadership, McGhee concluded that permanence of democracy in India could not be taken for granted as long as people were illiterate and poor and 'untouchability' survived.⁷⁶

The images that were constructed of India in the pre-independence period seem to have become part of American official and popular vocabulary. India was assumed to be otherworldly and weak and incapable of imbibing western dynamism and rationality. Its inability to survive on its own had become an accepted fact. These images would be consistently reiterated but

⁷⁴ Ibid., 295-296.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 93-94, 97. Henry Kissinger echoed the same sentiments when he met the complex Hindus and the simpler, more direct Moslems. *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979) 842-843.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 424.

rarely disputed.

The most noticeable element in the observation of the Americans is the singularity of vision and uniformity of images and metaphors to describe India. The passive masses and the sacred cow seemed to represent India in its entirety. Indians were rarely perceived or presented as individuals and were generally confined to a social and cultural collectivity. India's nationalism became an integral part of this culture represented by Gandhi or separated from it like the westernized Nehru. Later Nehru, too, was wrested out of his western identity and placed within the traditional Indian orbit. India's rootedness in the past and inability to identify with western dynamism and rationality had been firmly established. India's acquiescence to western interests and objectives seemed essential to win respectability. India's rejection of the Allied war objectives, the Cripps Mission and American proposals to combat communism brought forth entrenched social and cultural images to the forefront. Some shifts had occurred in America's vision of India but beneath it a rigidly defined image had survived.

The American observers, in general, established a firm gap between the West and the East and later, specifically, between themselves and the Indians. In accepting this distance, they resorted to the same images of India as those constructed by the British, which over a period of time, had become accepted American opinions as well. American distinctness may have emerged in opposition of British imperialism but the reasons behind this opposition, in the context of India, were never established. The Americans reevaluated their own ideals and interests but confined India to an essentialized image. These observers were the primary informers about India but were also reflectors of the western view of non-western cultures. In their observations, American official response towards India during the wartime crisis can be anticipated.

Chapter 4

Official Perspectives on Wartime India

The interest of American policy makers in the politics of India did not materialize until the outbreak of the Second World War. The general image of India available to them was of a society which would disintegrate if the British gave up control. But with the outbreak of the war, the Indian problem was thrust upon the American policy makers. India's aspiration for independence had to be given consideration. But the policy makers' perspective on India developed under different conditions from that of those Americans who observed India from within, especially those who associated with the British as fellow soldiers and not as diplomats. The policy makers' distance from India and its colonial culture and close association with British officials in Washington and London had a significant impact on their attitudes towards India.

Three major factors can be considered significant in the American policy makers' view of India. To begin with, the primacy of the war and concerns of their British ally would receive major consideration.¹ Indian

¹ American interest in India developed at a time when Nazi victories in Europe in the summer of 1940 had weakened French and Dutch empires and undermined the British position in Asia. America wanted to prevent Japan from affecting British abilities in Europe and lendlease was given to China to keep it involved in the Pacific war. See Robert A. Divine, *The Reluctant Belligerent: American Entry into World War II* 2nd ed. (New York: Dell, 1962), Paul W. Schroeder, *The Axis Alliance and Japanese-American Relations, 1941* (Ithaca NY, Cornell U. P., 1958), Herbert Feis, *The China Tangle: the American Effort in China from Pearl Harbor to the Marshall Mission* (Princeton: Princeton U. P., 1953). Christopher Thorne, *Allies of a Kind* (New York: Oxford U.P., 1978) : Akira Iriye believes that importance of Asia in the United States increased in order to prevent a Japanese assault on the British empire. Churchill gave freedom to the United States in Japan in return for total control of the empire, *Cold War in Asia: a Historical Introduction* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1974) and *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1977).

scholars M. S. Venkataramani and B. K. Shrivastava believe that the Indian nationalists had little understanding of the special relationship between Britain and the United States and that American policy makers held the British in considerable esteem.² This contention leads into the second factor, which is American perception of British imperialism. Phillip Darby brings out the difference in the perception of the two western powers regarding the British empire. He contends that British imperial system proceeded on the assumption of the centrality of British empire in world affairs, while Roosevelt conceived the empire as a threat to world peace.³ But Britain, according to David Reynolds, had been central to the definition of American values and identity. The American image of the British, during the war, took shape as part of the debate about American identity, about nationalism and cultural values. Britain's colonial policy evoked particular criticism in the United States, even though Americans lacked any substantial knowledge about the colonies. Reynolds points out that the British had also become concerned about the intrusion of American culture into Britain which, they believed, eroded the foundation of 'civilized life.'⁴ Clearly, the relationship between the two western powers was being reevaluated during the course of the war, in which American identification with the British struggled to come to terms with their emerging self image and role in the world. The British had also begun to recognize the growing military, cultural and economic power of the United

² M. S. Venkataramani and B. K. Shrivastava, *Quit India: The American Response to the 1942 Struggle* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1979) 10. Arnold A. Offner contends that the United States was suspicious of the British empire but also considered it important to sustain Britain as the first line of defense. *The Origins of the Second World War and United States Foreign Policy, 1943-1945* (New York: Praeger, 1975).

³ Phillip Darby, *Three Faces of Imperialism: British and American Approaches to Asia and Africa, 1870-1970* (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1987) 82-83.

⁴ David Reynolds, *Rich Relations: The American Occupation of Britain, 1942-1945* (New York: Random House, 1995) 34-35.

States and feared American encroachment in the colonies. These reevaluations lead into the third factor--American perception of the non-western world. Darby contends that at no stage in American history did Asia and Africa represent a natural unit of reference to the Americans. Aside from China and the Philippines, the rest of Asia had impinged little on American consciousness. Darby believes that much of the moralizing about self-determination and evils of colonialism was facilitated by American remoteness from actual issues. Moreover, America's incentive to observe overseas was lessened by American reliance on their own experience and values and their self conception loomed even larger in Asia and Africa.⁵

The Second World War can be considered a period of reevaluation in which the Americans wrestled to come to terms with their identification with the British position in India and their own emerging power and distinct interests. This tension between the two points of view, one identifying with Britain and the other critical of the colonizer and promoting American values, had emerged in the American observers in India. The military officials, closely associated with the British war effort, had begun to profess America's distinctness. The journalists also present two diverse views, one sympathetic to the British and the other opposed to their rule in India. However, these observers remained unified in their opinion of India's culture and politics. The tension between the emerging American self image and traditional relationship with the British can be anticipated in the policy makers as well. Distanced from and generally ignorant about India, they were reliant upon the available information on India. In this respect, their perception of the information providers, mainly the British, and their recognition of their growing power both had an impact on their understanding of India.

⁵ Darby, 142, 186, 223.

Official Review of India in the Early Stages of the War

The political situation in India had become complicated due to the policies instituted by the British. The decision of Lord Linlithgow, the British Viceroy of India, to lead India into the war was not accepted by the Indian National Congress (henceforth Congress) on the grounds that India was being forced into the war without prior consultation and without popular consent.⁶ The Congress argued that India would not participate in the war to defend British imperialism. A free and democratic India would fight willingly with other free nations.

India had become an important base for the Allied forces to launch offensives into Burma and to send supplies into China. In this respect, India's willingness to co-operate in this endeavor and to resist Japan had become important factors. If India's cooperation required independence for the country, then such a policy had to be pursued. The question that had emerged was how much was the United States prepared to invest in Indian politics. American policy makers had to grapple with the issue of their relationship with an imperial power who was also their major wartime ally. These evaluations were further complicated by opinions about India and its nationalism which were conveyed to them.

The records indicate that the major discussions about India by the American policy makers were conducted almost exclusively with their British

⁶ According to C. S. Venkatachar, who served as an Indian Civil Servant from 1922 to 1961, the imperialists had no understanding of the sentiments of Indian nationalism. The Conservatives had sent Linlithgow, a landowning aristocrat, who believed that the abiding purpose of his class was to rule India and that their rule would endure for as long a time as he could foresee. "1937-47 in Retrospect: A Civil Servant's View" in C. H. Philips and Mary Doreen Wainwright ed. *The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives 1935-1947* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970) 477.

counterparts. In this respect, American officials had made themselves dependent on British ideas about India. Furthermore, the administration of Roosevelt had to contend with Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, who seemed particularly unwilling to relinquish control over India. Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State, has stated in his memoirs that it was a delicate question as to how far the United States could go in any representation to Britain to grant independence to India or in any action that might encourage the Indian demand for independence.⁷ Hull's statement is indicative of American official reluctance to interfere in India or open channels of communication with Indian leaders. Any consultations they deemed necessary would be directed to England. American official interest in India was largely dependent on the American view of the British. Indian aspirations had not emerged as significant in themselves.

America's lack of interest in Indian politics is exemplified by the fact that until 1941 there was no American official representative in New Delhi, the seat of the British power. Although, American officials acknowledged the necessity they left the initiative with their British counterparts. It was only when the British Embassy in Washington proposed to attach to its embassy an Indian official with the rank of minister to deal with non-political questions, that Hull raised the issue with Lord Halifax, the British Ambassador in Washington.⁸ Hull's concern was not India's politics but the efficient transactions of official business and the implementation of the coordinated war programs.⁹ Consequently, Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai was appointed as the Agent General of India in Washington and Thomas M. Wilson, the Consulate

⁷ Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* v. 2 (New York: The Macmillan, 1948) 1482.

⁸ Lord Halifax had served as Viceroy Irwin in India from 1926 to 1931.

⁹ Memorandum by Hull of a conversation with Halifax. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (henceforth FR) 1941, v. 3, 171.

General at Calcutta, became the American Commissioner in Delhi. Wilson's appointment was approved by Lord Linlithgow, the British Viceroy in India. He informed Leopold Amery, the Secretary of State for India, on March 16, 1943 that no Indian knew or cared what Wilson did or said.¹⁰

During the early stages of the war American officials did not seek to undermine British authority in India. On September 16, 1941, Under Secretary of State, Sumner Welles requested George Winant, American Ambassador in Britain, to inform the British officials that "Our primary interest, of course, is the establishment of effective representation in complete accord with the wishes of the British Government and the Government of India."¹¹ Regarding the importance of the British empire to the conduct of the war, Roosevelt informed Joseph Grew, American Ambassador in Japan, that Britain had the advantage of its empire on which it could depend for resources and prevent the enemy from concentrating full force in Europe.¹² In such a climate, any opinion or policy recommendation which threatened British rule in India had little possibility of succeeding.

The first major State Department review of the situation in India took place on May 5, 1941, when Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle addressed the issue in a memorandum to the Secretary of State.¹³ The discussion centered on India's relevance to the war effort. Berle reported that India had manpower and a strategic position but was contributing little to the war effort. He believed that India exerted a vast influence upon the affairs of the Middle

¹⁰ Linlithgow to Amery, March 16, 1943. Nicholas Mansergh, *Transfer of Power* v. 3, 818.

¹¹ FR, 1941 v. 3, 174-175.

¹² FR, 1941 v. 5, 6-8.

¹³ The opinions expressed by Roosevelt, Hull and Welles about the British were not shared by Berle. According to Berle there were many men in the State Department who accepted the British without developing a strictly American point of view. Cited in Martin Weil, *A Pretty Good Club* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978) 111.

East and its status was of interest to all the surrounding nations. The degree to which, and the methods by which, India became integrated into a common cooperative effort of free peoples would affect the attitudes of the Middle Eastern countries. Berle recommended bringing India into a partnership on equal terms with other members of the British Commonwealth. But he also emphasized that the United States should disclaim any desire to intervene in the affairs of the Empire.¹⁴ Berle did not seem to share the general official deference towards British rule in India. He approached this issue by emphasizing India's potential role in Asia independent of the British. In this respect, Berle did not focus on popular images of India and its nationalism when he proposed independence for India. Instead, he directed his efforts toward presenting an independent American perspective on India and invited American officials to recommend policies to Britain.

Berle's recommendations influenced Hull to raise the issue of India's independence with Halifax. In response Halifax pointed out that the Indians had self-government in the provinces and that the British only managed India's national defense, foreign policy and general finance. He also stated that Hindus and Muslims were at odds with each other and that any future concessions were neither feasible nor necessary.¹⁵ Hull did not dispute Halifax's claims. He seemed to lack curiosity about India's dissatisfaction despite the concessions made by the British. He was either unaware of the

¹⁴ Berle to Hull. Draft *Aide-Memoire* enclosed to Hull and Welles. FR, 1941 v. 3 176-177.

¹⁵ Memorandum by Hull of a conversation with Halifax, May 77, 1941. FR, 1941 v. 3, 178. The Government of India Act of 1935 had given autonomy to the provinces. In the 1937 General Elections, Congress had won majority in 7 of 11 provinces. In November 1939 Congress had resigned because of British unwillingness to give guarantees on India's post war status. The British policy of providing limited self government has been considered a British strategy to seek Indian collaborators and to reduce Indian political aspirations to local and provincial levels.

political situation in India or merely deferred to Halifax's assertions. Both Hull and Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles considered it inappropriate for Roosevelt to raise the question of India with Churchill. Welles reiterated Halifax's belief that any change in the situation in India would lead to internal dissension.¹⁶

From these discussions it becomes evident that officials like Hull relied almost exclusively on the British for any information on India.¹⁷ Among the higher officials, there seemed to be no reevaluation of the American position in relation to the British or a recognition of American interests in India independently of the British. The British, therefore, were in a position to convince their American counterparts about the inability of the Indian nationalists to form a stable government and the necessity of British rule to prevent India from erupting into chaos.

However, American officials, in view of the war effort, had to take into account the growing opposition to British imperialism in Asia as well as in America.¹⁸ On August 1, 1941, American Ambassador in London, John G. Winant, suggested to the State Department that the United States might try to persuade Britain to grant Dominion Status to India. Winant pointed out that the issue was important because Australia and New Zealand were disturbed by Japan's successes and wanted the United States and Britain to increase their security net. Winant believed that if the Indian situation was solved, a friendly India along with China would become significant factors in deterring Japan in the Far East and would serve as a bridge between the East and the West. Winant also argued that opposition to British imperialism in the United States

¹⁶ Ibid., 186. Memorandum by Welles to Hull.

¹⁷ According to Martin Weil, Hull expressed no desire to reform anything except tariffs and he had few independent opinions. Moreover Roosevelt ignored Hull and preferred to consult with Welles. *A Pretty Good Club* 75, 87

¹⁸ See Thorne, 59-61.

was largely directed at the political situation in India and hindered support for Britain. In view of these considerations Winant recommended Dominion Status for India.¹⁹

Winant's recommendations, like those of Berle, indicate the presence of a different perspective in the official assessment of India's independence. Both emphasized India's independence in terms of its impact on the war effort. Winant did not bring into discussion the question of India's capability to form self government. In fact, he did not even include Indian nationalism or the Indian society in his exposition. In both Berle and Winant's proposals India seemed to be a convenient site to impress upon their superiors the development of an independent American perspective free of the British connection. On the one hand, Winant wanted to improve the British image in the United States; however, on the other, he also emphasized America's ability to 'persuade' Britain to grant Dominion Status to India.

Winant's recommendations led Berle, on August 5, 1941, to suggest that the State Department raise the issue of India with the British government. Consequently, a telegram was drafted on behalf of Roosevelt, addressed to Churchill, recommending that India be given Dominion Status; thereafter, India, Australia, New Zealand and China would enter a defensive alliance for security in the Far East. But the telegram was withheld as both Hull and Welles opposed any intervention by Roosevelt. They argued that the President should

¹⁹ Winant to Hull. FR, 1941 v. 3 178-179. Australian diplomats had expressed concerned about British complacency and disorganization in Asia especially in Singapore and Hong Kong. See Thorne, 55-56. American military officials had also made similar observations. Regarding American criticism of British imperialism, Halifax reported to Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, that the appointment of an agent general of India coincided with an increase in American interest in the Indian political situation and in an increase in criticism of British policies. Thomas E. Hackey, *Confidential Dispatches: Analyses of America* (Evanston: New University Press, 1971). Halifax to Eden, June 26, 1943. Political review of the United States for the year 1942. 65

raise the issue of India personally and confidentially with the British Prime Minister.²⁰ Hull believed that Britain was fighting for her life and the United States could not impede her struggle. In contrast to Berle and Winant, Hull was convinced that cooperating with Britain, India could be of immense assistance in Britain's defense, while working against the British, it could become a "frightful danger."²¹ Hull did not acknowledge the American ability or interest to recommend or persuade the British to grant independence to India. A more defined American perspective on India had emerged only among those officials who promoted American interests independently of the British. They did so by emphasizing India's potential role free of the British connection. But those who had been introduced to problems in Indian politics did not dispute the British position. They believed that India would better serve in the war under British guidance. A reevaluation of the American position regarding India was so far confined to those officials who were either distanced from Washington or had little control over political decisions.

America's unwillingness to become involved in India was tested when on September 9, 1941, Churchill made a statement in the House of Commons that Article 3 of the Atlantic Charter, stating that the subject people have a right to choose their own form of government, applied only to countries under the Nazi yoke and not to the empire. This statement was contrary to the proclamation made in August 1941. According to Hull, Roosevelt did not agree with this interpretation but had no desire to engage in any altercation with Churchill.²² However, Winant objected to Churchill's proclamation. He reported from London on November 4, 1941 that such a declaration ran

²⁰ Memorandum by Berle to Welles. Memorandum by Welles to Hull, August 6, 1941. FR, 1941 v. 3 180-181.

²¹ Hull, v. 2 1482.

²² Ibid., 1484.

counter to the general public interpretation in the United States and would intensify charges of imperialism against Britain.²³ But Winant's superiors seemed convinced of the positive aspects of British colonial rule in India. Welles informed Hull on November 15, 1941, that the British had been governing India for over a hundred years and understood the country and its problems. Welles believed that Halifax had been "the most liberal viceroy in India," and agreed with the British Ambassador that there was a consensus of opinion among the British civil servants, most experienced in Indian affairs, that any immediate change in the status of India would create internal dissension in India on a very wide scale, beyond Britain's capacity to cope. Welles argued that Britain had better a understanding of India than the United States. Unlike Winant, he did not believe that Churchill's proclamation meant much to public opinion in the United States. He believed that if any action was taken by the Americans, Churchill would consider that the United States was taking advantage of Britain's dependence upon the United States.²⁴

Welles' argument illustrates the impact of popular ideas about India on the attitudes of officials in the State Department. Welles may not have reiterated images of India presented by Mayo and her like, but he had certainly accepted their justification of British rule in India. A century of British rule in India testified to Britain's understanding of India and its capability to manage India's political problems. Welles identified Halifax as the 'most liberal' viceroy and therefore an acceptable authority on India. This acceptance seemed to have made it unnecessary for Welles to propose an independent evaluation of India. Welles' view of the British brings to light the difference in attitudes of the officials in Washington and the American

²³ Winant to Hull. FR, 1941 v. 3 181-184.

²⁴ Ibid., 186-187.

military officials posted in India. Observing British colonial rulers from a distance, Welles accepted them as just and wise, whereas the military officials saw them as decadent rulers and inept soldiers, and proposed a separation of interest. Welles' views also indicate that anti-imperialist sentiment in the American public in the context of India, as suggested by Winant, may not have been so widespread as to demand a change in policy.

Thomas Wilson, American Commissioner in India, further confirmed Welles' contention that Churchill's statement could be disregarded. Wilson belonged to a community of consuls in India who had a long established tradition of admiring British rule in India and disregarding Indian nationalism. Wilson reported to Hull on November 28, 1941 that the considerable prominence which American press gave to Churchill's statement regarding the application of the Atlantic Charter to the colonies had not been reflected by any section of the Indian press. He reaffirmed Roosevelt's popularity in the Indian press and discouraged an American response to Churchill's comments because they were of "infrequent occurrence."²⁵

Moreover, the officials in Washington had to contend with the British Prime Minister who seemed unwilling to give up control over India. When Churchill was in Washington in December 1941, Roosevelt raised the question of India's independence. Churchill recorded in his memoirs that he reacted so sharply that Roosevelt never raised it verbally again.²⁶

During the early stages of the war no concrete policy towards India had emerged in the State Department. In the initial reviews in the State Department, the discussions had centered vaguely on India and its nationalists leaders were not identified or their aspirations given consideration. The

²⁵ Ibid., 188-189.

²⁶ Winston S. Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate* (Boston: 1950) 209.

position of those who believed in the necessity of British rule in India, the importance they attached to British experience and knowledge of India had prevailed. Significantly, no specific image of India or criticism of the Indian nationalists had yet emerged, perhaps an indication of a lack of interest in India among the officials. Even those who proposed independence for India did so to advance America's independence from the British and not out of any special regard for the Indian nationalists.

Edward Said, in his discussion on Orientalism, has stated that the knowledge created about the orient provided both power and knowledge to the West which meant for 'us' to deny autonomy to 'it.'²⁷ Said's argument may be directed at the colonizer, in this case Britain, but by accepting the colonizer's position, American officials had accepted the justification of British rule in India making it difficult for India to be examined beyond the knowledge about India conveyed to them by the British.

Growth in American Understanding of India: the British Role

American acquiescence to the British was largely related to the conduct of the war in Asia. A reversal in the Allied position held the possibility of changing the American perspective on British rule in India. With American involvement in the war, in the wake of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, the possibility of a reevaluation of American opinion of the British and relatedly of the Indian nationalists increased. However, American reliance on British opinions along with views circulated by the popular media largely determined the development of American official opinion of Indian nationalism.

During the course of the war the British officials were becoming

²⁷ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) 32.

increasingly concerned at the possible development of American interest in the empire, especially in economic matters. Leopold Amery, the British Secretary of State for India, wrote to Linlithgow on January 5, 1942, that Hull wanted to use lend-lease as a lever to compel Britain to abandon Imperial Preference. "We in our anxiety to secure Lease-Lend and bring America in [the war] have never had the courage to say straight out that Imperial Preference is not merely a matter of economic policy but a national political right of British Commonwealth."²⁸ Fearing American involvement in India, it would also become necessary for the British officials to discourage the Americans by presenting the Indian nationalists, particularly the Indian National Congress, as immaterial and subversive.²⁹

With Japan's successes in the war and the fall of Singapore on February 15, 1942, the situation in India became a matter of greater concern to the American policy makers. Progressively, the Allied forces faced greater adversities in the Pacific War. They were forced to relinquish the Dutch East Indies. By March 8, 1942, Rangoon fell to Japan and by early April Japanese forces threatened the eastern borders of India. The assumption of British ability to control the nationalists and successfully conduct the war was now tested. With active participation of India becoming imperative, the United States was forced to reevaluate its own position regarding India. In this respect, their impressions about Indian nationalism became a major factor in deciding American policy objectives towards India. The major focus of the

²⁸ Amery to Linlithgow. Mansergh, v. 1 7-8. The policy of lendlease was developed by Roosevelt in March 1941 to provide material and financial assistance to the Allies.

²⁹ According to Darby, there was little to suggest that world opinion about India influenced London before the First World War. But in the period leading up to the Second World War, anti-colonialism in the United States jolted the British out of their complacency. 107. In the case of India, American officials may have made anti-colonial pronouncements but seemed unwilling to become involved.

Americans was on the Indian National Congress and its leaders, Gandhi and Nehru. The question arises, would the Congress get an opportunity to address American leaders itself or would impressions and images provided by the British officials gain precedence in any discussions about India.

Americans officials may have lacked a substantial understanding of India and only recently begun to evaluate Indian nationalism but in Britain, the images of India, discussed in the previous chapters, remained central to their evaluation of India. Views expressed by Churchill, Amery and Linlithgow provide insights into ideas about India they would introduce to American officials in Washington. Churchill was convinced that the Indian troops were loyal to the British king and that the "fighting races" would not tolerate the rule of the Congress and the "Hindoo Priesthood" machine. He did not anticipate any problems from the Americans because of their involvement in the war. Linlithgow, on the other hand, believed that the morale and fighting value of the army was more important than the American opinion. Like Churchill, Amery was convinced that India's war effort was dependent on Muslim support and active assistance of the Congress would not make much difference to India's fighting strength. He hoped to expose Chiang Kai-shek, the Chinese leader who had become concerned about the political situation in India, to the "niggling impractical creatures" Nehru and Gandhi were.³⁰ The British intention was clearly to prevent any outside interference by revealing the true character of the Indian nationalists. Indians, particularly the Congress leaders, had already been accepted as impractical 'creatures' by the American observers in India, but so far this sentiment had not been echoed by

³⁰ Ibid. Churchill to Attlee, January 7, 1942. Mansergh, v. 1 14. Linlithgow to Churchill, February 14, 1942. 170. Amery to Linlithgow, January 10, and February 2, 1942. 20, 108. Chiang Kai-shek visited India in February-March, 1942.

the American officials.

It is noteworthy that the British strategy was not only directed towards exposing the 'Oriental' to the West as its opposite³¹ but was also directed towards another 'Oriental' power, namely China, which had begun to question British rule in India in the context of India's participation in the war. Churchill wrote to Chiang Kai-shek on February 3, 1942, and emphasized the importance of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, leader of the Muslim League. Churchill argued that Jinnah represented eighty million Muslims, who, unlike the Hindus, were a martial race and were loyal to the British.³² In contrast, the Hindus were characterized as non-martial and passive people, irrelevant to the war effort.

Similarly, differences between Hindus and Muslims were reiterated by the British officials in India when Chiang Kai-shek visited the country. Linlithgow informed Amery on February 20, 1942, that he conveyed to the Chinese leader the importance of the Muslims in the army and "exploded Gandhi's myth."³³ But the British strategy apparently failed to convert Chiang Kai-shek to their point of view. Instead, the Chinese leader expressed his concerns to Roosevelt regarding India's military and political situation. He believed that only when the British handed power to India would they be able to win Indian loyalty.³⁴ The British had failed to deflect Chiang Kai-shek's attention away from the issue of India's independence. The Chinese leader seemed unconcerned about the differences between Hindus and Muslims. He

³¹ Said, *Orientalism* 38.

³² Churchill to Chiang Kai-shek. Mansergh, v. 1 113-114. Churchill on February 3, 1942, expressed his concerns at the possible consequence of Chiang Kai-shek's visit to New Delhi. He foresaw a spread of 'pan-Asian malaise through all the bazaars of India.' Ibid. v. 1 110-111.

³³ Ibid., 213.

³⁴ The Chinese Foreign Minister (T.V. Soong) to Roosevelt, enclosing the text of the telegram dated February 24, 1942. FR, 1942 v. 1 604-605.

focused primarily on India's confrontation with Britain and believed that India's independence was imperative.

The issues that concerned the Chinese leader were also expressed in the United States Congress. At the Senate Foreign Relations Committee meeting in February 1942, there was a noticeable expression of anti-British sentiments and promotion of America's growing power. The Committee argued that even if the Americans equipped the Indians with arms, the Indians would still not be encouraged to fight merely to prolong British rule in India. The Committee reasoned that America had provided Britain with lendlease and had achieved the position of strength to justify American participation in the empire councils and to recommend that Britain make changes in the empire. They argued that America should accept Gandhi's objectives and demand India's autonomy from Britain. In response to these suggestions Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long informed Welles on February 25, 1942, that the Committee might use their recommendations to attack not only Britain but also Roosevelt's administration for failing to take advantage of America's power.³⁵

The Congressional Committee viewed India's independence in the context of their recognition of America's power and its ability to wrest concessions from Britain. Their recommendations were similar to those of Berle only more forcefully stated. The Committee did not concur with the notion that India would better serve the Allied purposes under the British. Furthermore, they did not dispute India's ability to achieve and sustain independence. Rather, they accepted the claims of the Indian nationalists and acknowledged the Indian National Congress as their voice. The ideas about India, which had been circulated by American writers and journalists were not even a factor in this discussion. The driving force behind the

³⁵ Ibid., 606-607.

Congressional members was their belief that the United States had achieved the position of power to 'demand' from the British political concessions in the empire.

In response to recommendations made by the Chinese leader and the Congressional committee, Roosevelt was forced to act immediately. He advised Winant and Averell Harriman, second in command at the American embassy in London, to get a "slant" on what Churchill thought about a new relationship between Britain and India. Roosevelt clarified his position that he hesitated to send a direct message to Churchill because "in a strict sense, it is not our business but interest in the conduct of the war"³⁶ Churchill's earlier admonitions may have influenced the President to act with caution.³⁷ By addressing his concerns only to the British, the President had provided Churchill an opportunity to further instruct the Americans about the importance of British rule in India and to establish India's political and cultural image for them.

Churchill's response was similar to the one delivered to the Chinese leader. Considering that American interest in India had developed because of the war, Churchill's approach was to convince his American counterpart that the fighting forces in India were loyal to the British. Facing a challenge from his own Cabinet colleagues Churchill also knew that he had to negotiate with the Indian nationalists.³⁸ By confining the problems within Indian

³⁶ Roosevelt to Winant, February 25, 1942. Ibid., 604.

³⁷ Robert Dallek contends out that Roosevelt saw United States as a major force for world peace, but believed that aid to Britain and France was essential to preserve American values. *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York: Oxford U.P., 1979). 219.

³⁸ Churchill had to contend not only with external pressures but also from his Cabinet colleagues of the Labour Party for a British initiative on India. Labour leader Clement Attlee, on February 2, 1942, had challenged Churchill that the time had come to be statesmanlike towards India. Venkataramani, *Quit India...* 75.

nationalism he probably hoped to discourage American interference. It was now the turn of the Americans to be educated about Indian politics. It was essential to convey that the Congress was not the voice of all Indians but only the Hindus, and that for the war effort to continue successfully the Muslims demands had to be accounted for.

Churchill informed Roosevelt that approximately thirty five percent of the Indian troops were Muslims, of whom only twelve percent sympathized with the Congress. The fighting forces were largely antagonistic to the Congress and were from the northern provinces [Churchill did not clarify the demographic makeup but implied the Muslims] while the population of the center and the south [Churchill probably meant the Hindus] had no vigor to fight. In view of these facts, Churchill was unwilling to take political steps which would alienate the Muslims. He emphasized the inadequacies of the Congress and importance of the Muslims by providing numerical proofs, exposing character traits and social makeup of the Indians to justify his arguments. He did not provide specific data on the population composition but elaborated on the nature of the two religious groups. He informed Roosevelt that there was some danger in offending the Muslims, who were the main fighting force in the Indian army, and that they would not allow themselves to be governed by the "Congress Caucus" and the "Hindu priesthood."³⁹

It is noteworthy that Churchill made no mention of either Gandhi or Nehru. It probably suited him to submerge Gandhi within the larger Hindu nationalism and ignore Nehru in case Nehru's western upbringing be

³⁹ Warren F. Kimball, ed. *Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*. v. 1. (Princeton: Princeton U. P., 1984) 374 and FR 1942 v. 1 604-608. Linlithgow had emphasized to Churchill that India was not one national state but two major nations, composed to Hindus and Muslims and also the princes. Any attempt to militate against the Muslim demand for a separate state would lead to disaster in India. Mansergh, v. 1 233.

perceived as a sign of positive leadership by the Americans.⁴⁰

Having established the framework within which to understand Hindu nationalism, Churchill, on March 4, acquainted Roosevelt with the British plan to review India's future. Churchill once again informed Roosevelt of the problems between the two religious groups in India. He enclosed messages of Jinnah and the British military advisers to illustrate his point. These statements helped Churchill's argument that plans for India should be made after the war and should provide the right to secede to the Muslims. Churchill argued that the protection of the Muslims was essential because they represented 100 million people and the main army elements on which "we must rely for immediate fighting." He expressed his fear that the Muslims would be sacrificed if power in India was handed over to the Congress, as would the future of 30 to 40 million untouchables and the princely states. These were standard British arguments which writers like Bromfield had also adopted. Now it was the turn of the American officials to be introduced to them. Churchill argued that immediate transfer of power would deprive these minorities of assistance of "European elements" on whom they depend. "We do not want to throw India into chaos."⁴¹

In his correspondence with Roosevelt, Churchill progressively emphasized not only the divisions between Hindus and Muslims but also the fears of the minorities whose interests the Congress did not represent and

⁴⁰ According to John Gunther the British unendingly attacked Nehru as a socialist. *Inside Asia* (New York: Harper, 1939) 408, 424.

⁴¹ Warren F. Kimball, *Churchill and Roosevelt* 376-79 also Mansergh v. 1 309-13 and FR 1942 v. 1 612. Linlithgow wrote to Amery on March 6, 1942 that Indian army percentage composition was Hindus forty one, Muslims thirty five, Sikhs ten, Gurkhas eight and a half and others five and a half. Linlithgow believed that a promise of independence to India would discourage the martial races and bring forward non-martial classes who would be worthless against external aggression. India's independence would lead to widespread communal disturbance. This information was conveyed by Churchill to Roosevelt on March 7, 1942. Kimball, 388-389.

whom only the British could protect. The success of this stereotype of martial Muslims and submissive Hindus depended on its continuous and repeated reiteration. The data that Churchill provided often contradicted his argument regarding the unbridgeable gap between Hindus and Muslims but served his purpose of presenting the confusion in Indian politics.⁴² India's independence was no longer a simple problem with a simple solution.

American policy makers who had consistently relied on British opinions did not ignore this information. Churchill knew that the Congress demanded immediate independence and a unified India and disagreed with the Muslim demand for a separate state of Pakistan. By suggesting a postponement of India's independence until after the war and conceding the demands of the Muslims, Churchill was inviting the Congress to reject the British proposals. The strategy of presenting the Congress as limited in popularity and immaterial in the war would remove the Congress as the accepted voice of Indian nationalism. According to Churchill, the motive of the mission was not to work out a solution but to project to the United States a better image of British rule in India. In Britain, the Special Cabinet Committee, set up to examine the Indian problem, on March 7, 1942, constituted a mission headed by Sir Stafford Cripps to negotiate a settlement. On March 10, Churchill wrote to Linlithgow that owing to the general American outlook the Cripps Mission was indispensable to prove "our honesty of purpose."⁴³

The information provided by Churchill had a definite impact on

⁴² Churchill's delegitimization of the Hindu Congress has to be examined in the context of his objectives. The Congress may have been caste based but what Churchill ignored was that it was also mass based which also included the Muslims. He had acknowledged that twelve of the thirty five percent of the Muslims in the army sympathized with the Congress. Moreover, Churchill also underplayed the fact that 41% of the Indian army was composed of Hindus, instead he focused on non-martial traits of the Hindus.

⁴³ Mansergh, v. 1 394-395.

Roosevelt. On March 10, 1942, he wrote to Churchill expressing his diffidence in making recommendations about India. Yet he suggested setting up a temporary government in India using the American example of the 13 colonies which had joined in the Articles of Confederation as an obvious stop-gap arrangement. Roosevelt argued that a similar temporary government could be set up in India headed by a small representative group composed of all castes, religions and geographical regions which would have certain executive and administrative power over public services. A more permanent government would be set up over five or six years. Roosevelt argued that it would make the Indians forget their hard feelings towards Britain. He added "For the love of heaven don't bring me into this, though I do want to be of help. It is strictly speaking none of my business."⁴⁴

In his war memoirs Churchill dismissed Roosevelt's suggestions as an illustration of the difficulties of comparing the situation in various centuries and in trying to apply any superficial resemblance between the two countries.⁴⁵ As noted earlier, John Paton Davies, political advisor to General Stilwell, criticized Roosevelt for not understanding the Indian political reality and for assuming that India was a single nation. Davies believed that what was good for American colonists would not necessarily be good for the Indian colonials, smoldering with ancient explosive antagonisms of race, religion and

⁴⁴ FR 1942 v. 1 613-16 and Francis L. Loewenstein, ed. *Roosevelt and Churchill: Their Secret Wartime Correspondence* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1975) 190. On the February 25 draft, which was not sent, Roosevelt had reevaluated colonialism and expressed American distinctness in more defined terms. He had informed Churchill that the old relationship had ceased to exist at least 10 to 20 years ago and that no substitute had been worked out except the American policy of eventual freedom for the Philippines. Roosevelt expressed his concern about India and believed that there was real danger in India and that unless granted independence India would not resist Japan wholeheartedly. Kimball, ed. *Churchill and Roosevelt* 400-401.

⁴⁵ Churchill, 214.

caste.⁴⁶ Roosevelt's understanding of India may have been limited but had emerged out of the information provided by Churchill. He did not dispute the facts and figures provided by Churchill. He accepted India as divided by geography, caste and religion. Moreover, Roosevelt did not suggest immediate independence for India, rather he believed that real independence could come later whenever it was deemed self-governable by Britain.

Roosevelt's discussion with Churchill introduces not only a spirit of cooperation but an underlying competitiveness as well. Their correspondence was not confined to discussions about India but dealt extensively with war related matters in which the adversities Britain suffered in Asia were evident. The British dependence on American assistance seemed to have given Roosevelt an incentive to impress upon Churchill his recommendations. However, Roosevelt did not give credence to the demands of the Indian nationalists or examine the impact of Churchill's plan on their aspirations. Instead, he presented his own plan promoting America's own successful political experiment.

Roosevelt had certainly been influenced if not convinced by the British Prime Minister's interpretation of problems within Indian nationalism. He sought journalist Edgar Snow's advice about constituting a new government in India because of "that Hindu Muslim problem," the "untouchables and the "princes" and the British argument that they had to protect them all. Snow recorded in his memoirs that Roosevelt believed that the Japanese were a necessary evil to break the old colonial system.⁴⁷ Roosevelt, like many American observers of India, may have opposed British imperialism but this

⁴⁶ John Patton Davies, *Dragon by the Tail* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972) 236.

⁴⁷ Edgar Snow, *Journey to the Beginning* (New York: Random House, 1958) 254-255.

opposition remained unrelated to the opinions he developed of India. He did not express a distaste for Hindu nationalism but he echoed India's problems in a vocabulary provided by Churchill. He did not dispute Churchill's dismissal of the Hindus as nonmartial despite the data provided to him which indicated that forty one percent of the Indian army was composed of the Hindus and that some Muslims sympathized with the Congress. Roosevelt may not have necessarily marginalized Indian nationalism but had largely accepted it as presented by the colonizer.

America's Response to the Cripps Mission

On March 11, Churchill announced the Cripps Mission in the House of Commons. At this time the United States had constituted a Technical Mission to India with the intention to boost the war effort. The mission was headed by Henry Grady, former Assistant Secretary of State, and Louis Johnson, former Assistant Secretary of War, to assist in developing industrial resources of India. Berle had clarified to the Indian Agent General in Washington, Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, that the mission did not have political objectives.⁴⁸ But with the announcement of the Cripps Mission, and in view of the mounting internal and external pressures, Roosevelt was presented with an opportunity to exert some influence on the British.

Once the Cripps Mission was announced, Roosevelt detached Louis Johnson from the Technical Mission and made him his Personal Representative in India. Johnson's appointment raises a number of questions regarding Roosevelt's intentions. Was Johnson's appointment merely an effort

⁴⁸ Memorandum of conversation of Berle with the Indian Agent General Bajpai, February 28, 1942. FR, 1942 v. 1 609-610.

to placate the growing opposition to the British in America, or was Johnson assigned to put pressure on the British or to encourage the Indians to accept the Cripps proposals. According to Davies, Johnson was a coarse and bombastic man. His appointment was "a crude expression of Roosevelt's concern over the Indian problem." Davies was also critical of Roosevelt's assumption that India was a nation.⁴⁹ But Davies, like many American observers in India was critical of the British as well. In contrast, Johnson had no experience in India and had largely associated with British officials in London. There were two possible attitudes Johnson could develop about India. Either like Davies, his distance from Washington could change his perspective, or his experience in the State Department and with the British officials could encourage a greater identification with the British.

Johnson's role in India was largely dependent on Roosevelt's involvement in Indian politics. The Cripps Mission had provided Roosevelt an opportunity to assert America's influence. He challenged Churchill's assumptions about the Hindu Congress by corresponding with Maulana Azad, the Indian National Congress President. Roosevelt sent a letter with Johnson to Maulana Azad expressing his hope that India would accept Cripps' proposals and participate in the war actively.⁵⁰ Earlier, in February 1942, Roosevelt had sent Nehru a message by journalist Edgar Snow, asking Nehru to write to him about what he wanted done for India.⁵¹ No record of Nehru's reply to Roosevelt could be found. But when the Cripps Mission was announced Roosevelt did not approach Nehru. It is possible that Roosevelt was following

⁴⁹ Davies, 236-237. *Time* had described Johnson as a 'gusty figure' with a 'brash style' who knew India from Kipling's *Kim*. April 20, 1942, xxxix no. 16, 28.

⁵⁰ Maulana Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1960) 119.

⁵¹ Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: a Biography* v. 1 290.

the protocol by approaching the president of the nationalist organization.

Roosevelt's communication with Azad does not indicate that he gave consideration to the demands and concerns of the Indian nationalists. Instead, he seemed to want the Indians, particularly the Congress to accept the proposals without debate. Nevertheless, Roosevelt's involvement meant that he had not been entirely converted by Churchill to adopt the British interpretation of Indian politics nor had he rejected the Congress as Churchill wanted him to. If Roosevelt wanted to put a dent in the British imperial enterprise, he wanted the Indians to take the lead by accepting the proposals. Unlike observers like Eve Curie, who had established a firm identification with the British, Roosevelt had adopted a more independent approach and seemed to have challenged the British, albeit indirectly and discreetly.

In view of India becoming an American concern, the British had to deal not only with the American President, but also with American public opinion and the reports presented by the American media. Amery informed Linlithgow on March 8, that fear of the breakdown of Indian morale, if no concessions were made, was being worked to death by the American press.⁵² Earlier, on February 26, the British Ambassador in Washington had reported that American interest in British rule in India and Indian demands showed signs of revival.⁵³ A *New York Times* editorial stated that if the British proposal was rejected the only explanation that would save Cripps and his Cabinet colleagues was that India herself put her old quarrels ahead of freedom.⁵⁴ In view of such opinions it was likely that the British would attempt to turn world attention away from themselves to 'old quarrels' among the Indians. Amery

⁵² Mansergh, v. 1 375.

⁵³ H. G. Nicholas, ed. *Washington Despatches 1941-1945* (New York: Harcourt, Brace 1944) 22.

⁵⁴ *New York Times*, March 24, 1942 (8:2).

believed that by sending an extreme Left winger [Cripps], who was close to Nehru and the Congress, the British would be able to absolve themselves of any responsibility for failure. Amery was certain that chances of Cripps' success were minimal.⁵⁵ Cripps had written to Nehru on October 11, 1939, that he had put before the Cabinet Ministers the "democracy and freedom" argument for India. He believed that the Congress should stand as firm as a rock upon its demands.⁵⁶ Cripps' was the voice of the dissident and like the Congress had to be silenced.

Amery was correct in his assessment. Cripps received much praise in the American press. *Time* magazine declared that Cripps was the only member of the British War Cabinet who had advocated the offer of Dominion Status for India. But when Cripps was asked if a guarantee could be obtained from Roosevelt for the mission's success he had stated "I am afraid you won't get it."⁵⁷ This statement provides an insight into the limited intervention that the British officials, including Cripps, expected from the American policy makers. The Mission was designed to convince the Americans that British intentions were fair and that the obstacle towards constitutional reforms was created by the Indians themselves.

The success of this strategy is visible in a *New York Times* editorial of March 31, 1942, which praised the British for acknowledging their mistakes and suggested the Indians do the same. The editorial commented that if India could reconcile her factions, then she can have a "new birth of freedom." However, it also warned that if Indian leaders refused this "gift of freedom" for petty, or personal, or spiteful reasons they will lose American sympathy and

⁵⁵ Amery to Linlithgow, March 10, 1942. Mansergh, v. 1 401-404.

⁵⁶ Jawaharlal Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters* (New York: Asia Publishing House 1960) 395.

⁵⁷ *Time*, v. xxxix no. 14 April 6, 1942, 19, 26.

the "offer of American comradeship that is now theirs for the asking."⁵⁸ This view indicates that with the advent of the Cripps Mission the onus of responsibility had definitely shifted on India. The editorial did not examine the demands of the Indian nationalists but placed requirements on them to display political maturity by accepting the "gift" unquestioningly or lose American support. The British, on the other hand, by merely sending Cripps to India had proven their good intentions. No effort seems to have been made to examine the possible motives of Churchill, who had never hidden his intentions of keeping the empire intact. Rejection of the proposals by the nationalists would have to be for petty, personal and spiteful reasons alone. If the Americans wanted British imperial power dismantled, the Indians had to do so by accepting the proposals regardless of their own concerns. There was no evaluation of Cripps' proposals in context of India's demands or the manner in which the nationalists wanted the transfer of power to take place. The *New York Times* warning to the Indians predicts the opinions that would be adopted about India if the Indians rejected the proposals.

Further, on April 3, 1942, an editorial of *New York Times* contended that with Japan marching to Burma, the war was the priority. The real choice for the Indian people was not on what terms they would settle for their independence, but whether they would have a chance to achieve independence. Americans understood what freedom meant and were fighting to preserve it.⁵⁹ The editorial emphasized the American capacity to understand "freedom" but denied it to the colonized Indians. British imperialism was not even an issue in this report.

At this time Nehru wrote an article for *Fortune* magazine entitled

⁵⁸ *New York Times* (20:1) .

⁵⁹ *New York Times*, (20:1).

'India's Day of Reckoning.' This article can be read as his attempt to inform the Americans about India's concerns and aspirations. Nehru urged the "leaders of America and Britain" to issue declarations recognizing the rights of the people of every race to equality of treatment and opportunity. He wanted them to recognize India's independence and right to frame her own constitution through an assembly of elected representatives followed by a provisional national government with "real power" handed to it. Nehru argued that the American President had spoken words of freedom, but the words were vague and unsatisfactory because no action followed these words. He urged the Americans to divest themselves of conceptions of India "as a kind of colonial appendage or offshoot of Britain" that required a period of "tutelage and training" to become ready for nationhood and freedom.' He warned that India should not be considered a British responsibility and a problem militarily:

No country can ignore India's present and her future, least of all Americans, on whom rests the vast burden of responsibility and towards whom so many millions look for right leadership at this crisis in world history.⁶⁰

Nehru not only appealed to the Americans to dissociate themselves from the British but was also aware of ideas Americans held of India. The general image of India present in the writings of Mayo and Kendall indicate that India had been widely perceived as requiring British 'tutelage' and Nehru seemed to address and correct that misconception. Interestingly, Nehru's recognition of American power and his appeal to the Americans to establish a distance from the British echoed the sentiments expressed by American military officials in India.

Opinions expressed by the *New York Times* and Nehru illustrate the

⁶⁰ Cited in M. S. Venkataramani *Quit India...* 90-91 Nehru had cabled the article on March 8, 1942 and it was published in the April edition of the magazine.

different perspectives on the concept of "freedom" presented by Americans and Indians. The *Times* viewed freedom in the context of the war against Fascism whereas Nehru emphasized it in terms of freedom from colonialism. Nehru wanted freedom to decide India's own future whereas most Americans expressed doubts about India's capability to understand the concept.

Louis Johnson's Involvement

In the United States, Louis Johnson, the newly appointed Special Representative of the President, inquired whether "he could do much" with the nationalists and was advised by Assistant Secretary Howland Shaw to "be careful." According to Shaw, Johnson seemed to feel that he had not been given any positive information about anything.⁶¹ This unpreparedness of Johnson is suggestive of the State Department's lack of perspective on India and the disregard with which they treated the Indian nationalists. Indian nationalism and the nationalists were lost in the vaguely identified 'India,' when their personalities did emerge, they had often been defined by the British.

As the stage was set for the Cripps Mission, the retiring Commissioner in New Delhi, Thomas M. Wilson provided his assessment of the aspirations of the Indian nationalists regarding the Mission. He reported that the Muslims were prepared to wait so long as no plan was put forth which torpedoed Muslim claim for a homeland. Moreover, proposals which did not give to India complete freedom coupled with effective guarantees for their fulfillment

⁶¹ Memorandum of conversation of Shaw with Johnson, March 11, 1942. FR, 1942 v. 1 616-617.

would certainly not be accepted.⁶² In the State Department, Paul Alling, Chief of the Near Eastern Affairs, emphasized the importance of the Cripps Mission. He believed that a settlement in India would contribute significantly to winning the war.⁶³ Alling acknowledged the significance of the Cripps Mission but its real outcome lay in the hands of the British and their access to Washington.

The British utilized their access to Washington and forewarned the American officials about the possible failure of the Mission and placed the responsibility for it on the Congress. On April 1, 1942, Halifax informed Welles that he did not believe that the Congress would accept any plan because of their inability to reach any agreement with the Muslim League. He also reassured Welles that the failure of the Mission would not have any adverse effect in India.⁶⁴ Welles had found no reason to disagree with Halifax earlier. In fact, he had acknowledged the British ability to preserve order in India. Independence for India on its own merit had never emerged as an issue in itself. On the day Halifax spoke to Welles, Cripps had reported to Churchill that the Congress would reject the proposal and informed him of the low morale and anti-British feeling in India.⁶⁵ British officials qualified this information when reporting to the Americans. The low morale and anti-British sentiment in India was not reported.

The British proposal promised Dominion Status to India at the end of the war. But it also contained within it the clause offering possible non-accession to any province or princely state in the new Indian union. The non-accession

⁶² Ibid. Wilson to Hull, March, 17, 1942. 619-621

⁶³ Memorandum of Alling, April 1, 1942. *General Records of the Department of State*, Record Group 59, 845.01/181.

⁶⁴ Memorandum of the conversation of Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles with Halifax. FR, 1942 v. 1 623.

⁶⁵ Cripps to Churchill, April 1, 1942. Mansergh, v. 1 600.

provinces could enter into a new constitutional arrangement with Britain. The states in the constitution-making body were to be represented not by persons selected by the people but by nomination.⁶⁶

The Officer-in-Charge in New Delhi, George R. Merrell, on April 2, 1942, informed the State Department of the Congress's concerns regarding the provisions. Merrell reported that the Congress objected to the non-transfer of defense to the Indians and was dissatisfied with the provision for appointments rather than elections of delegates from Indian states to the Constituent Assembly.⁶⁷ But the officials in the State Department had already been introduced to the marginality of the Congress and possibility of the failure of the Mission. Amery wrote to Linlithgow on April 3, 1942, "I am not sure that these people [Indians] want responsibility," if Britain offered them "the moon" they would reject it. The Cripps mission had improved "our position in outside world."⁶⁸ These opinions of the Indians had more or less been expressed only by the British, but they seemed to anticipate their adoption by American officials as well.

With the arrival of Johnson in India a new avenue had opened for the officials in Washington to learn about Indian politics. Johnson was informed by both Cripps and the British Commander-in-Chief Archibald Wavell that the appointment of an Indian Defense Minister would lead to chaos and loss of army morale. These arguments apparently convinced Johnson and in his initial reports he favored the British position. He informed Roosevelt on April 4, 1942, that Cripps was unwilling to modify the non-acceding clause for the provinces and believed that Cripps was justified regarding the Muslim

⁶⁶ For a detailed analysis of the Cripps Mission see V. T. Patil, *Jawaharlal Nehru and the Cripps Mission* (Delhi: B. R. Publishing, 1984) and R.J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India, 1939-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

⁶⁷ FR, 1942 v. 1 624-627.

⁶⁸ Mansergh, v. 1 632-634.

provinces and treaty rights of the princely states. Johnson pointed out that Nehru wanted people, not rulers, as representatives in the Constituent Assembly, which instilled fear in the Muslims and the Sikhs. In view of these facts, Johnson urged Roosevelt to intervene in the matter in order to prevent the collapse of the negotiations because such a failure would adversely affect the war.⁶⁹ Johnson may not have accepted the image of the Hindu as immaterial in the war but he had accepted the Congress as a threat to those who had been identified by the British as needing protection. But he had also recognized the American ability to intervene to effect a solution. However, on April 5, Welles informed Johnson that Roosevelt did not consider it desirable or expedient to intervene.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, by predicting chaos in India if the Congress was handed responsibility, Johnson had reconfirmed the problems with which Churchill had already acquainted Roosevelt.

In the meantime, British officials, in anticipation of Cripps' failure, were already planning future strategies. Halifax informed Linlithgow on April 7, that if Cripps failed to bring about a settlement he should return to Britain via the United States as it would be good for public relations. In his initial response to Johnson, Linlithgow reported to Amery on April 7, that Johnson was a "pleasant man" and had succeeded in increasing the pressure on the Congress. But Linlithgow also made it clear that he did not like the principle of anybody concerning himself too closely with detailed negotiations between Britain and India.⁷¹ The general American deference to the British suggests that Johnson's role in India would be controlled by the British.

Johnson was the first American official in India who made serious contact with the Indian leaders, especially Nehru, and reported extensively

⁶⁹ FR, 1942 v. 1 626-627.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 627-628.

⁷¹ Mansergh, v. 1 690.

and frequently about the situation in India. He was apparently not converted by the British to adopt their interpretation of the Congress or discouraged by Washington's unwillingness to intervene. Instead, he progressively changed his perspective on problems in India. Like the military officials, his observation of British incompetence in the war helped him recognize the growing American power. Consequently, his involvement in the Cripps Mission increased and his emphasis shifted to reporting the ability of the Americans to exert influence on the British.

Whereas the British insisted that Cripps' failure would not adversely affect the war, Johnson emphasized the opposite. In his reports he concentrated on the negative impact of the political impasse in India on the war effort. He informed Hull that Japan had successfully disrupted shipping between Madras and Calcutta. He also informed the Secretary of State that at the request of Cripps and Nehru he had been acting as a mediator and believed that the negotiations had survived due to his efforts as Roosevelt's personal representative. He reported on his attempt to urge Wavell to join Cripps in requesting the British Cabinet to make further readjustments which, Johnson believed, Wavell rejected because of his distrust of Nehru.⁷² With the rejection of Cripps' proposals, Johnson even developed his own plan that the Defense Department be placed in charge of an Indian representative, but certain functions of the war remain with the British.⁷³ In view of this initiative, Linlithgow changed his opinion of Johnson. He was displeased with Johnson

⁷² Johnson to Hull, April 7, 1942. FR, 1942 v. 1 628-630.

⁷³ Venkataramani, *Quit India...* 111-112. Over the issue of defense the ultimate proposal was that the British Commander-in-Chief retain his seat in the Viceroy's Executive Council and maintain full control over all war activities. An Indian representative would be added to the Council but his functions would remain different from that of the Commander-in-Chief. For the text of the Cripps-Johnson formula see the memorandum of Linlithgow to Amery on April 9, 1942. Mansergh v. 1 699-700.

for sharing the formula with the Congress before consulting him. He found the American position in the "business" intolerable because it presented the British as obstructionists.⁷⁴

Johnson's initiatives caused concern in London as well. On April 9, Churchill raised the question of Johnson's role with Harry Hopkins, Special Emissary of Roosevelt. Hopkins informed the Prime Minister that Johnson's original mission in India had nothing to do with the Cripps Mission. He also informed Churchill that Roosevelt was unwilling to be drawn into Indian politics except at the personal request of Churchill and only if assured that both sides accepted the proposals.⁷⁵ Hopkins urged Roosevelt to play down Johnson's role because there was an "unfortunate impression" in England that Johnson was mediating under the President's instruction.⁷⁶ At this time Cripps asked Churchill to thank Roosevelt for Johnson's assistance. But Churchill, with his newly acquired assurances from Hopkins, informed Cripps that Johnson was not Roosevelt's personal representative in any matter outside the specific issue of the war.⁷⁷

Hopkins' initiative to inform Churchill about the limits of Johnson's role, without consulting the President, indicates a lack of American perspective on India. Roosevelt may have sent Johnson as his personal representative but seemed disinclined to pursue the issue any further. Johnson's support from his superiors depended largely on the British approval. As far as the British were concerned the mission was over. Churchill declared the mission a success in terms of creating a favorable opinion in both

⁷⁴ Note by Linlithgow April 8, 1942. Mansergh, v. 1 694-696.

⁷⁵ Robert Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper, 1948) 524-525.

⁷⁶ FR, 1942 v. 1 629-630.

⁷⁷ Cripps to Churchill and Churchill to Cripps, April 9, 1942. Mansergh, v. 1 697, 704.

England and the United States. Amery wrote to Linlithgow that for the first time Americans "will have learnt something about the complexities of Indian affairs and the intransigence of the Congress and their refusal to face responsibility."⁷⁸

However, the British insistence upon the complexities in Indian politics did not convince Johnson. He informed Hull that, even though the Congress had rejected the proposals, he believed that Cripps could work with Nehru if given authority by Churchill. Johnson had recognized that Churchill, Linlithgow and Wavell did not want Cripps to succeed. But Johnson was astute enough to emphasize the fledgling war effort and the weakness in the British army in order to evoke a response from Washington. Unlike his initial report, in which he had focused on the problems within India, Johnson had shifted the focus to the British in an apparent effort to keep American interest in India alive. He reported that the Indian Ocean was controlled by the enemy, British shipping to India was suspended, Wavell was worn out and the British were in the process of abandoning Burma. Johnson emphasized that in such a situation any association by the Americans with the British was bound to adversely affect the morale of American officers.⁷⁹ Johnson's assessment indicates that those Americans who witnessed British military reversals were able to draw distinctions with the British more easily than the officials in Washington. It was this distance which had given Johnson a different perspective.

According to B. Shiva Rao, correspondent in Delhi of the *The Hindu* and *The Manchester Guardian*, Johnson informed him that "We are fighting this war more than the British." Johnson further added that Roosevelt wanted to

⁷⁸ Ibid. Churchill to Cripps and Amery to Linlithgow April 11, 1942. 739, 756-758.

⁷⁹ Johnson to Hull, April 11, 1942. FR, 1942 v. 1 631-632.

know whether India would continue to fight, and whether free India could give guarantees to the Muslims and the Untouchables. If Roosevelt could be convinced of these two positions, Johnson believed, the President would use his influence with Churchill to give India independence.⁸⁰ Roosevelt may have encouraged Johnson by expressing these sentiments, however, Johnson failed to recognize that Roosevelt's activism towards India had already ceased. Johnson may have made promises to the Indians on behalf of the President but without a mandate from Washington.

End of the Cripps Mission: the American Reaction

The State Department may have been aware of the possibilities of Cripps' failure but had nevertheless planned policies in anticipation of the Mission's success. Welles informed the President that the failure of the Cripps Mission made it impossible for the United States to utilize the announcement of an agreement between Britain and the people of India as a platform upon which to base an announcement of a broader policy. If the mission had succeeded Welles would have recommended an announcement affirming the independence of Korea and expulsion of the Japanese from all occupied territories. Welles contended that if such an announcement was now made it would lack conviction as the war was going in favor of the Japanese and the question of India's independence still held the center of attention.⁸¹ There is no indication in the printed policy records that any major consideration had

⁸⁰ B. Shiva Rao. "India, 1935-47," in C. H. Philips and Mary Doreen Wainwright ed. *The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives, 1935-1947* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970) 431.

⁸¹ Welles to Roosevelt, April 11, 1942. FR, 1942 v. 1 631.

been given to this aspect of the Cripps Mission. As long as the mission was considered narrowly, only in terms of India's independence, American officials were willing to act within the limits set by the British. But with Japanese victories and the low morale among the Allied troops in India, and in recognition of the larger implications of India's independence, suddenly the Cripps Mission acquired greater significance.

Roosevelt now wanted to prevent the breakdown of the negotiations and wanted Cripps to be authorized to continue the mission. He informed Churchill that American opinion was not satisfied and believed it was due to the unwillingness of the British government to concede the rights of self government to the Indian people. If the British Government was willing to permit parts of India to secede from the British empire after the war, why was it not willing to permit India during the war to enjoy self government. Once again, Roosevelt suggested that if component groups in India could be given the opportunity to set up a nationalist government similar to the American one, a solution could be found. He believed that if such an effort was made and failed then at least public opinion in the United States would be satisfied that a real and fair offer had been made. But Churchill informed him that the negotiations could not be reopened because Cripps had already left India. He added that anything like a serious difference between the two of them would "break my heart" and would deeply injure both the countries at the height of the terrible struggle.⁸²

Johnson's commentaries on Britain's failures in the war seemed to have succeeded in convincing Roosevelt to renew his interest in India's independence.⁸³ However, there is no evidence of a widespread criticism of

⁸² Ibid. Churchill to Roosevelt, April 12, 1942. 633-635, Mansergh, v. 1 764.

⁸³ According to Hess, Roosevelt was pressured by Johnson and Berle to assert his influence but, as usual, did not consult the State Department officials when

Britain in the United States to which Roosevelt referred. This was a period in which Americans were slowly coming to grips with their increasing power and recognizing the gradual loss of the British strength. Roosevelt was probably testing the new found American power and his latest initiative may have come as a result of this awareness allowing him to challenge the British once again, but this time more forcefully.

Johnson's interest in India had arisen out of a similar recognition. He may have failed to make India's independence an issue on its own merit but had definitely succeeded in arousing American interest in it in the context of the war. If India was to win independence at this stage, it would not be because its aspirations were recognized but because India's independence had become linked to larger American interests.

However, Roosevelt's assertions against the British were not accepted by all officials. Henry Stimson, the Secretary of War, believed that the President had foolishly intervened on behalf of India. Stimson believed that it was a difficult position for Churchill to have the United States "butting" into an area which Churchill had declared a British concern.⁸⁴ The vacillation in American interest in India occurred primarily because of the tension between those who recognized the emergence of American power, whose interests in Asia diverged from those of the British versus those who adhered to a traditional relationship with Britain. However, Indian nationalism had not aroused any interest on its own merit and the concerns expressed by the

he approached Churchill. He relied on personal diplomacy which, according to Hess, often meant acting on whim. *America Encounters India*, 51-52. Clymer believes that Roosevelt's suggestions to Churchill were a logical extension of the American policy which was progressively moving toward intervention. It was exemplified by the President's proposals about establishing an interim government, made on March 10, 1942 and the appointment of Johnson as his Special Representative in India. *Quest for Independence*, 68.

⁸⁴ Cited in M. S. Venkataramani, *Quit India...* 131.

military officials regarding the growth of anti-white sentiments in India had not acquired any significance.

The suspicion of British motives to which Roosevelt referred to seemed to have subsided in the American media. In fact, with the demise of the Cripps Mission the focus of attention had shifted to India and the American press reported extensively on the failures of the Indian nationalists. In the official circles the discussion still centered on 'India,' but the press, in the aftermath of Cripps' failure, identified and characterized the nationalists, drawing on the images and vocabulary so far promoted by the British. Churchill's opinion of the Indian National Congress was readily adopted by the journalists. Before Cripps had begun negotiations, the media had not questioned the Indian ability to establish self rule or criticized the Indian nationalists. However, with the failure of the Cripps Mission, the focus of the media shifted mainly to India. The media may not have absolved the British but had become effective collaborators of the British arguments about India.

A *New York Times* editorial on April 13, 1942, questioned the very concept of "the people of India." The editorial declared that "India is a maze of vertical and horizontal divisions" and questioned how could one find a solution that could satisfy provinces, princes and the Muslims. It singled out the Congress leaders as "sleep-walkers" who spoke of "freedom of India" but would obtain nothing unless they cooperated fully with England. The leaders had no experience or training to be put in charge of defense. The editorial pointed out that having been trained in the habits of protest, the Congress seemed unable to change quickly enough to adopt the habits of responsibility. The editorial acknowledged that at times Britain may have put leaders like Gandhi and Nehru in jail, but under the despotism of Hitler and Japan they would have been silenced. In fact, Gandhi's philosophy of non-resistance was possible "only

under a ruler with a conscience."⁸⁵

A noticeable change had occurred in the American media's view of the situation in India. With the failure of the Cripps Mission, the popular media downplayed their occasionally critical evaluation of the British rule in India and concentrated primarily on criticizing Indian politics.⁸⁶ It was the Indian nationalists who emerged as betrayers of freedom. Now India's ability to achieve independence was questioned and the Congress leadership singled out as inept and irresponsible. They could not comprehend the ideas of freedom and democracy and the necessity of cooperating with the British in the war. The British were still imperialists, but with a 'conscience,' who had allowed India's nationalism to exist.⁸⁷

It should be noted that American criticism of the British had not entirely disappeared. In an article published in *Time* magazine, 'As England Feels....,' the unnamed author stated that England had taken the empire for granted. The English people did not know or care that only under England did India ever achieve unity, peace, constitutional law and evenhanded justice. After the fall of Singapore the English were shocked to learn that Englishmen in Singapore were all very rich, drank a great deal and failed to inspire the natives to die for the empire.⁸⁸ The British failures in the war had definitely presented the Americans with the opportunity to criticize and satirize British

⁸⁵ *New York Times*, (14:1).

⁸⁶ Even in 1930 when Gandhi had been made Man of the Year by *Time* magazine, John Haynes Holmes had believed that Americans regarded Gandhi's policies as fantastic. *My Gandhi* (New York: Harper, 1953) 54. Gandhi's rejection of the Cripps' mission was bound to arouse criticism in the United States.

⁸⁷ David Spurr points out that the essential confrontation of cultures marking the colonial situation extends beyond the banner of colonial rule. Ruling ideas continue to hold sway outside institutional limits of direct domination. *The Rhetoric of Empire* (Durham: Duke U.P., 1993) 6.

⁸⁸ *Time*, v. xxxix no. 15. April 13, 1942, 28-29.

imperialism. Americans had begun to establish their distinction from the British by emphasizing British incompetence in the war, for forgetting their purpose and ideals and for becoming decadent imperial rulers. An American identity, free of the imperial baggage, had begun to assert itself in this comparison.

However, the criticism of the British did not necessarily mean that the Indian nationalists had gained respectability. Gandhi was described as a "wily saint" who came to confer with Cripps in his "loincloth" from his "mud hut." Cripps tried his "Christian-Socialist" best to sway the "Hindu saint" but failed while Nehru was left with "both feet off the ground." *Time* magazine considered Nehru "fanatically" loyal to Gandhi, but also aspiring to be India's savior. He saw the point like a "practical westerner," yet he felt as a "mystical Hindu." Jinnah, on the other hand, represented only a small faction of the Muslims but his importance lay in the fact that he epitomized the Muslim fear of the Hindus.⁸⁹

The *Time* magazine article did not analyze political differences but focused primarily on cultural incompatibility between the Indians and the British. At the time American official interest withdrew from India the media became more intrusive in its examination of Indian culture and politics. It was not the political aspirations but the irrational behavior of the Indians which was forcefully and graphically criticized. The failure of the Cripps Mission was not examined in the context of its contents or the motives and objectives of the British. Instead, popular perceptions of India were resurrected to demonstrate the difference between Gandhi and Cripps, in effect between the East and the West. Such epithets and visualizations as 'wily' Gandhi's emergence from the 'mud hut' wearing a 'loin cloth' to confer with the 'Christian-Socialist'

⁸⁹ Ibid., 33-34.

disqualified Gandhi as a rational and practical politician as did the fanatic loyalty of Nehru to Gandhi.⁹⁰ The description of Nehru is significant because his positive 'westernized' self would always be at odds with his Hindu mysticism in which the latter always subdued his rational westernized personality. Nehru, whom Johnson had attempted to present as a reasonable leader, had lost his credibility. India was progressively becoming synonymous with the Hindus where the Muslims did not belong.

The American press, although at times derisive of British imperialism, accepted the British assessment of India. Amery believed that while Indians demanded independence, none of them had that spirit of self government.⁹¹ *Time* magazine echoed this belief that the defeatist and alarmists in the Congress had prevailed, they did not want to accept power and responsibility on the eve of the invasion.⁹²

The British were conscious of this trend in the American thought. Halifax made some astute observations to Anthony Eden. He reported that the shift of attention from the European war to the Pacific war itself was one of the largest single factors reducing British popularity in America. Halifax believed that America's attention in Asia, where Britain's colonial operation were already suspect, "heroic" China took the pride of place. National pride found an outlet in America and in comparison Britain emerged unfavorably. Halifax singled out the "internationally minded liberals" in America who found their worst fears of the inefficiency and decadence of British colonial administration confirmed by the swift collapse of the far eastern empire.

⁹⁰ Spurr points out that the West 'aestheticized' the non-West by showing it as unprotected by the restraining constructs of advanced civilizations, 'classified' it according to western standards of advancement and 'naturalized' it by representing it in terms of natural space and natural phenomena, as primitive people. 46, 69, 156.

⁹¹ Note by Amery, April 28, 1942. Mansergh, v. 1 838-841.

⁹² *Time*, xxxix no. 17 April 27, 1942 36.

Halifax believed that in the State Department, below the level of Hull, Welles and Acheson, there was an unwillingness to take Britain into closer consultations. Halifax believed that the President gave the American people to understand that Britain was no longer capable of protecting its own colonies and the United States must take a lead in Asia. Regarding India, Halifax also believed that with the failure of the Cripps Mission the prestige of the Congress party leaders declined in America. Never again would "glib generalizations about the simplicity of Indian problem be accepted by the majority of the people." Americans had become better educated about India and the wave of criticism of the British conduct of the war died down.⁹³

Halifax had correctly understood the growing differences between the British and the Americans. In this respect, the Cripps Mission had served the purpose of diminishing the criticism of British rule in India. American criticism of British imperialism may have survived ideologically but India, where the Americans could have put this distinction into practice, had effectively been removed as the battle ground. Americans in general were obviously disenchanted with India, and the President had lost the opportunity to pursue the Indian cause with Churchill any further. If Roosevelt depended on public opinion to boost his effort to assert American power against the British then public opinion and the popular forums had undermined his ability.

In face of American criticism of India's leaders, Nehru wrote to Roosevelt expressing his disappointment at the failure of the Cripps Mission. Nehru

⁹³ Thomas E. Hachey, ed. *Confidential Dispatches* (Evanston: New University Press, 1974) Halifax to Eden, June 26, 1943. Political review of the United States for the year 1942. 61-62. Halifax may have had intellectuals like Pearl S. Buck in mind who praised the Chinese and believed that the United States could no longer trust Britain. *American Unity and Asia* (New York: John Day, 1942) 28, 79.

explained the Congress's position to Roosevelt and conveyed India's desire to "organize real national resistance." Nehru emphasized that the Indians were anxious to defend India and to promote freedom and democracy. In conclusion, Nehru stated "To your great country we send greetings and good wishes for success. And to you, Mr. President, on whom so many all over the world look for leadership in the cause of freedom we would add our assurance of our high regard and esteem."⁹⁴

Nehru made no direct appeal to Roosevelt to intervene, neither did he mention Johnson's efforts. But his letter reflected disappointment at American proclamations of freedom and their failure to act upon it in India. Nehru had said in a press conference that "We have not asked for anyone's intervention. For my part, I admire President Roosevelt and consider he has been shouldering a very great burden worthily."⁹⁵ But Nehru had also recognized the growing power of the United States and observed that it was America's war in which Britain played a minor role.⁹⁶ Nehru did not receive any direct reply from Roosevelt. Instead Acting Secretary Welles asked Johnson to urge Nehru to fight for the common cause.⁹⁷ Clearly, Johnson's efforts to distinguish Nehru from the other nationalists had failed to impress Roosevelt. In Welles' message there was no reference to India's independence. According to Edgar Snow, Nehru kept hoping for pressure from Roosevelt on Churchill and became bitter when no help was forthcoming.⁹⁸ Roosevelt by not replying to

⁹⁴ Johnson to Acting Secretary of State Welles, April 13, 1942, Enclosing letter of Nehru, April 12, 1942. FR, 1942 v. 1 635-637.

⁹⁵ *Time* xxxix no. 16 April 20, 1942. 33.

⁹⁶ Sarvepelli Gopal, ed. *Jawaharlal Nehru: An Anthology* (Delhi: Oxford U. P., 1983) 58.

⁹⁷ Acting Secretary of State Welles to Johnson, April 15, 1942. FR, 1942 v. 1 637.

⁹⁸ Edgar Snow, *Journey to the Beginning* (New York: Random House, 1956) 271-72. B. Shiva Rao wondered whether Johnson's intervention complicated the situation in India. Would Nehru have been quite so firm in his talks had he

Nehru seemed to have conceded the British argument and also to the popular sentiment in the United States.

Louis Johnson was the only official voice which continued to appeal for an American involvement. In his initial response to India, Johnson had adopted the British point of view about India. But with his involvement in the Cripps Mission his position changed considerably. At a time when general opinion of Gandhi and Nehru had plummeted, Johnson continued to present Nehru as a reasonable leader. He informed the Secretary of State that Nehru had made a bid to take charge of the Congress and had driven out the "Gandhist non-resisters." He believed that Nehru's position would be strengthened if Britain, China and the United States could issue a joint statement of Pacific war aims, specifically including freedom and self determination for India. He believed that the weight of the United States was needed to overcome India's distrust of the British. But on April 27, Hull informed Johnson that a joint declaration of Pacific war aims at this time would raise a number of complex problems relating to the future of the Oriental peoples. He found an inherent danger in adopting any measures which might appear to unduly favor a particular faction in India. He advised Johnson to be impartial and not identify with any group.⁹⁹ Hull's statement is revealing in not only what he said but what he did not say. Whereas Johnson recommended plans for India in terms of the Congress, Hull, following the general trend of thought, did not acknowledge it as the voice of Indian nationalism. Johnson's recognition of American interests, independent of Britain, was not shared by his superiors nor any particular future relationship with India anticipated.

not been encouraged to think that America would insist upon a settlement by agreement. in C. H. Philips ed. *The Partition of India...* 435-436.

⁹⁹ Johnson to Hull, April 21, Hull to Johnson, April 27, 1942. FR, 1942 v. 1 638-639, 644-645.

Johnson, like the American military officials posted in India, had found the British incompetent and inefficient. But he had also attempted to present the positive aspects of the Congress. In this effort he projected Nehru as a reasonable leader, but in the process he had to deny Gandhi his place in the nationalist movement. Probably, like the other observers, he too distinguished between Gandhi, who exemplified the worst aspects of the Hindu mentality while Nehru, a product of western influences, emerged as a viable alternative. But Johnson's views competed with an even more overpowering and more acceptable opinion presented by the media which branded Congress as irresponsible and dismissed Nehru as weak. The officials seemed to concur with the views presented by the media.

Despite the fact that his recommendations were rejected by the State Department Johnson remained undeterred. He informed Hull on April 28, that in Rangoon the whole civil administration had collapsed, there was panic and incompetence in Madras because of the inefficient and irresponsible British officials who had no contact with the country and did not care for the needs and safety of the people. It was only the Congress that was working towards inculcating self reliance and self sufficiency among the people.¹⁰⁰ This opinion was contrary to the one presented by the British and accepted by Hull and Welles and most Americans. Alternative thoughts on India were likely to fail in view of the burgeoning negative impressions of the Indian nationalists in the United States. Johnson's views about India not only disturbed the accepted opinion of India but undermined his credibility as well. His position was further undermined when Cripps stated in the House of Commons that Johnson had not acted on the President's order but in a purely personal

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 645-646.

capacity.¹⁰¹

Amery wrote to Linlithgow on April 30, that Johnson was condescending about the British war effort. He concluded that Americans were apt to be hasty in judgment and considered the East was exactly like the West and could move as fast as Americans moved. However, Amery conceded that it was possible that there may be something in Johnson's view that the whole British machinery had become "somewhat oriental" in its notions of "time and energy."¹⁰² Amery reiterated the British opinion of the Orient as frozen in time, immune to change, lacking in energy and often subversive, requiring both guidance and surveillance. Any influence it imparted to the West was only negative. Johnson's espousal of the Indian cause and his interaction with the Indian nationalists, especially the Congress leadership, may have made him 'somewhat oriental' and his arguments suspect. The Cripps Mission had ably served the British purpose of deflecting attention away from themselves by exposing the Indian nationalists to the American officials and the public as irresponsible and irrational. This incompatibility may not have strengthened commonality between the United States and Britain, but had definitely provided a vocabulary to the Americans to express their differences with the Indians.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 646-647.

¹⁰² Mansergh, v. 1 870-871. The notion popularized by Kipling about not hurrying the East had been accepted widely by the American observers in India. This acceptance had led them to recommend the continuation of British rule in India. See chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 5

Diverse Thoughts on India, 1942-1947

American involvement in India during the period of the Cripps Mission had brought Indian politics into mainstream discussion in the United States. The concerns which had led to the development of American interest in India had survived, but the American approach underwent a noticeable change. A dominant opinion of India had emerged in America emphasizing the difference between the two cultures and constructing an extremely negative image of Hindu nationalism. A greater exposure of Indian politics had brought deeply embedded images to the surface. In 1942 these images were forcefully and compellingly reported, and infiltrated political discussions as well. The American reaction can be understood on one level as the adoption of a British representation of India, thus becoming part of the dominant discourse about the East in the West. But the American response to India also acquired distinctive overtones. American understanding of and attitude towards India were also influenced by the growing recognition of America's power and role in world politics leading to a reevaluation of its association with Britain.

With an increasing recognition of their own ideals and interests, a single monolithic thought on India was no longer possible. British representations had a considerable impact on American understanding of India, but American misgivings about associating their interests with an imperialist power were producing independently constructed opinions of the American role in and opinion of India as well. These reassessments can be understood within the framework of Michael Hunt's contention that American policy was guided by an active quest for national greatness and promotion of

American values.¹ The impact of these opinions become apparent in America's perceptions of independent India.

Even though criticism of India was rampant in the United States, there was an emergence of a different perspective which challenged the accepted position of America regarding India. Alternative thoughts on India, although marginal, are apparent in the writings of John Haynes Holmes, Louis Fischer, Frances Gunther and to some extent in Adolf Berle as well. These opinions had emerged either in sympathy for Indian nationalism, or in spiritual response to Gandhi in particular, or in promotion of America's emerging role in Asia. These reevaluations had occurred among those who were on the periphery of Washington's mainstream political culture, whose vision of the American role in postwar Asia had become more defined. The military officials posted in India, although critical of India, had distanced themselves from the British and recommended independent policies. Louis Johnson, in recognition of America's distinctness, had deviated from the standard discourse on India. He had not only acknowledged a complete break from the British but progressively adopted the cause of the Indian National Congress at a time when the officials in Washington and the media abandoned it. This deviance, by challenging the British, and asserting American values, produced a knowledge with its own influence. American thought on India was constructed by the interplay of those who accepted the British version and those who opposed British imperialism, those who sympathized with Indian nationalism and those who questioned it.²

¹ Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1987) 77, 161.

² Jayant Lele has critiqued Said's adoption of a structuralist concept of power, for not seeing domination and critique as recurring moments in the history of a society. Lele contends that this decontextualized conception of power both renders the authors of the dominant discourse and those whose discourse capability has been silenced by it, irrelevant for a critical analysis of power

Different Thoughts on India

The Official Perspective

Louis Johnson had challenged the established political culture in the State Department by adopting the cause of the Indian National Congress and insisting upon the recognition of a distinct American role in India. The Cripps Mission may have ended but Johnson still held his position in India and continued to recommend American intervention. But America's position on India was not only influenced by the emerging American differences with the British but also by their own evolving perceptions of India. In this respect, developments in Indian politics also provided direction to America's opinion of India. Now Gandhi's decision to launch a civil disobedience movement, demanding the British to 'Quit India' came under American scrutiny. Johnson informed the Secretary of State on May 4, 1942, that the Congress had resolved to follow Gandhi's lead in the non-resistance movement. But he also reported that the Congress had agreed to negotiate if the Viceroy's Executive Council was converted into a national government, and an Indian defense minister given all powers except the function of the Commander-in-Chief. Johnson reiterated that only the United States could save India.³

But Johnson's insistence on presenting the Congress as the nationalist voice in India was no longer acceptable in Washington and neither was Roosevelt willing to assume an independent role in India. On May 8, the President outlined the policy Washington would henceforth adopt towards

relations. By default, it contributes to the entrenchment of the totalizing power of the ruling classes. Lele's contention is relevant in the study of American opinion of India especially in view of their evolving perception of themselves and of the British. "Orientalism and the Social Sciences." in Carol A. Breckenridge ed. *Orientalism and the Postcolonial...* 46-47

³ Johnson to Hull, May 4, 1942. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, (henceforth FR) 1942 v. 1 648-650.

India. He advised Johnson that the position in India was largely military; if successful it would aid the military effort and if unsuccessful, harm that effort. He rejected the plan outlined by Johnson because it would be acceptable only to the Congress. It would further alienate the Indians from the British and cause disturbance among various communities.⁴ Whereas Johnson had insisted upon the capability of the United States to save India, the President rejected the idea of American involvement. Whatever doubts Roosevelt may have had about accepting British opinion of Indian nationalism had been subdued or overcome and Roosevelt had reverted India back to the British.

American involvement in India's independence movement was over and on May 16, 1942, Johnson's mission in India ended. In the State Department, opinions which confirmed the problems within Indian politics were readily endorsed. One such opinion was expressed by Graham Spry, a Canadian national, who had served with the Cripps Mission in India. Spry met Roosevelt on May 15, 1942, and reported to London of his conversation with the President. Spry believed that he convinced Roosevelt that Churchill had placed no restrictions on Cripps. In turn, according to Spry, Roosevelt confided in him that Johnson was not supposed to interfere and that Gandhi was responsible for the Mission's failure.⁵ Spry informed the State Department officials that Gandhi's "narrow political outlook," had brought about the failure of negotiations with Cripps and that the Congress was unwilling to accept political responsibility during the war. Spry further insisted that the issue of India's independence was not related to the defense of the country. In fact, Indian nationalists were not hampering the war effort. Chief of Near

⁴ Ibid. Hull to Johnson, "From the President for Colonel Johnson," May 8, 1942. 650.

⁵ Spry's interview with Roosevelt. Nicholas Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power*. v. 2 89-92.

Eastern Affairs, Paul H. Alling (replaced Wallace Murray who became Advisor on Political Relations) did not dispute Spry's claims. He considered Spry an intelligent and liberal minded person and concluded that Indian problems should be left alone.⁶

Calvin H. Oakes, of the Department of Near Eastern Affairs, disputed Johnson's argument that Britain had poor quality officers and was wasting American lend lease material. Oakes also disagreed with Johnson's dismissal of Jinnah as a creation of the British. Oakes considered the Muslim League a force in India which the British could not ignore. He also doubted Johnson's contention that Cripps was denied power to negotiate.⁷ At a time when the Congress leadership was deemed irresponsible, Johnson's espousal of their cause itself had undermined his credibility. Spry, on the other hand was received by American officials as rational and intelligent, a balanced, unbiased and credible reporter of the Indian affairs. The discussions in Washington no longer focused on India, but on a factionalized India, in which the Congress progressively acquired an image which had so far been deployed by British officials and had been accepted by the American media.

The association of the Congress with political problems in India is apparent in the report of George Merrell, who took charge from Johnson in New Delhi. On May 21, he provided his assessment of Gandhi's decision to launch a mass civil disobedience movement. Unlike Johnson, who had concentrated on exposing British incompetence and rigidity, and their unwillingness to negotiate with the Indians, Merrell's report, focused exclusively on the Congress's inadequacies in terms of both its policies and

⁶ Memorandum of conversation of Alling with Spry, May 13, 1942. FR, 1942, v. 1 651-653.

⁷ Ibid. Memorandum of conversation of Oakes with Johnson, May 26, 1942. 657-662.

leadership. He pointed out that Gandhi was unmoved by warnings that a civil disobedience movement would lead to a civil war and make India an easy prey to Japan. Merrell believed that if this program was launched India would lose its usefulness. Unlike Johnson, Merrell did not recommend an American initiative. Further, on May 25, Merrell reported his discussion with Nehru concerning Gandhi's plan. He found Nehru unable or unwilling to state his position which led Merrell to suspect that Nehru was veering to "his master's point of view."⁸

Nehru, whom Johnson had attempted to project as a reasonable man of independent thinking, was deemed weak and dependent on his 'master.' These opinions of Gandhi and Nehru were expressed by journalists Eve Curie and Herbert Matthews and were reiterated by Merrell as well. Two distinct positions on India had emerged among American officials. One represented by Johnson, recognized America's special place and a distinct role in addressing India's political problems. The other opinion, represented by Merrell, focused primarily on India's weak and inept leadership. But Merrell's view had become progressively more acceptable in discussions on India. American opposition to British imperialism and a recognition of American self interest was submerged or expressed independently of their criticism of India.

In such a climate, when the Congress had lost credibility in Washington and Nehru's ability and willingness to stand up to Gandhi had become questionable, Nehru attempted to explain Gandhi's position to the American officials. He wrote to Johnson that Gandhi did not want to impede the war effort but wanted independence and wanted to resist the Japanese.⁹ Nehru clarified to Lampton Berry, member of the American Mission in New Delhi,

⁸ Ibid. Merrell to Hull, May 21 and May 25 1942. 663-665.

⁹ Ibid. Officer-in-Charge at New Delhi to Hull, enclosing text of message from Johnson, July 1, 1942. 667-669.

that a lack of confidence in India was due to the incapacity of the British to resist the Japanese. Nehru believed that independent India would participate in the war wholeheartedly.¹⁰ Nehru's clarifications failed to impress American officials. Nehru had been widely criticized in the media for not standing up to Gandhi and this opinion was adopted by the officials as well. The Secretary of State informed the Indian Agent General in Washington, Girja Shankar Bajpai, that Gandhi was playing into the hands of the Japanese and that no practical steps of resistance were advocated by other leaders including Nehru.¹¹

At the time when the opinion of Gandhi in the United States was at its lowest, Gandhi wrote to Roosevelt on July 1, 1942. Gandhi declared that the British should withdraw and enable the Indians to fight. He believed that the Allied objective of fighting to make "the world safe for freedom of the individual and for democracy sounded hollow, as long as India, and, for that matter, Africa were exploited by Britain, and America had the Negro problem in her own home." Gandhi argued that if the Allies considered it necessary, they may keep their troops in India at their own expense, not for keeping internal order but for preventing Japanese aggression. So far as India was concerned, "she must become free even as America and Great Britain are," and the Allied troops would remain in India during the course of the war under a treaty with an independent Indian government.¹²

Roosevelt's reply to Gandhi reveals the opinion he and the State Department officials adopted about Gandhi and India. However, in his response, Roosevelt distinguished American objectives, ideals and values from

¹⁰ Jawaharlal Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1960) 491-493. June 23, 1942.

¹¹ Memorandum of conversation of Hull with Bajpai, June 15, 1942. FR, 1942 v. 1 670-672.

¹² Gandhi to Roosevelt. FR, 1942 v. 1 677-678.

those of Britain. The President wrote to Gandhi on August 1, 1942, that the United States consistently strove for and supported policies of "fair dealing for fair play." He also clarified that at this moment the Allies were fighting to defeat the Axis. Roosevelt enclosed Hull's speech to illustrate the attitude of the government.¹³ Hull had made the speech with "India in mind" on July 23, 1942. He had stated that all people who are "prepared and willing to accept the responsibility of liberty, are entitled to its enjoyment" and "we encourage and aid all who aspire to freedom...by preparing themselves to assume its obligations." The United States would support attainment of freedom by all peoples who, "by their acts, show themselves worthy of it and ready for it."¹⁴ Roosevelt's letter was delivered to Gandhi two years later as he was in prison. When the question was later posed if a new one be sent to Gandhi, Roosevelt was encouraged by Hull to reject it in case it encouraged Gandhi to take up the issue of India with Roosevelt again.¹⁵

Both Roosevelt and Hull presented American ideals to make their point to Gandhi. Clearly, India had not proven its worth and preparedness to be assisted in assuming power. The Congress leaders had not played "fair" nor demonstrated an ability to understand liberty and assume responsibility. Hull's speech implied what Matthews had explicitly stated, that Indian politics was inconsistent and the leaders had a different standard of honesty and morality.¹⁶ This perception of India and its leadership had found a place in

¹³ Ibid. Roosevelt to Gandhi, August 1, 1942. 703.

¹⁴ Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York: MacMillan, 1948) v. 2 1484-1485.

¹⁵ Merrell to Hull, May 19, 1944 memorandum by Hull to Roosevelt, June 22, 1944. FR, 1944 v. 5 234-236. Kenton Clymer believes that Hull influenced Roosevelt. The sentiments expressed in the letter did not reflect Roosevelt's thinking which was again moving away from supporting colonial possessions. Hull's recommendation appealed to a busy and tired president. *Quest for Freedom* (New York: Columbia U. P., 1995). 199-201.

¹⁶ Matthews, *Education of...* 218, 262.

official discussions as well. Roosevelt and Hull may not have adopted the same vocabulary as the media to express their opinions but their attitudes reflected their agreement with the media regarding India's irresponsible political culture. Significantly, Roosevelt and even Hull did not even bring Britain into the discussion. Instead, American values and ideals had emerged more forcefully as the standard to which Indians should aspire in order to win American support. It was not British imperialism but the irresponsible behavior of the Indians which had emerged as critical issues. Roosevelt did not address the issue of liberation of the colonized raised by Gandhi but rather emphasized freedom of the world from Fascism. He also ignored Gandhi's apparent willingness to let the Allied forces maintain troops in India. Gandhi had been confirmed an obstructionist and his overtures were disregarded. Both Roosevelt and Hull demanded and required India to provide proof of political maturity in order to win American approval.

During this period Louis Fischer was one of the few journalists who presented an alternative perspective on Gandhi. Fischer believed that Gandhi did not favor Japan. He reiterated that after demanding Britain's political withdrawal from India, Gandhi had agreed to let the Allied forces maintain their troops in India. Fischer pointed out that he had informed the British Viceroy about Gandhi's conciliatory mood but Linlithgow did not pay any heed to Gandhi's overtures. Fischer believed that Gandhi procrastinated about launching the civil disobedience movement in the hope of being approached by the British for a compromise, but was ignored. In his assessment of Gandhi, Fischer broke from the widely accepted opinion of Gandhi and considered him as a tough and shrewd politician. Fischer also believed that the United States had the power to 'prod' the British to negotiate with Gandhi.¹⁷ But Roosevelt's

¹⁷ *Nation* August 15, 1942 v. 155 no. 7 121-122, August 22, 1942, v. 155 no. 8 145-

reply to Gandhi indicates that Fischer's version of Gandhi would fail to inspire America's intervention in India.

Gandhi's decision to launch a civil disobedience movement had concerned Chiang Kai-shek as well. On July 25, he appealed to Roosevelt and expressed his concern that India's decision to launch this movement would help the cause of the Axis powers. The Chinese leader insisted that the Indians expected help from the United States. But the Americans were not willing to take any action. Instead, Roosevelt chose to consult the British Prime Minister and asked for his suggestions.¹⁸ Churchill reiterated that the Congress represented only the intelligentsia of non-fighting Hindu elements and lacked the ability to defend India or to revolt. Following the trend, the British Ambassador informed Hull that the civil disobedience movement was not a factor.¹⁹ On August 7, the British acquainted Roosevelt with the fact that the Indian leaders would be imprisoned. By this time Roosevelt had already made his position on India clear to Gandhi. He informed Chiang Kai-shek that American intervention in India would undermine British authority.²⁰

The ambitious native 'nationalist' bourgeoisie now required an exercise of punitive and restrictive power by the colonizer²¹ and this development was not challenged in the United States. The British argument that the Congress was not a factor, and that British presence in India was necessary was not disputed.

147.

¹⁸ Chiang wrote to the President on July 25, 1942. Memorandum of conversation with the Foreign Minister of China (T.V. Soong) by Welles, July 28, 1942. FR, 1942 v. 1 695-700.

¹⁹ Churchill to Roosevelt, Halifax to Hull, July 31, 1942. Mansergh, v. 2 533, 177-178.

²⁰ Winant to Hull, July 30, 1942. Roosevelt to Chiang n.d. handed on August 8, 1942 to the Mr. Soong. FR 1942 v. 1 700-706.

²¹ Homi Bhabha, "Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," *The Politics of Theory*, ed. Francis Barker (Colchester: University of Essex, 1983) 198.

However, those officials who evaluated India in the context of larger American interests presented a different perspective. Laughlin Currie, administrative assistant to the President, sent to Asia as a special emissary, warned Roosevelt of the tendency on the part of the Congress supporters to identify Americans stationed in India with the British. Currie reported that Gandhi believed that the Americans had made common cause with the British and feared that Gandhi's opinions could endanger America's moral leadership in Asia and its ability to exert influence for an acceptable and just settlement in post-war Asia. Currie believed that it was to Britain's own long term interest to preserve Asian belief in America's disinterestedness. He recommended a policy stating that American troops were in India to help the Chinese and not to support Britain in India. In view of these concerns raised by Currie an official statement was released by the State Department that American troops were in the country solely to aid China.²²

Currie succeeded where Johnson had failed, probably, by recommending only statements professing America's separation from the Britain and not an active involvement in India. However, Currie's recommendation introduces a recognition in Washington of the British aim to keep America out of Asia and an awareness of America's emerging leadership and independent role in postwar Asia.

However, in the case of India, the dominant image of a chaotic society

²² Officer-in-Charge at New Delhi to Hull, enclosing a message from Currie to Roosevelt, August 11, 1942. FR, 1942 v. 1 712-15. Currie was probably referring to Gandhi's statement made on April 26, 1942. Gandhi had stated "the promise of a never ending stream of soldiers from America" meant that American aid in the end would amount to American influence. Cited in Venkataramani, *Quit India...* 154. Similarly, Nehru in a speech made before the Congress Committee on August 9, 1942 had denounced the United States for following the British lead and for looking upon India as an appendage of the British and harboring a racially superior attitude towards a "benighted backward people." Cited in Venkataramani, *Quit India...* 239.

and its disfunctional nationalist leadership tended to overshadow American suspicions of the British. These trends in the United States were noted with relief by the British. Halifax reported to London that Gandhi's non-violence policy was unpopular in the American press. Gandhi was a "bad man" from the point of view of the war effort.²³ A report on 'India as a Factor in Anglo-American Relations' prepared by Spry on July 27, had astutely summed up the end of American interest in India. Spry contended that the United States and Britain were competitive but also shared a natural sense of community, language and laws. India had stirred American nationalism but Spry did not give significance to India in the development of Anglo-American relations. He believed that the American view of India was a part of the American view of Britain.²⁴ Spry's observation help explain the general acceptance of British opinion of India by the American officials. It was not just the British strategies and maneuverings that converted the Americans, but the very existence of the shared sense of values that made British arguments reliable and acceptable. It seemed relatively easy to accept the British as benevolent but impossible to accept the Indians as reasonable.

There was truth to Spry's contention that American view of India was a part of the American view of Britain. Undoubtedly, most Americans shared a natural affinity with the British, but those who opposed British imperialism and those who recognized America's interests as independent of the British, found in India the opportunity to make their case. The American view of themselves and relatedly of the British was undergoing a change, even if to a limited extent, India was one place where the Americans articulated their growing distance.

²³ H. G. Nicholas, ed. *Washington Despatches 1941-1945* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) 70.

²⁴ Mansergh, v. 2 471-473.

Wendell Willkie, the Republican candidate for presidency in 1940, articulated such views. His interest in visiting India in the course of a global tour concerned Linlithgow in case Willkie wished to meet the imprisoned Congress leaders. Linlithgow believed that such an occurrence would encourage the Hindu press to exploit the opportunity for American intervention. But Welles assured Halifax that Willkie would not visit India. Halifax reported to Eden that Roosevelt agreed with British objectives.²⁵

Willkie had questioned the vacillating attitude of American government towards India and believed that America's silence on India had "drawn heavily on the American reservoir of goodwill in the East."²⁶ Sir Ronald Campbell, member of the British Embassy in Washington, reported to Eden that Willkie's *One World* reader felt America was rising to the height of its "material and spiritual power and that its duty lay in its own material expansion with political deliverance of under-privileged nations."²⁷ Willkie's views, however marginal for the moment, had acquired a following and were the harbinger of what would become the American image of itself and of its place in the world.

The Intellectual Perspective

The presence of two thoughts on India, one critical of India and the other examining India in the context of larger American interests is apparent among intellectuals as well. Those intellectuals who concentrated on examining India's culture confined India to images popularized by the British. American anthropologists can usefully be singled out for a brief examination. Their

²⁵ Ibid. Halifax to Eden, September 3, 1942. 890.

²⁶ Venkataramani, *Quit India...* 323-324.

²⁷ Hachey, 96. Sir Ronald Campbell to Eden, August 31, 1943, political review of the United States for 1943.

views, although not of a popular variety or related directly to political processes, nevertheless indicate the general trend of thought and provide an intellectual endorsement to the manners and mores of an alien culture.²⁸ T. N. Madan, an Indian sociologist, believes that American anthropologists adopted the vision of their British counterparts to examine India. Whereas the British, for reasons of developing effective administration concentrated on local settings, on tribes and castes, American anthropologists, free of imperial interests, assumed a broader and totalizing vision of the Indian civilization. They adopted a homogenizing gaze of the modern man, emphasizing the 'otherness' of the Indian.²⁹

Two anthropologists, A. L. Kroeber and Ralph Linton, are selected for an evaluation primarily because they wrote about India at a time when American interest in Indian politics had developed. Incidentally, neither scholar did any field work in India. Lacking an intimacy with India, it was possible that these Americans would direct their limited but firmly ingrained knowledge to construct a homogenized and essentialized picture of India.

Kroeber believed that the Hindus had developed a great civilization but without a historical sense. He presented proof for his contention in the Indian sculpture, which, he observed, had developed uninfluenced from the outside, with no fundamental changes of direction. He concluded that India's high culture period ended by the year 1200 A. D. Similarly, Indian nationalism, Kroeber observed, remained relatively underdeveloped within the 'vast

²⁸ Edward Said considers the anthropologists most closely tied to colonialism. They advised colonial rulers on the manners and mores of the native people and embodied the notion-you cannot govern India unless you know it. *Culture and Imperialism* 152.

²⁹ T. N. Madan, "India in American Anthropology" in Sulochana Raghavan Glazer ed. *Conflicting Images: India and the United States* (Glenn Dale, MD.: The Riverdale Co., 1990) 192-193.

amorphous caste' system which had divided India.³⁰ Kroeber's views were not original, but a reiteration of opinions already expressed by most commentators of India. India's rootedness in the past, social fragmentation and inability to adapt, had been firmly entrenched in western thought. The nationalist movement itself was a part of this past, retarded by India's social and cultural patterns. By denying the Indians a sense of history, and an ability to change, Kroeber could deny any possibility of social or political change in the future as well.³¹ India had been scientifically explained, bound and surveyed, theorized about, making it unnecessary for the two anthropologists to make first hand observations.³²

Ralph Linton's study was published after India became independent. Like Kroeber, Linton concluded that India lacked a historical sense and that Indian political history did not begin to meet western standards of precision until after the first Muslim invasion. He defined India as a static culture, where the foundation of society was the village self government, the caste system and the joint family. Linton believed, that it was primarily British colonialism which had dealt a blow to the village autonomy and self containment and further fractured the caste system.³³

³⁰ A. L. Kroeber, *Configurations of Culture Growth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1944) 62, 260, 682-683.

³¹ Partha Chatterjee contends that the middle class Indians were being schooled in the new colonial education and taught principles of European history, statecraft and social philosophy. The English educated middle class in Bengal by the 1870s was unanimous in its belief that the old institutions and practices needed to be fundamentally changed. "History and the Nationalization of Hinduism" in *Social Research* v. 59, no. 1 (Spring 1992) 122, 127 Kroeber and Linton ignored this class of Indians.

³² Arjun Appadurai, "Number in the Colonial Imagination" in Carol A. Breckenridge ed. *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993) discusses British focus on quantification. The census made numerical majorities prominent, thereby providing a simplified and essentialized view of the Indian society. This view is apparent in Kroeber's analysis of India.

³³ Ralph Linton, *The Tree of Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962 c1955)

In their observations, the two anthropologists maintained that India, primarily Hindu India, was a static and divided society, not merely living in another space but in another time as well. In their views, Indians did not deviate from traditional social and cultural patterns of behavior. The emerging middle class and the growing nationalist movement had been subsumed by an even more powerful image of India residing in villages and in the past. India's real time was not in the present, but in the future and the British had challenged India to prepare for that future. Both scholars denied social and political changes that had begun to take place in India because an acceptance of change could have undermined their theoretical assumptions. The position adopted by the anthropologists and the American observers in India seemed unified with the British in condemning a non-western culture.³⁴

However, India had begun to emerge in discussions among those intellectuals who reviewed America's association with Britain in terms of larger American interests. These opinions refocused attention on British imperialism and ignored India's cultural images. In their discussions American ideals and interests were distinguished from those of Britain and its colonial enterprise and relatedly America's role in India was reevaluated. George E. Taylor, an academic, argued that despite the cooperation between Britain and the United States there were many differences that had emerged between the two countries based on their differing traditions and economic arrangements. Taylor believed, that unlike Britain, the American system created a strong urge towards westernizing non-industrial people and had

486, 511-518.

³⁴ Dorothy B. Jones points out that the subject matter of American films regarding India remained consistent, focusing of religion and mysticism in India. During the Second World War the focus had shifted from feature to factual films, concentrating on subjects such as India's religion and poverty. *The Portrayal...* 52, 58, 68.

only secondary interest in colonies. Taylor was concerned at the growth of economic nationalism in the former colonies and believed that American interest lay in liberating and modernizing people and keeping the world market open. Relatedly, he considered the nationalist movement in India of enormous consequence. But Taylor also believed that regarding India, the United States was in a delicate situation. If the Americans pressed for full mobilization of India it would mean granting a large measure of independence to the country. Such a policy would bode ruin for Britain. Even though Taylor recognized the problems Britain faced, he ultimately believed that the United States should propose independence for India provided India agreed to participate actively in the war.³⁵ In Taylor's analysis the widely accepted political immaturity of the Indian nationalists was not of material consequence. It was the promotion of American self interests and potential role in world politics to which he gave precedence.

Similarly, writer Pearl Buck expressed concern at the increase in racial tensions in Asia. She believed that Japan's racial propaganda in Asia was becoming effective. In view of this fact, she argued that Americans should recognize, whether Britain did or not, that a world based on former principles of empire and imperial behavior was no longer possible. She believed that America must fight for democracy for all people and not to continue western control over colored people. She argued that Americans cannot trust the English and 'we' must think and act for 'ourselves.'

Buck had recognized the need for America to establish a separation from British imperialist objectives. However, she was not entirely critical of British colonial rule in India. She believed that whatever the fault of

³⁵ George E. Taylor, *America in the New Pacific* (New York: Macmillan, 1942) 6-7, 18-21, 112, 150-151.

imperialism, under the British a strong healthy national movement had developed in India. She argued that because Britain had allowed freedom to exist in India, nationalists like Gandhi and Nehru could exist, whereas, under Japanese rule they would not even be alive. However, Buck also believed that no people can learn self government until they govern themselves. She disputed the British argument that Muslims were innately different from Hindus. Instead, she contended that there were strong unifying elements in India. Ultimately, Buck believed that India was the business of all Allied Nations.³⁶ In her analysis, Buck was not entirely critical of the British but gave precedence to the promotion of American national interests. The British ability to uphold western interests had become outmoded and it was time for the Americans to take over. India's independence, in these analyses, had become part of larger American interests. In all probability, this recognition had led both Taylor and Buck to accept Indian nationalism and India's ability to establish self rule.

The expression of such ideas, promoting America's self interests and relatedly accepting Indian nationalism, concerned the British officials. Consequently, the Government of India, Home Department, directed its attention towards "exposing" Gandhi to the English and American public and in presenting the Congress as a "Hindu-bourgeois" dominated organization. The British aim seemed to be to focus American attention on problems within India in order to stall India's reappraisal within the larger context of America's emerging self interests. The earlier British efforts had been more or less confined to educating American officials about India, but now the focus had shifted to the larger public. It was essential to reaffirm American unity

³⁶ Pearl S. Buck, *American Unity and Asia* (New York: John Day, 1942) 22-28, 45, 87-89. This anthology is composed mainly of speeches of Buck, most of them delivered in April 1942.

with the British by refocusing the attention of the American public back to the alleged failings of India. In this respect, the British hoped to exploit Gandhi's decision to launch the civil disobedience movement to demonstrate Congress's prejudice to the American war effort and safety of the American troops in India which may result from Gandhi's plan.³⁷

The Media Perspective

The British purpose was effectively served by the American media. To begin with, American journalists had focused narrowly on India and emphasized the irrationality of Gandhi's strategies. Gandhi's political philosophy was incomprehensible to most Americans and in analyzing Gandhi's personality, Americans tended to reaffirm their differences with India and often, even if reluctantly, accepted British rule in India. While the officials remained critical of the political strategy and philosophy of the Indian nationalists, the press targeted cultural aspects of India and emphasized an unbridgeable gap between themselves and the Indians.³⁸

However, the reports presented by the media also highlighted the change in the American perspective on the British. These reports did not present India favorably but at the same time contained expressions of

³⁷ Government of India, Home Department to Amery, June 7, 1942. Mansergh, v. 2 188-9.

³⁸ Rosane Rocher points to the dialectics between pursuit of knowledge and government pursuits. She believes that knowledge and government objectives are often, but not always, related. While a political agenda corrupts, drives and even defines the production of knowledge, intellectual (in this case also the media) trends also impinge upon the government. Rosane Rocher, "British Orientalism in the Eighteenth Century: The Dialectics of Knowledge and Government." in Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer ed. *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993) 215, 240-241. Rocher's contention is particularly applicable to the role of the American intellectuals and the media on the growth of knowledge about India in America.

America's distinctness. Two reports in *Time* magazine present both perspectives. Major General Lewis Hyde Brereton, commander of American Air Force in India, clung to his Americanism--he feared he would catch himself describing an air battle as "a jolly good show." But he also informed the Maharajas that he had no time to shoot tigers with them. *Time* blamed the British for being "woefully late" in modernizing the Indian troops and for being immersed in the old tradition--a tradition with "more grandeur, more Kiplingesque affection between officers and men than effectiveness."³⁹ In such observations Americans had freed themselves of the decadence of both British and Indian cultures. India remained slow moving and backward but British imperialism was rapidly becoming anachronistic and ineffective. Americans posted in India may have accepted British interpretations of India but now questioned British imperialism.

In another report *Time* magazine focused on an evaluation of Gandhi's political strategies. The report stated that Gandhi's *Satyagraha* [resistance by non-violent non-cooperation] was not "so nonsensical as it appeared to the western eye." It had philosophical basis in Buddhism, Indian mysticism and Christianity. But *Time* also pointed out that this philosophy was popular only among the Hindus who were a "good deal closer" to Gandhi than to Nehru, and did not influence the Indian Muslims who cooperated with the Allied forces.⁴⁰ This report is significant in many respects. To begin with it exemplifies the American inability and unwillingness to accept Gandhi's philosophy in political terms or examine its implications for Indian nationalism. At best it could be explained as not 'so nonsensical.' Gandhi's strength lay not in any political rationality but in Hindu spiritual and mystical beliefs. It should be

³⁹ *Time*, xxxix no. 18 May 4 1942 22.

⁴⁰ *Time*, xxxix no. 19 May 11, 1942 33.

noted that even sympathizers with Gandhi had not been able to present him beyond the confines of this image. In accepting Gandhi as a leader only of the Hindus and separating the Muslims from Hindu India completely and unequivocally *Time* had confined Indian politics rigidly to religious affiliations. Furthermore, by dismissing Nehru as a nonfactor in Indian politics, *Time* had dismissed him as a credible political leader. Moreover, such opinions diluted the concerns raised by the military officials regarding American association with an imperial power and unlike the intellectuals did not anticipate any future American interests in Asia. *Time* dismissed the concerns about western imperialism raised by "little Mohandas Gandhi" and presented his "Oriental formula" of non-violence as "fibreless."⁴¹ *Time* had reduced not only Gandhi's stature but also his political philosophy.⁴²

One aspect that was progressively becoming prominent in most discussions was the incompatibility between Hindus and Muslims, presenting the latter more favorably. The *New York Times* correspondent, Herbert L. Matthews, took credit for exposing the Congress as a Hindu organization and not a representative body of all Indians. He believed that the Muslim League was far stronger than anybody in the United States had realized and the Muslims did not fit the autocracy of Gandhi. Matthews considered Gandhi unwise, impractical and dictatorial while Nehru was unable to stand for his own ideas.⁴³ John Patton Davies, Advisor to Stilwell, made a note of the

41 Ibid., xxxix no. 21 May 25, 1942 32-34.

42 The acceptance of this opinion is visible in Adolf Berle. Berle doubted whether Japan would invade India, but would put pressure on China and blow up the Indian empire by propaganda and political activity from inside. Gandhi seemed to be playing the game for them very well, probably sincerely. Berle added "I have always wondered why rulers finally shot saints, and I am beginning to find out." June 20, 1942. Memo VIII 3 203-208, *The Diary of Adolf A. Berle* (Hyde Park: Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, 1978).

43 Herbert Matthews *The Education of a Correspondent* 1st ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946) 224-225, 281, 303-304.

information provided by the Muslim League to the effect that the Hindu was a coward and temperamentally incapable of defending himself.⁴⁴

Buck, Currie and Willkie may have recognized America's emerging role and reassessed India's independence but the general trend of thought on India remained confined to the criticism of the Indian society and politics. India had not proven its capability to achieve political deliverance with American help. Furthermore, the focus on India, especially in the media, tended to obscure the emerging American difference with the British. On August 11, 1942, the day Laughlin Currie recommended American separation from the British, a *New York Times* editorial considered that it would be a major disaster for the United Nations to permit the Indians to "cool the friendship" between Britain and the United States. According to the editorial Gandhi's demands for freedom were demands for anarchy. India's people needed to be educated in political responsibility.⁴⁵ While American officials distanced themselves from India, the media became more vocal in its praise of the British policies. The *New York Times* editorial reported on August 13, 1942, after the Indian leaders had been arrested, that in victory British have always been "magnanimous" and can now be merciful to the arrested leaders. "There is enough goodwill in Britain to accomplish it." On September 8, 1942, Herbert Matthews reported from India that the British government had no alternative but to arrest Gandhi as his strategy would lead to anarchy.⁴⁶

The media, in general, had become propagators of the views popularized

⁴⁴ Snow, *People on Our Side* (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1945) 28-30.

⁴⁵ *New York Times* (18:2).

⁴⁶ *New York Times* (18:2) and (10:2). Edgar Snow claims that Roosevelt considered the Japanese a necessary evil to break the old colonial system. *Journey to the Beginning* (New York: Random House, 1958) 254-255. But American opinions of the Indian nationalists, especially Gandhi, were significant factors in preventing Americans from becoming involved in India.

by the British regarding India's inability to assume political responsibility. But these opinions can be considered accepted American views as well. Roosevelt had expressed similar sentiments when addressing Gandhi, but had deployed American values to make his point. The irrationality of the Congress, particularly that of Gandhi, had become the focal point of criticism. In view of America's mission to make the world safe for democracy, Hindu nationalism had emerged as a combination of mystical and fanatical, weak and irresponsible, subversive and totalitarian, antithetical in the extreme to American values.

Even those who apparently sympathized with the Indian cause were unable to deviate from the established norms when discussing India and reconfirmed the difference between 'us' and 'them.'⁴⁷ On August 22, a report in the *Nation* stated that "our sympathy does not blind us, as their [Congress] bitterness blinds them, to the cold facts that the Axis victory would not only end India's chances of independence but destroy the freedom of the world."⁴⁸ India's demand for independence, which, during the Cripps Mission had been considered rightful, had now become questionable. The image of an irresponsible Congress leadership was largely responsible for this change in perception. Also, from the western perspective, colonialism, as opposed to fascism, seemed a minor infringement on the rights of self-determination. These opinions were presented by both British and American contributors to the *Nation*. In the August 9 issue of *Nation*, Norman Angell reported in 'British

⁴⁷ These opinions had emerged in publications like *The New Republic* and *Nation* which are considered outspoken political and social critics. But these publications do not attract a large audience or circulate their ideas widely. They are directed largely at the intelligentsia and those of liberal views. James Playstead Wood, *Magazines in the United States* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1949) 175-177. The *One World* reader, alluded to by Ronald Campbell, in all probability, subscribed to these publications.

⁴⁸ *Nation* v. 155 no. 9 172-173.

view of India' that it was Gandhi's "sincerity and saintliness, his fanaticism" which was the problem. The Congress' demand that power be handed to a single party dominated by a "mystic personality" in the midst of the war was unjustifiable. Angell considered the Muslims far more distant from the Hindus than the Irish were from the English. Similarly, Bertrand Russell on September 5, wrote that many liberals in America did not understand that Cripps failed because of the unwillingness of the Hindus to admit that the Muslims had same rights to independence from the Hindus as Hindus from the British.⁴⁹

Whereas the American media, in general, questioned India's quest for independence, Angell and Russell did not deny the Indians this right. But the two writers also reiterated the unquestioning acceptance of the popular British assumptions of Hindu and Muslim political and cultural differences.⁵⁰ The Muslims were absolved of any criticism and effectively removed from Hindu India. Gandhi was confined to the realm of the mystical and spiritual, which in political terms translated into irrational and impractical. If a Hindu like Nehru, did deviate from the established behavior patterns, he was ignored or denied credibility. These images of India and its leadership were so powerful that an alternative interpretation seemed impossible. These images had apparently become self sustaining, repeated without any evaluation or even an explanation.

⁴⁹ *Nation* v. 155 no. 8 144, no. 9 200.

⁵⁰ The western observers, both American and British, had adopted what Peter van der Veer considers the essentialized difference between the Hindus and Muslims adopted in the colonial period. It transformed the religious communities into 'nations.' Such a discourse, according to van der Veer, reifies culture as an unchanging system of ideas and values that is not historically produced but that simply exists out there. It ignores a sense of historical development and regional differences. "The Foreign Hand: Orientalist Discourse in Sociology and Communalism." in Carol A. Breckenridge ed. *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993) 241-242, 261.

Even American sympathizers with India, although critical of British imperialism tended to emphasize the failures of the Indian nationalists. Freda Kirchway's assessment provides one such example. On September 9, 1942, she reported in the *Nation* that the resistance of the Indian leaders and their lack of vision were the product of imperialism. She believed that the Indians needed to be won over not whipped.⁵¹ The *New Republic* on September 12, 1942, disputed the British argument that the attitude of the Indian population was immaterial and argued that "we" must not apply "occidental standards to oriental problems."⁵² However, even sympathizers like Kirchway could not accept the Indian nationalists as reasonable or give credence to their political objectives. They trapped the nationalists in the image of the childlike--lacking vision and maturity--who needed to be nurtured and won over. Perhaps unwittingly, the sympathizers too had applied 'occidental' standards to the 'oriental' problem.

In general, British and Americans analysts had silenced India. A dominant image of India had successfully emerged and was expressed frequently and more forcefully. Alternative opinions, attempting to present positive aspects of Indian nationalism, were generally confined to forums with a smaller audience. In the August 15, 1942, issue of the *Nation* Louis Fischer described Gandhi as a shrewd politician. He believed that Gandhi was willing to make concessions while the British could not be trusted. On August 22, Fischer urged Roosevelt to "bring the British government to a point" where it would be forced to negotiate with Gandhi. But in view of the fact that no American official action was taken, Fischer toned down his recommendations. On September 5, Fischer suggested that the American officials should intervene

⁵¹ Ibid., v. 155 no. 12 224-225.

⁵² *The New Republic*, v. 10 no. 12 330.

discreetly and informally so as not to irritate Britain. On December 5, he blamed Churchill for the failure of the Cripps Mission.⁵³ During the course of these reports Fischer changed his position from recommending a tough stand against Britain to suggesting discreet negotiations. Fischer's effort was obviously to reinstate Gandhi as a credible politician in order to rekindle America's interest in India. But during this period no American official action was taken.

Clearly, American political interest in India had declined. On November 30, 1942, *The New Republic* reported that India "was slipping out of our minds."⁵⁴ In an earlier report on November 16, 1942, 'Is it a People's War,' Michael Straight⁵⁵ argued that Britain and America were still the oppressors or alien masters and little different from Japan or Germany. He questioned not only the British argument that Nehru was an isolated individual, under attack for his modernism by high caste Hindus, but also their assertion that Congress represented only a part of India. Straight did not believe that the Muslim League was a representative body of all Muslims. Instead, he considered the League a relic of feudalism and a one man dictatorship. Straight believed that it was because of the British attitudes that Indian leaders were transforming, discrediting moderates like Nehru, despising Britain and the United States.⁵⁶

In this rare introspection, Straight, instead of imposing judgments on India, questioned American policies and attitudes. In his interpretation colonial subjugation was not different from fascist oppression. Unlike most observers, he presented Nehru as a reasonable leader and disputed the well publicized differences between Hindus and Muslims. But the arguments for

⁵³ *Nation*, v. 155 no. 7 121-122, no. 8 145-147, no. 10 185, no. 23 621.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 107 no. 22 696.

⁵⁵ Michael Straight served as the editor of *The New Republic* from 1941-1943 and from 1946-1956.

⁵⁶ *The New Republic*, v. 107 no. 20 633-35.

which Straight criticized the British had also become accepted American opinions. During the same period Herbert Matthews countered Straight's views. In a report sent from the Indian state of Punjab on November 5, 1942, Matthews argued that relationship between Hindus and Muslims was full of distrust and antipathy. None had any understanding of or desire for independence. None thought of India in national terms and could not conceive India without the British.⁵⁷ Matthews had a larger audience and his reports were well received in the policy making circles. Unlike Straight, Matthews did not question America's association with an imperial power and focused entirely on problems within India and questioned India's claim for independence. With a barrage of such reports, voices like those of Nehru who wondered what role American troops would play, "our guests or our hangmen,"⁵⁸ could easily be ignored.

If during the Cripps Mission Americans had begun to observe the Indian leaders as inept and irresponsible, Gandhi's decision to begin passive resistance had helped solidify this perception. India's aspirations may have been acknowledged by the Americans, but India's unpreparedness to assume responsibility had also been accepted. The timetable for India's independence was to be set not by the Indians themselves but by the Americans or the British.

Despite the recommendations of those Americans who promoted America's national interests, Washington was unable to dissociate itself from the British. The widespread perception of India's inability to assume responsibility along with India's social and cultural incompatibility with the West could have prevented American officials from committing themselves to

⁵⁷ *New York Times*, (6:2).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, August 9, 1942 (1:3) Cited in *Quit India...* 260.

India's cause. It was probably the reason why for a long time after the departure of Johnson no American representative was sent to India. This position was filled only when the British mission in Washington made a request. The British specified that the post should not carry with it any implications that the new commissioner was to undertake any form of mediation between the British and the Indians.⁵⁹ On September 28, 1942, Eden had instructed Halifax to take the initiative to advise the Americans about what type of official they wanted and what limitations they expected. Linlithgow did not want a "Johnson or a Currie type." He wanted a Foreign Service Officer of reputation and controlled ambition.⁶⁰ These requests show that the British fear of America's involvement in the British empire persisted. In view of this fact Amery declared in the House of Commons that "We are not quitting India on anybody's order."⁶¹ On November 10, 1942, Churchill made it clear that "I have not become the King's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire."⁶² Both leaders obviously made these statements to warn the Americans to stay away from the empire.

William Phillips' Perception of India

At the end of October 1942, Roosevelt appointed William Phillips as his Personal Representative in India. At this time Phillips was in charge of the London Branch of the Office of Strategic Services. Phillips' close association with the British seemed to make him an ideal choice.⁶³ On December 19, 1942,

⁵⁹ Welles, Memorandum of conversation with Halifax, October 2, 1942. FR, 1942 v. 1 736.

⁶⁰ Eden to Halifax September 28, 1942 and Linlithgow to Amery, September 18, 1942. Mansergh, v. 3 53-54 and v. 2 983-4.

⁶¹ *Time*, XL no. 16 October 19, 1942.

⁶² Cited in John Sbraga, *Anglo-American Relations and Colonialism in East Asia, 1941-1945* (New York: Garland, 1983) 17-18.

⁶³ According to Martin Weil, William Phillips had steeped himself in the

he reported to Hull from London that it would be wise for him to keep a distance from political subjects in India until he could gain the confidence of the Indians and that he already had the confidence of the British.⁶⁴ Hull cautioned Phillips on November 20, 1942, not to be partisan and to discuss the Indian situation with appropriate British officials. Hull reasoned that the United States could not bring pressure on Britain as it would disturb the unity of command and cooperation both during and following the war. American forces and supplies were pouring into India for which peaceful conditions were necessary. But Hull also suggested that Phillips could remind the British that America's involvement in the Philippines provided a good example of how a nation should treat a colony or dependency--by cooperating with it.⁶⁵

In this briefing, American involvement in India's independence was not an issue. Hull was representing what David Spurr defines as American style self-affirmation of material prosperity and moral progress in its colonial enterprise in the Philippines. The Philippines, according to Spurr, was an extension of American civilized ideals.⁶⁶ Hull's position was similar to the one assumed by Roosevelt when he recommended to Churchill the adoption of the American model to settle India's problems. Now it was the American management of the Philippines as opposed to British rule in India, which distinguished American values and ideals. But the opinions expressed by Hull in the State Department and Matthews in the media maintained India as a British concern and Hull did not want Phillips to disturb that relationship.

In January 1943, Phillips left London for India. Although a proclaimed friend of Roosevelt, Phillips would write about Roosevelt in his memoirs that

cosmopolitan culture of European courts. *A Pretty Good Club* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978) 67

⁶⁴ Phillips to Hull. FR, 1943, v. 4 178-180.

⁶⁵ William Phillips, *Ventures in Diplomacy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952) 344.

⁶⁶ David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire* (Durham: Duke U. P., 1978) 117-118.

"...I never fully trusted his assurances...his desire to please might lead him to appear enthusiastic..." about any suggestions offered yet [he] realized that "there were political considerations to which he might have to give preference..."⁶⁷ Phillips' frustration with Roosevelt can be examined in the context of his role in India and the response he received from the President.⁶⁸

The initial response of Phillips about India was predictable. In his report to the President he pointed out that the official British position in India was not unreasonable. They had ruled India for over a century and their withdrawal would create chaos in India. However, in retrospect, his memoirs recorded inconsistency in the British policies. He realized that the British invited the Indians to negotiate yet kept Gandhi and Nehru in prison.⁶⁹ In view of Phillips' initial response to India Linlithgow was satisfied and informed Amery that Phillips had agreed not to interfere in Indian politics.⁷⁰

Phillips' stay in India eventually changed his assessment of the Indian problem. The conclusions he reached were similar to those adopted by most American military officials. Phillips recognized that the British were incompetent but that did not necessarily mean the Indians were ready to assume political responsibility. On January 22, 1943, Phillips reported to Roosevelt that the Hindus were united in their distrust and dislike of the British but were not altogether united behind Gandhi. Jinnah feared Hindu domination and hoped for the continuation of the British rule while the princes remained detached from Hindu political objectives. Phillips also

⁶⁷ Phillips, 183-184.

⁶⁸ According to D. Cameron Watt, India's policies were made in London, the Government of India was subordinated to the Cabinet. Under these circumstances Phillips' interaction with the Government of India could not have been of consequence. *Succeeding John Bull: America in Britain's Place, 1900-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1984) 236.

⁶⁹ Phillips, 352-353.

⁷⁰ Linlithgow to Amery, January 11, 1943. Mansergh, v. 3 485-488.

commented on the social and cultural aspects of India. He singled out the caste system which "divides people into rigid categories." Phillips pointed out that Gandhi was revered as a god, but was "a wholly impractical god," and considered Jinnah a formidable opposition to Hindu nationalism. Phillips may have reiterated ideas about India popularized by the British, but his opinion of the British in India was not flattering. He believed that the viceroy represented the traditional empire that was governing backward people. The civil servants were unaware of the outside world and wanted a status quo to be preserved as their livelihood depended on it.⁷¹ In view of Phillips' reassessment of the British, Linlithgow reevaluated his opinion of Phillips. He wrote to Amery on January 28, 1943, that he did not propose to "suffer any interference."⁷² Phillips reported to Hull on February 10 that Linlithgow had grown suspicious of him.⁷³

The impressions of India Phillips presented to his superiors were not original, but based on the ones that had already been confirmed by most commentators on India. Caste and religion had subdued Indian nationalism. The Congress did not represent India and its appeal among the Hindus, personified by Gandhi, was based more on Gandhi's religiosity than on any viable and practical political philosophy. Phillips' failure to interest Washington in India probably lay in his own inability to review India differently and to present an alternative perspective. His rendition of India may have even undermined his criticism of the decadence of British imperialism in India.

Unlike Johnson, Phillips was unable to meet Gandhi and Nehru because they were in prison and Gandhi had gone on fast in protest. But Phillips had

⁷¹ Phillips to Roosevelt. FR, 1943 v. 4 180-183.

⁷² Mansergh, v. 3 554-556.

⁷³ Phillips to Hull. FR 1943 v. 4 187-188.

recourse to the British officials which led him to review America's relationship with Britain. This reevaluation led him to recognize America's ability to assert its power and promote its interests independently of the British. It was this recognition which, in all probability, inspired Phillips to become involved in Indian politics. Consequently, he disregarded Hull's warning not to interfere and asked the viceroy to see Gandhi. He attempted to make his request palatable by presenting Roosevelt as popular in India.⁷⁴ In his next report Phillips asked Hull for directions as his silence on Gandhi's fast was looked upon unfavorably by the Indians. However, in this report Phillips did not emphasize Roosevelt's popularity but cited criticisms leveled at the President in the *Bombay Chronicle* for not implementing his pledges for self determination for non-white people. But Phillips' reports did not have the desired effect. On February 16, 1943, Hull informed Phillips that the President wanted him to return to the United States for consultations at the end of April or beginning of May.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Phillips' reevaluation of India was not shared by all Americans reporting from India. His assessment of Gandhi's fast competed with that of Herbert Matthews. On February 21, 1943, Matthews expressed his doubts that there was a countrywide demand in India for Gandhi's release. He found the masses unconcerned and the Muslims distant.⁷⁶ Matthews was both reflecting and affirming the ideas about India already established in Washington. Unlike Phillips, there was no concern in Matthews regarding America's image in India. The President's instruction to Phillips to return was probably a warning to Phillips not to interfere.

Phillips had failed to recognize how firmly entrenched the American

⁷⁴ Ibid. Phillips to Hull, February 10, 1943. 188-191.

⁷⁵ Phillips to Hull, February 12, 1943, Hull to Phillips, February 16, 1943. Ibid., 191-194.

⁷⁶ *New York Times* (21:4).

opinion of India had become. He may even have strengthened these beliefs by reiterating problems in India in a vocabulary which provided confirmation to the accepted opinions of India. Like the military observers in India, who had recognized America's emerging role, Phillips was concerned at the possible loss of American prestige in Asia. On February 19, he reported that Rajagopalachari, an Indian nationalist, believed that the American government should help India in order to remove the impression in Asia that America was collaborating with Britain.⁷⁷ But Phillips' concerns evoked no response in Washington. Instead Hull informed Phillips that if Phillips was pressured to make any statement he should inform the Indian nationalists that he was required to discuss the situation with "ranking American and British officials."⁷⁸

Hull's recommendation suggests that American officials had already determined their understanding about India and were unwilling to consider India in the context of their larger interests. Phillips probably recognized that the image of the Indian nationalists he had presented to the officials in Washington had contributed to their disinterest. In his next report to Roosevelt, presented on February 23, Phillips acknowledged the difficulty of understanding Gandhi. He conceded that it was difficult for the "Anglo-Saxons" to understand the deep seated feeling aroused by a seventy three year old Gandhi who many Hindus considered possessed a "semi divine quality." Phillips acknowledged that neither the President nor the Secretary could do much in India but hoped to avoid the impression that his own presence and the presence of American forces in India encouraged the British to retain control over India.⁷⁹ Phillips' assessment is insightful at many levels. At a personal

⁷⁷ Phillips to Hull. February 19, 1943. FR 1943 v. 4 196-97.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 199.

⁷⁹ FR 1943 v. 4 201-203.

level, he had been unable to accept any rationality in Gandhi's popularity and sought to explain the Indian leader within the parameters of the image already established of the Hindu culture. In this respect, Phillips reconfirmed the gap between the political behavior of the "Anglo Saxons" and those of the Indians. But his explanation to Roosevelt also provides an access into a vocabulary with which he and the other State Department officials were most comfortable discussing non-white cultures. Phillips was part of a political culture which, in all probability, routinely defined itself as Anglo Saxon and confirmed its unity with the British against the non-western world. But removed from the close knit circle, where the preservation of the unity between the Anglo Saxon powers was not yet challenged, Phillips had been exposed to the reality of the colonizer's position and questioned their collaboration. He reminded Roosevelt of America's distinction and distance from the British. He may have wanted white prestige to be preserved in Asia, but by dissociating from the British.

Phillips qualifies as a representative and adherent of the belief presented by Emily Rosenberg that American values were meant to uplift the world.⁸⁰ Like Johnson, his stay in India convinced him of America's independence from the British. Phillips' focus was not so much on the viability of Indian nationalism or an acceptance of the political objectives of the Asians, as on the maintenance of white prestige in Asia, which American association with the British was hampering.

Following the general trend among American commentators in India Phillips concentrated primarily on Gandhi and ignored Nehru. Nehru's disagreements with Gandhi had not acquired any voice even though they had

⁸⁰ Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982) 203.

been recorded in the State Department. Nehru had acknowledged in his prison diary on January 26, 1943, that Gandhi was insensitive to the Americans and ignored "international aspects."⁸¹ But the American tendency to focus on Gandhi made Nehru's place in Indian nationalism irrelevant. If American officials accepted cultural and racial differences in their discussions on India, then Gandhi conveniently fit the image which confirmed the difference.

Phillips had recognized the political necessity to establish a distance from Britain but the officials in Washington seemed unwilling to detach themselves from a power with which they had shared a long-established affinity. Their acceptance of British rule in India could not be negated suddenly. On March 3, when Gandhi ended his fast, Phillips informed Roosevelt that, even though, the British had ruled India for over a century they had also recognized the emergence of new forces in the world. Phillips believed that the British would offer freedom to India as soon as the Indians could secure a government. He reminded Roosevelt that the Atlantic Charter had given the Indian nationalists hope and that they were caught up with new ideas of freedom. He believed that Americans could induce the Indian leaders to talk and recommended that the President invite them for a meeting as it would become advantageous for America in the future.⁸²

Phillips had changed his tone considerably. Instead of directing his attention to divisions and problems among the Indian nationalists, he focused on the western inspired new forces of freedom and democracy in India. Western standards were now applied by Phillips to define Indian nationalism in an effort to make it more palatable. But, unlike Johnson, Phillips did not promote the cause of the Congress, or present a leader like Nehru as a

⁸¹ Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru : An Anthology* (Delhi: Oxford U. P., 1983) 180-181.

⁸² FR 1943 v. 4 205-207.

reasonable alternative to Gandhi. His primary goal was to promote an independent American role in Asia. Instead of criticising the British he focused on the limitations an imperial power faced in effecting change. American policy makers, in this respect, were being educated about the necessity to assume responsibility from Britain. But opinions expressed by Phillips consistently competed with those of the British officials and the American press. Both reiterated inadequacies of Indian nationalism and promoted the necessity of British rule in India. Herbert Matthews reported that the end of Gandhi's fast was a political blow to his reputation as the Muslims and the princes remained detached.⁸³

In contrast to journalists like Matthews, whose focus remained confined to problems within India, Phillips had recognized America's future role in Asia. This fact was recognized by Wallace Murray, Advisor on Political Relations. He reported to Welles on April 6, that Phillips' request to see Gandhi should be given consideration, at least for the record. Murray believed that in view of America's espousal of the Atlantic Charter "we will be vulnerable in the future" in Asia. Consequently, on April 14, Hull instructed Phillips to make a request to see Gandhi, but on a personal basis.⁸⁴ Hull's recommendation does not suggest any urgency to reevaluate the American position on India. The political climate and public opinion in the United States did not require the officials to take any immediate action. In this sense the media may have contributed towards creating a disinterest towards India. Unlike Phillips, who had recognized America's emerging role, the media had remained shortsighted in its evaluations and in all probability created a similar mind set in the general public.⁸⁵

⁸³ *New York Times* March 3, 1943 (10:5).

⁸⁴ FR 1943 v. 4 212-213, 215.

⁸⁵ American public opinion regarding India's independence is apparent in a

Phillips viewed America's association with Britain as a liability and realized that the prestige of the white race could no longer be preserved by the British and that role had to be assumed by the Americans. He warned the President of the growing anti-white sentiment in Asia and that "oriental hopelessness" could easily turn to hostility. He further informed the President that India was suffering from hopelessness and that Indian leaders had become disillusioned with the Americans. Phillips added that there was no war spirit in the British. He warned that unless the situation in India changed, Americans would have to bear the burden of future campaigns in Asia where color consciousness was developing and a "vast bloc of oriental people shared a growing dislike and distrust of the occidentals." The only reaction that this report induced was that Welles requested Hull to recall Phillips in case the British thought that Americans had modified their policy on India.⁸⁶ Phillips may have confined his opinions of India within the established parameters; however, his primary concentration was on establishing America's distance with the British. In contrast, the media limited itself to presenting graphic images of India which confirmed the country's social and cultural alienness and political immaturity. This inability to view India from a different perspective seemed to have made British presence in India a necessity and India's independence a liability. Phillips left India at the end of April 1943.

poll conducted in April 1943. It indicates that 62% favored India's independence, but only 19% favored it immediately while 40% favored it after the war. Cited in Gary Hess, *America Encounters India* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971) 128.

⁸⁶ April 19, 1943. FR 1943 v. 4 217-223.

Planning the Future

The sentiments Americans may have expressed about British imperialism continued to develop independently of American view of the imperialized, at least regarding India. In this respect, the media continued to emphasize India's alienness and backwardness. On June 14, 1943, a report in *Time* magazine focused on differences between Jinnah and Gandhi, in effect, between Muslims and Hindus. The report presented Jinnah as possessing "Bond street clothes and the rich palace," who revived the Muslim pride in its one time imperial greatness. Gandhi, on the other hand, with his 'mysticism," his "dhoti" [loincloth], and his "goats" aspired to a unified India.⁸⁷ In this graphic description both leaders appeared as caricatures--Jinnah in his suit imitating the West and Gandhi in his loincloth rejecting the West. Suggestions made by Phillips that the President invite such leaders to a conference could not have won public approval or support.

The withdrawal of America's interest in India's nationalist struggle was noted with relief by the British officials. Halifax reported to Anthony Eden, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that the Cripps Mission had revealed the impracticability of the Congress leaders.⁸⁸ However, those voices which promoted America's national interests continued to concern the British. Now the British directed their efforts towards limiting American interest in Asia in the post-war period. Amery believed that there was a widespread and rooted feeling in the United States which regarded the British colonial empire as equivalent to a private estate. He acknowledged that Britain needed

⁸⁷ *Time* XLI no. 24 31.

⁸⁸ Thomas E. Hachey, *Confidential Dispatches: Analyses of America the British Ambassador 1939-1945* (Evanston: New University Press, 1974) 65. Halifax to Eden, June 26, 1943, political review of the United States for the year 1942.

America's protection and would have to convince the Americans that British colonial policies were not an anachronism. Amery wanted Americans to recognize that Britain had consistently applied liberal ideas in social, economic and political spheres for the benefit of the people. He believed that it was important to encourage the United States to look outward and join in the acceptance of these policies towards colonial people and their development.⁸⁹

One of the major concerns of the British was the growing economic ambition in the United States. Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour, informed Amery on September 21, that the United States would make industrialization of India and China an important objective. Under such circumstances it would be to "our benefit" to train Indians in Britain and encourage them to look to Britain for capital equipment.⁹⁰ Linlithgow wrote to Amery on January 2, 1943, that in economic and commercial fields America's objective in the post-war period was likely to be free trade for all and expressed his discomfort about "welcoming...American interest in the British colonial empire."⁹¹ Sir Ronald Campbell reported from Washington that powerful business interests, which favored American participation in world affairs, were becoming interested in overseas affairs.⁹²

With the growing threat to their own position, the British did not only have to retain India's loyalty but also educate America about the value of their empire. The strategy of the British seemed to be directed towards controlling American ambition by appealing to their views of other cultures and keeping them dependent on the British role and experience in the empire. Halifax explained in the *National Geographic* that Indians were a "primitive people"

⁸⁹ Ibid. Amery to Linlithgow, December 13, 1942. 363-366.

⁹⁰ Mansergh, v. 3 122, 8.

⁹¹ Mansergh, v. 3 457-460.

⁹² Hachey, 127. Ronald Campbell to Eden, October 27, 1943, political review of the United States for the year 1943.

to whom the British had provided social and economic upliftment. He argued that that the British had helped change the Indian outlook by introducing them to the language of Shakespeare and Milton, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. In this respect, Halifax conveniently hinted at America's contribution, however indirect, towards India's awakening. He also expounded on the differences between the realistic and democratic Muslims and the mystical and introspective Hindus--between "dynamic" and "static" people.⁹³ The British empire would now be justified in terms of what Said and Bhabha have considered the necessity of progressive 'western' forms of social and economic organizations, to develop, modernize and stabilize the East. The attributes of modernity and tradition would now 'fix' a nation in the hierarchy and policies planned accordingly. Said contends that the United States inherited this posture after the war, when colonies like India became independent.⁹⁴ Perhaps these beliefs already existed in the United States to which the British could appeal.

Britain's concerns regarding the growth of America's interest in the empire were evident in the opinions expressed by Americans reporting from Asia. On June 19, 1943, Paul Alling, Chief of the Department of the Near Eastern Affairs, reported John Paton Davies' concern that Britain was fighting primarily to retain its Empire and the United States to defeat Japan. Davies wanted Americans to dissociate themselves from working the British in programs like the psychological warfare program as they tended to identify America with British imperialism. Hull concurred with Davies' concerns and wanted to avoid programs that presented American and British interests as

⁹³ Lord Halifax, "India-Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," *National Geographic* (October 1943 v. L xxxix no. 4) 385-405.

⁹⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) 4, 291, 321, Bhabha, 209.

identical.⁹⁵ The emergence of American interests in Asia also led American officials in India to review India's opinion of America. Merrell reported on May 4, 1943, from New Delhi that the Indians wanted American economic assistance but feared American power. He reported on the suspicion of 'dollar diplomacy' and 'economic imperialism' in the press. On February 2, 1944, he reported that Indian nationalists believed that America's interest in India was not altruistic and that Roosevelt may sacrifice his principles in the course of making economic adjustments with Britain. On April 12, 1945, Merrell reported that the editorial in the Indian newspaper *The Hindustan Times* attacked America's imperial tendency in the Far East. The editorial, according to Merrell, was another example of anti-American propaganda in the Indian press.⁹⁶ Merrell's reports indicate that it was no longer sufficient to inform Washington about the inadequacies of Indian nationalism. His reports covered a large span of time, but apparently nothing was done to quell India's suspicion of the United States. Once again, Washington seemed prepared to issue policy statements proclaiming a dissociation from the British as long as it did not require an active involvement in India.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ FR, 1943 v. 4 239-240. On his return to the United States Phillips reiterated to Roosevelt on May 14, 1943 the fear of anti-white sentiment and that people in Asia saw the war as fought between fascism and imperialism. India was bound to be an important base against Japan and the Indians felt they had nothing to fight for. Phillips, 387-388.

⁹⁶ Records of the Department of State, Decimal Files Record Group 59, Box 4951 845.50/7-2244, Box 349 1742 64500/6-2044, Box 6062 845.00/4-1245.

⁹⁷ According to D. Cameron. Watt, Roosevelt's sense of power grew from 1942 and so did the American populist anti-colonial sentiment which the President and his representatives, Louis Johnson and William Phillips transferred to India. *Succeeding John Bull: America in Britain's Place, 1900-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1984) 91, 223-224. But Wm. Roger Louis believes that from about 1943 the American government, in pursuit of security, tended to support, rather than break British imperial system. *Imperialism at Bay* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) 567. Roosevelt's sense of power may have grown after 1942 but he seemed unwilling to challenge the British and assume a dominant role at least in the case of India. Americans had not been able to articulate an interest in India within the framework of larger American goals.

Halifax astutely summed up the evolution of American policies during the course of the war. He believed that the Roosevelt administration had set out to free itself of charges that they were following Whitehall, but for strategic reasons the American officials realized that America's interest lay in the perpetuation of the empire. It was in the matter of economic interests that Halifax predicted a conflict of interest, especially over imperial preferences. He believed that in the first quarter of 1944 India and the colonies were not discussed much in the United States.⁹⁸

Kenneth Decourcy reaffirmed Halifax's reasoning. In the January 1944 *Review of World Affairs*, he reports that there was an increasing appreciation of the fact in the United States that no peace system could exist unless the British empire was preserved. It was the empire rather than the British Isles which was strategically important to the United States. Regarding India, the *Review* in April 1944 pointed out that the Hindus had no faith in democratic institutions because democracy was the antithesis of their faith while the Muslims were more adaptable to democratic ideas as they considered all men equal. Moreover, in villages the British were more popular than the Indians.⁹⁹ DeCourcy was obviously propagating the standard British opinion of India. The British had once again found it necessary to remind themselves and the Americans of India's inadequacies and the necessity of their rule.

Towards Independence: A Reappraisal

With the end of the war approaching American policies towards India underwent a reevaluation. With the death of Roosevelt in April 1945 those

⁹⁸ Hachey, 162, 191, 194. Halifax to Eden, June 19, 1944, political review of the United States for the year 1944.

⁹⁹ *Review of World Affairs*, January 1944 no. 64 10, April 1944 no. 65 7-8.

officials who had unsuccessfully promoted an independent approach towards India attempted to influence the new administration of Harry S. Truman. Phillips was one such person. He advised the State Department on April 19, 1945, that the Atlantic Charter and the statements of the late President regarding independence for all people had led India to expect sympathy from the United States. Phillips wanted Truman to convey to Eden that Americans were disturbed by the resentment among Indians against the Anglo Saxon powers because it adversely affected the military effort and the prestige of the white race in Asia.¹⁰⁰ Phillips' emphasis on the preservation of white prestige in Asia was probably meant to make the concern palatable to Truman and was expressed in a vocabulary with which, in all likelihood, Truman was familiar.

American objectives in post-war Asia had begun to manifest themselves more forcefully. In Britain the Labour Party had won the general elections in July 1945. The State Department, where misgivings about British policies in India had remained subdued, were now expressed more openly. Leslie F. Smith, of the State Department, reported on July 26, 1945, that the British were spending large sums of money on anti Indian propaganda in the United States and anti American propaganda in India. Smith pointed out that the experts in the State, War and Navy departments believed that lend lease given to British India was not used towards the war but to prevent revolts in India. He also pointed out that the State Department experts believed that Roosevelt never got really tough on Churchill. Truman should.¹⁰¹

Smith echoed sentiments which had been expressed earlier by Louis Johnson. However, as during Johnson's involvement in India, criticism of India continued to coexist and often competed with the articulation of

¹⁰⁰ Phillips memorandum. FR 1945 v. 6 249-250.

¹⁰¹ Smith to the Secretary of State. *General Records of the Department of State*. Decimal Files RG 59 box 6063 845.00/7-2645.

American self interests. Winant reported from London on November 16, 1945, that Nehru had become impatient with Gandhi and "his spinning wheel" and non-violence. Winant also believed that the Congress was unwilling to assume responsibility and hoped to achieve its ends versus the British and the Muslims by resorting to violence because Britain would hesitate to use force.¹⁰² In his earlier reports Winant had focused primarily on American objectives and ignored the Indian nationalists. But, once his focus shifted to India, he reinforced the entrenched images of the Indian nationalists. The Congress remained an irresponsible, obstructionist and manipulative organization with a cunning and unreasonable leadership at its helm.

Even though the political habits and objectives of the Indian nationalists continued to earn criticism in the United States, such opinions no longer discouraged the officials from planning long term strategies towards India. Acting Secretary of State Joseph Grew advised Truman on June 9, 1945, to lift the barriers placed on Indian immigration in order to alleviate hostility towards the "white races" in India and other places. Grew believed that Pearl Harbor had been a reminder of the oriental bitterness against those westerners who treated them as racially inferior. Grew also highlighted India's economic potential. He pointed out that India had plans for post war economic reconstruction and was a great potential market for American goods.¹⁰³ Howard Donovan, Consul in Bombay, reported to the Secretary of State on January 9, 1945, that due to the war the United States had vastly

¹⁰² FR 1945 v. 6 253-254. In April 1946, Peter and Frances Muir wrote that Gandhi did not speak for India because India was riven by geographical barriers, religious allegiances and caste. They illustrated the gap between the Hindus and the Muslims by pointing out that Jinnah would not be a popular leader in India because he lived too well and his linen was too clean. (*National Geographic* v. L xxxix no. 4) 443-467.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 287-288. The bill permitting 100 Indians per year to enter the United States passed on July 2, 1946.

improved its position in Indian markets which hitherto exclusively belonged to Britain.¹⁰⁴ The concerns the British had anticipated regarding America's economic interests in the empire had now begun to manifest themselves. A recognition of the American role and interests in India and Asia had become more directed and focused among the American officials. No longer did negative images of India or its nationalism impede an American review of India's economic potential. But significantly, no Indian leadership was acknowledged with whom the Americans would begin an interaction.

The development of American interest in Asia was recognized by the British. Halifax reported to Eden that America's esteem for British political, social, economic and military leadership had declined. Suspicion of colonialism was seen in Britain's supposed reluctance to take the last steps towards self government in India. Halifax believed that as the United States moved more and more into world affairs differences with Britain emerged.¹⁰⁵ There was truth to Halifax's assessment. Official discussions in Washington indicate that America's interests in Asia were being consistently articulated. Their concerns for British interests, which had once received priority, were not even voiced in the new policy suggestions. American officials had apparently recognized Britain's inability to uphold white interests, and that role had to be taken over by the Americans. The Americans had not excluded the British from the exclusive club but had definitely subordinated them.

Even though American officials articulated their own interests in India, they did not take into consideration opinions Indians like Nehru developed of the United States. Over a period of time, American policy makers had been

¹⁰⁴ *General Records of the Department of State*, Decimal Files RG 59 box 6061 845.0/1-945.

¹⁰⁵ Hachey, 259-60. Halifax to Eden, June 16, 1945. Political review of the United States for the year 1945.

informed about the irrational, irresponsible Indian leadership and had accepted the Congress leadership within the parameters of this image. Nehru believed that America had kept itself clear from all entanglements, a passive and sometimes active supporter of British policies and propaganda.¹⁰⁶ He wrote in *The Discovery of India* that the British colonial outlook was not compatible with American policies and expansionist tendencies because the United States wanted an open market and looked unfavorably at those who opposed it.¹⁰⁷ Nehru's fears of American objectives in India were similar to those expressed by the British. Both eventually wanted to keep American influence at bay, one to preserve the empire the other to preserve India's independence. The contentions made by Hunt and Rosenberg regarding America's mission to spread its values and capital and its inability to accept changes incompatible with American interests had been understood and responded to by Nehru. In a speech made in 1946 Nehru declared "I do not want India to be a supplicant country," and in January 1947, "We can only deal with other countries on an equal basis and if this is denied to us, we shall rely upon our own resources how ever poor they might be."¹⁰⁸ Nehru had announced the basis of India's foreign policy. He stated that "Asians and Africans have become increasingly conscious of themselves and their destiny." They were nationalists and were seeking neither domination nor interference.¹⁰⁹

Grew, in selling India to Truman as a potential market, did not take into

¹⁰⁶ Hess 164.

¹⁰⁷ Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New York: John Day, 1946) 549-550, 560.

¹⁰⁸ Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* 2nd series v. 4 (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1986) 428 and *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches* 2nd ed. v. 1 (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1958) 472.

¹⁰⁹ Nehru, *The Discovery ...* 559.

account Nehru's opinion of American economic imperialism and his views on capitalism. In general, American commentators had not assigned Nehru a political stature and regarded him as a weak and ineffective leader. Naturally, his views had not acquired relevance. Nehru believed that imperialism and capitalism were cohorts and neither would disappear until both systems were rejected.¹¹⁰ Nehru contended that since "capitalism necessarily led to exploitation of one by another," the solution lay in the adoption of a socialist economy.¹¹¹ As during the Cripps Mission, Americans tended to give precedence to their own expectations of India over the avowed political objectives of the Indian leaders. Nehru's economic policy and his non-aligned policy, and promotion of Afro-Asian solidarity eventually became incompatible when the Americans defined their political objectives towards Asia and Africa. India's resistance to America's objectives, as in the case of their rejection of Cripps' proposals, could easily be explained within the framework of images and ideas which demonstrated India's political irrationality and irresponsibility.

The American inability to accept policies and attitudes which did not conform to America's self image and interests is evident in Merrell's observations. He seemed offended that the Indians classed the United States with Britain as an imperialist power and that Britain was not trying to dispel the illusion.¹¹² He was disappointed with Sardar Patel, future deputy prime

¹¹⁰ Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: a Biography* v. 1 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975) 104-105.

¹¹¹ Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: An Anthology* 292.

¹¹² Merrell to the Secretary of State, June 10, 1946. FR 1946 v. 5 86-94. American officials held the British responsible for presenting the United States as an imperialist power. In a memo, Joseph S. Sparks of the Division of South Asian Affairs stated that Britain had made no attempt to consult with 'us,' and seemed unhappy with 'our position' in India. Lord Mountbatten, the last British Governor General of India, had warned Nehru against dollar imperialism of the United States. 26, December 1946. FR 1947 v. 3. 175-178.

minister of India, for believing that the United States was unduly influenced by Britain. Patel, according to Merrell, was "obsessed" with Britain's insincerity. Similarly, another Congress leader, Rajagopalachari evaded the question posed by Merrell as to how democracy would survive in India if tensions between the Hindus and Muslims continued. Merrell concluded that no leader demonstrated "statesmanlike" behavior, vision or courage to rise above his party or communal affiliation.¹¹³

American opinion of India did not change but continued to coexist with the promotion of America's objectives and interests. With the threat of communism looming large, the future of India and the demands of the Muslim League for a separate state of Pakistan were reviewed from a global perspective. America's involvement in the process of transfer of power in India was minimal but American interest in the outcome had heightened. Dean Acheson, the new Secretary of State, believed that a quick settlement of the Indian problem would expedite other colonial questions in Asia and limit the appeal of Communism. In view of these facts, Acheson wanted the Congress to accept British and Muslim League's interpretations of compulsory groupings of provinces.¹¹⁴ Acheson advised the American mission in New Delhi on December 11, 1946, to dispel any belief in India that America's actions and initiatives were inspired at the instance of Britain.¹¹⁵ Acheson's

¹¹³ Merrell to Acheson. FR 1946 v. 5. 101-103, 109-112. Kenton Clymer believes that American policy makers considered the Indian nationalists not only capable but ultimately reasonable. *Quest for Freedom* 292. Merrell's statements do not reflect Clymer's contentions.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. Acheson to Merrell. 97-98. The Cabinet Mission sent by the British in 1946 had proposed two groupings of Indian provinces, one of the predominant Hindu provinces and the other of the Muslims. The Congress leaders wanted a strong central government while minimizing the power of the provincial groups but the Muslim League disagreed. The Cabinet Mission failed to resolve the impasse.

¹¹⁵ Acheson to Merrell, December 10, 1946. *General Records of the Department of State*, Decimal Files RG 59 box 6068 845.00/12-1046.

recommendations reflect a similarity in the present American posture towards India with the one adopted both during and immediately following the Cripps Mission. Americans had placed requirements on the Indians, especially the Indian National Congress, to adopt recommended policies. Also, the need to dispel the Indian fear of American association with the British had not been resolved. India's anti-imperialist sentiment was constantly rediscovered by the American officials and handled on an ad hoc basis.

With India's impending independence in sight, and the division of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan becoming a reality, American officials had to review their interests in the two emerging nations separately. In this respect, the well publicized ideas about the characteristics of Hindus and Muslims became convenient tools to assess the two nations. On May 2, 1947, Merrell warned the State Department that Indian Muslims considered Americans unsympathetic to their cause. He emphasized Jinnah's importance and conveyed the Muslim fear of the spread of "Hindu imperialism" into the Middle East. Merrell believed that the allegiance of the Muslim countries was important to the United States in order to deter Russian aggression in that region.¹¹⁶ Merrell's contention indicates that American interest in India's independence had changed significantly over a period of time. In 1941 Berle had viewed India's independence in terms of its favorable impact on the Middle East.¹¹⁷ At this time Berle did not even consider differences between the two religious communities a factor. But in 1947, Merrell seemed to have accepted the well publicized incompatibility between the two communities and redefined the relevance of India's independence. In this respect, he even removed the Muslims from the culture and politics of the Indian sub-continent

¹¹⁶ Merrell to Acheson. FR 1947 v. 3 154-155.

¹¹⁷ Berle to Hull. Drafte Aide Memoire, May 5, 1941 FR 1941 v.3 176-177.

and aligned them with that of the Middle East. The understanding Americans developed of the Hindus and Muslims had a considerable impact on American involvement in the politics of the two nations as well.

Once India's independence became a certainty, its leadership represented by Nehru also given consideration. The newly appointed American Ambassador to India, Henry Grady reported on July 9, 1947, that Nehru based his foreign policy on the need to avoid involvement with any bloc and wanted friendly relations with the United States. Grady projected that, even though some Indians feared American economic penetration, they would generally welcome American exports. He believed that international ideological conflicts were less important to India than the domestic problems it faced.¹¹⁸ In view of the fact that Indian opinion had generally been ignored in the United States, the information provided by Grady regarding Nehru's political beliefs could easily receive a similar disregard. Nehru had articulated his political philosophy long before India became independent, but it had not generated any discussion in America.¹¹⁹ In the final stages of India's drive towards independence Americans remained observers of the process. On August 15, 1947, India achieved independence.

On August 18, 1947, days after India's independence, *Time* reported that on the whole British despotism had been benevolent. Thoughtful Indians wondered what new conquerors might be coming over the hill, and whether

¹¹⁸ Ibid. Grady to Acheson. 160-161.

¹¹⁹ The incompatibility of Nehru's non-aligned policy probably kept American attention focused on Nehru's personality without necessitating a review of his opinion of the communists and Soviet Union in particular. It was on January 31, 1952 that the OSS/State Department Intelligence and Research Report on China and India, 1950-1951 acknowledged Nehru's suspicion of the Soviet Union. The report pointed out that in *The Discovery of India*, written by Nehru in 1944, he mentioned expansionists tendencies of the Soviet Union. *OSS/State Department Intelligence and Research Reports. China and India 1950-1961.* ed. Paul Kesaris. Part IX. 1979.

they would be as helpful as the British had been.¹²⁰ *Time's* opinion exemplifies that India was still not considered capable of forming an able and competent government or defending itself. It would remain open to new conquerors who in the current scenario would not be the 'benevolent' British but more sinister communists. American interaction with independent India would begin on this premise.

¹²⁰ *Time* L no. 7 34.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

American involvement in the politics of India in the early 1940s was a crucial period in which a well defined image of India was established and accepted within government circles, and intellectual and popular arenas in the United States. Certain aspects of India acquired a dominant place in American thought within which Indian society, politics, and leadership was ultimately defined. These images were so powerful, so arresting, that the American policy makers, the writers, military officials, and the media seemed compelled to understand India within their confines. This perception of India had a significant political impact; it served the immediate purpose of defining the tone of American involvement in India's achievement of independence. Furthermore, in the long run it provided a framework within which to discuss and develop a relationship with independent India.

Even though the discussion centered on India, it was primarily Hindu India which was the object of scrutiny. Within the broadly defined "Orient," the Hindus were placed much lower than the Chinese¹ and even the Indian Muslims. India, in fact, became more or less synonymous with the Hindus and the Muslims were excluded from the boundaries that the western observers defined as India. Hindus were singled out as passive and subservient and discussed with extreme negativity. Hinduism and the institution of caste became the defining elements of India which in turn became the basis for examining India's political aspirations. Both the religious and the social institutions were perceived as breeding an otherworldly, passive, fatalistic,

¹ See Harold A. Isaacs, *Scratches on our Minds: American Images of China and India* (New York: John Day, 1958)

undemocratic tradition. Within these confines, Hindu nationalism, represented by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhi, became suspect. It was not merely the political philosophy of Gandhi, but such visualizations as Gandhi's attire, the inert masses and the sacred cows which demonstrated and confirmed India's inability to break away from strangulating traditions and irrational, irresponsible, and illogical political behavior. Consequently, India's ability to participate in the war or to develop self-rule became questionable. Since the Second World War was the primary reason for American involvement in India, this interpretation imposed limits on the United States' interest and role in India's independence movement.

The success and acceptance of these images depended largely on their constant reiteration until they became firmly entrenched in American political thought. The British played a significant role in this respect, particularly during the period of the Cripps Mission. They defined India, provided graphic images, numerical proofs, and introduced a vocabulary into American politics with which to discuss India. Yet, for these images to become accepted a certain impulse had to exist in the United States in order to identify with the British. In fact, traditionally, Americans had accepted and endorsed the British position in India. To begin with, an admiration for the British had existed among the American policy making elite since the period of Anglo-American rapprochement, c1900-1914, which was expressed as the civilized 'white race' performing an admirable duty to uplift the unruly 'natives.' These sentiments were also expressed by American observers in India prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. But India was still distant from American interests and consequently, it was not explored, or its subject reported widely in popular forums and policy making circles. The images of India created by writers such as Katherine Mayo, while popular, may have over time become

peripheral. However, with the growth of American interest in India's independence these images were rediscovered, extensively developed and discussed both in policy making arenas and public forums. The opinions of the new observers of India became more defined and more meaningful to the American officials and also more widely reported in the media. When, during the war, India did become significant to American policy makers they had been educated to limit their analysis to these characteristics of India. The British could then appeal to and channel these sentiments. The cultural, racial, and linguistic affinity between the United States and Britain, which presupposed superiority, set them further apart from a non-western society.

It should be realized that Anglo-American interaction over the subject of India cannot be considered simply an exchange between an active informer and a passive recipient. Even within their wartime alliance certain tensions and dissensions are evident. Their similarity in purpose and affinity of race and culture could unify, but also create rivalry and competition. American unwillingness to condone imperialism and the British fear of the Americans establishing a foothold in their empire were important factors in this relationship. These concerns made it necessary for the British to emphasize India's inadequacies and the necessity for continued British rule. Even though in the State Department there was usually a general consensus regarding the British position in India, there were still some who were unwilling to accept the British arguments passively. Roosevelt himself did not seem ready to acquiesce to the British. His appointment of Louis Johnson as his representative in India during the Cripps Mission can be considered a reflection of this resistance. On the other hand, Roosevelt also adopted a standard vocabulary on India and relied almost exclusively on the British whose position he had challenged. Moreover, he seemed unconcerned with the

opinions of the Indians themselves in response to the proposals made by Cripps. His actions seemed more an effort to establish the United States as being distinct from the British, rather than taking up the cause of the Indians. Questioning imperialism did not necessarily mean elevating the imperialized to an equal status. Even Louis Johnson, who delineated America's interest in India as being separate from the British, could not make India palatable to his superiors. The failure of the Cripps Mission provided confirmation of a collective group of images that, in composite, showed a portrait of India which could not take political initiative or demonstrate political maturity. American identity, which was struggling to establish a distinction from the British in terms of national roles in the world, had manifested itself in confirming a separation from the Indians. Americans, in recognition of their own values and beliefs, had placed requirements on the Indians to incorporate these ideals into their lives in order to win American support. Under these circumstances, the officials and the media ignored Louis Johnson's espousal of the Indian National Congress and Nehru. In this respect when analyzing policy decisions, not only are policies significant in themselves but the language and images employed to discuss India which are equally political in content and equally consequential in determining attitudes in the context of which policies are made. Similarly, opinions recorded by writers, journalists and military officials, scrutinizing social, cultural and political characteristics of India, carry significant political implications.

American writers, journalists, and military officials may have objected to British imperialism but these reservations were overridden by their opinion of India. Furthermore, their inability to develop a different perspective also lay in their preconceived conception of India which emerged in their frequent references to Rudyard Kipling's version of India. In fact,

American observers in India performed a significant role in propagating an image of India which suited the British position. These observers were unable to view Indian society outside the confines of the entrenched images. They derided imperialism yet could not accept the imperialized. It was as if India was responsible for its own colonization. Even in rejecting British imperialism they seemed to have accepted the colonizer's representations.

One of the major factors which influenced these observers was the immense difference between the society to which they belonged and the culture they observed. Partha Chatterjee highlights the problem that beliefs held by other peoples turn out to be manifestly irrational and false when judged in terms of western criteria of rationality and truth.² Chatterjee's focus is on the western anthropologist but this problem is not confined to their discourse alone. It can also encompass writers, the media and the policy makers, who may not be experts on other cultures, who but occupy positions of influence and with their observations make a significant impact on policy making and public opinion.³ Frank Ninkovich contends that a study of culture requires an emancipation from cultural fetters but acknowledges that it is impossible for the intellectual to proceed independently of this bondage.⁴ In case of India, it is noticeable that the negativity India generated was

² Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) 11.

³ An important work regarding the anthropologists' view of the Other is Johannes Fabian's *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia U. P., 1983). He states that anthropology is a science of other men in another time, an ideologically construed instrument of power in which the Other is ultimately other people who are our contemporaries. The relationship between them and their object is inevitably political and Fabian recommends that the anthropologists meet the Other on the same ground and in the same Time. 143-144, 165. American observers consistently placed India not only in another space but in another time as well. In their views India seemed destined to remain rooted in its past.

⁴ Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* (New York: Cambridge U. P., 1981) viii.

primarily due to its inability to meet western standards of political and social behavior. Gandhi evoked particular criticism because he represented everything that was contrary to the West. The standards and values of western institutions and beliefs seemed to impede an acceptance of Indian society and nationalism on its own terms. In this respect, India frustrated the American observers and often led them to endorse British rule in India with the hope that the British would eventually inculcate western values and norms of behavior in the Indians. Their discomfort with Indian nationalism also led the American observers to deny Nehru political legitimacy. Nehru, although commended for his western upbringing, was also criticized for his Hinduness.⁵ The images of Hindu India were so opposite of and contrary to the West that in this polarity a definite 'us' and 'them' emerged, in which 'us', even if in some cases reluctantly, enfolded the British.

The notion of India's essential difference with the West was accepted by most American commentators and overpowered the voice not only of the Indians but of any dissenting opinion from successfully emerging in the West. The marginality of alternate thought on India in popular forums is markedly noticeable. Sympathetic voices for India were more or less confined to smaller forums with limited readership and constantly competed with growing criticism of India. Even those who professed sympathy for India often adopted a paternalistic tone in presenting the Indian nationalists as lacking vision and maturity, who needed to be nurtured and instructed to learn responsible political behavior. The opinions of those Americans who included India within the framework of larger American interests did not gain widespread

⁵ Ninkovich warns that foreign ideas usually end up adjusting to the limitations imposed by local traditions. New patterns of thought are domesticated not assimilated. 6. Nehru's failure to impress American observers probably lay in the fact that he had domesticated foreign ideas and the impact of the West was not obviously visible in him.

acceptance during the period of India's nationalist struggle. Their opinions emerged more forcefully when the United States interacted with independent India. However, by then India had already been imprisoned within defined images and categories. Even William Phillips, who promoted an independent approach towards India, was unable to accept India on its own terms and defined it in the established vocabulary. Phillips did not give centrality to the aspirations of the Indians but the emerging American role in Asia. He recognized the inability of the British to maintain white influence in Asia and that role had to be assumed by the Americans. However, during the phase of India's nationalist struggle, Phillips' exposition on India and the disregard with which it was received in Washington revealed the inability of American officials to sever long established ties with Britain.

The distinctions American observers in India made with the British remained unrelated to the ideas they developed about India. India's failures lay more in the character of the people than in their historical circumstances. Most observers did not treat Indians as individuals, but merely as socially and culturally driven entities. Gandhi's spiritualism and mysticism became so central and so contrary to the western norms that the political consequences of his strategies on Indian nationalism were not considered. In fact, Indian nationalism itself was questioned. These were the standard British views of India, which had become American as well. But these Americans also made significant contributions to the knowledge about India in the West. Even though they questioned British imperialism, these Americans had begun to employ their own values and ideals to distinguish themselves from the Indians. Also, they assumed a much broader and totalizing vision of India and in the process denied any difference or deviance in the Indian society and politics. In general, they presented the Indians as devoid of any humanness

and assigned them a collective identity often termed the "Hindu mentality." In case of Nehru, the British generally marginalized him by imprisoning and ignoring him, but the Americans delegitimized Nehru either by exposing his Hindu personality or by declaring him a misfit in a tradition bound India. Ultimately, American officials, writers and the media had become unified in their understanding of India. This knowledge had given the colonizer authority to maintain dominance over India and the same ideas gave Americans a reason to define the limits of their own participation and authority to demand the Indians to convert to more acceptable forms of political, social and cultural behavior. This position is evident in Roosevelt's reply to Gandhi. After the failure of the Cripps Mission a more defined official opinion on India had emerged.

The writers, military officials and the media cannot be considered merely reflectors of the dominant thought on India, but as active educators as well. The images and perceptions they provided often helped the officials in the United States define India and set limits on their response towards India. It is unclear whether these observers arrived at their conclusions independently or were influenced by the British, because as Americans they often distanced themselves from the colonizer. But their contribution was as significant as that of the British. They reinforced, reiterated and progressively provided a more comprehensive and a more detailed picture of India to a large public and the policy makers. They silenced the voice of the Indian nationalists by submerging them in a chaotic and irrational culture rooted in the past. They helped the discussion in both popular and official forums shift from questioning British imperialism to concentrating on India's inabilities and deficiencies. When they did question the British, it was in recognition of America's emerging role and recommended policies geared

towards preserving white influence in Asia. American values and ideals emerged more forcefully in establishing a distance with India.

The images of India in the United States considerably influenced the American perception of India's viability for independence. But these images had long term political implications as well. K. Balaraman, American correspondent for the Indian newspaper *Hindu*, draws attention to representations of non-western societies like India in the West. He points out that the American press ignores progress made in science and education and only shows interest in bizarre and the outlandish stories and conveys the impression of a backward, superstitious country.⁶ The problem Balaraman highlights is the survival of images which go beyond mere consumer satisfaction to influencing relationships at many levels and at different times.

The American relationship with independent India began at a time when Cold War concerns dominated American politics. The Second World War had witnessed the demise of British power and the emergence of the United States as the only country powerful and influential enough to uphold the western interests. But the growing power of the Soviet Union threatened to undermine these interests. It naturally became the prime concern of the United States to thwart the economic, political and ideological expansion of the Soviet Union. South Asia, occupying a strategic position on the periphery of the communist dominated Asia, naturally became important in the strategic designs of the United States. At this time India, under the leadership of Nehru had adopted a policy of non-alignment. Nehru had rejected the western premise that the world needed to be freed from the threat of communism and he was convinced that both the East and the West shared the blame for the international tensions. Hence he considered non-alignment vital to peace and

⁶ *As Others See Us*, (Zurich: International Press Institute, 1954) 18.

a means to alleviate international tensions.

America's interaction thus began with a country which had challenged American foreign policy objectives and world leadership. But the Americans had already defined India as a land of apathy, passivity, outdated traditions, lacking modern political and economic thought and incapable of developing a cohesive and coherent political structure. This image overpowered India's own political imperatives and aspirations. The new American observers confined independent India within these images. The *New York Times* correspondent C. L. Sulzberger's assessment of India was limited to his observation of the 'stark naked *sadhus*' [ascetics], 'sacred cows' and 'lazy Hindus.'⁷ Sulzberger reinforced India's social, cultural and political distance from the West by identifying those characteristics which had come to define India in the United States. His panacea was that 'we' must do more than help the Indians fill their stomachs 'we' must influence their minds.⁸

Sulzberger's opinions reflect the dominant views American officials had adopted about India. A Report of the National Security Council on the position of the United States in Asia suggested increasing the western orientation of South Asia and the utilization of the skills and knowledge of "our European friends" to help check the spread of Soviet influence.⁹ Americans had learned to disregard Indian opinions and in the policy recommendation gave no consideration to the suspicion Indian leaders had expressed about the West. The report, in fact, placed reliance on Britain's knowledge of India to

⁷ C. L. Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles: Memoirs and Diaries, 1934-1954* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1969) 547.

⁸ Sulzberger, 791-797.

⁹ *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967* Book 8 December 23 1949, (Washington: United States Government Printing Press, 1971) 226-258. The Office of the Near Eastern Affairs had recommended that American information and cultural programs be expanded to indoctrinate people with pro-West leanings and anti-communist ideas. *Records of the Office of South Asian Affairs* RG 59 lot 54 D 341 box 23 December 5, 1949

increase the western orientation of India. Considering the opinions Britain held of India, this reliance, in all probability, would not have produced a different perspective on India but reaffirmed the already entrenched opinions.

The premise of American policy was outlined in the National Security Council recommendation (NSC 68) that "we" must make ourselves strong, affirm "our" values and build a successfully functioning political and economic system in the free world. The policy report acknowledged American responsibility for world leadership in order to contain Soviet expansion. The argument presented was that moderate regimes in India and Pakistan would not be able to restore or retain popular support and authority unless assisted in improving their economic and social structures.¹⁰ The NSC policy report was an affirmation of American values as the standard to which all must aspire. In this respect, the report echoed the sentiments expressed by Roosevelt in his reply to Gandhi. But a shift had also become apparent in the American position on India. The NSC report did not place requirements on India to fulfill, instead it recommended America's involvement to assist India improve its social and economic structures. Still, there was no recognition of the self-defined aspirations and concerns of countries like India, emerging from imperial rule and suspicious of western influence. India's ability to survive on its own had always been questionable, and Americans had no confidence in India's ability to withstand communism. A Regional Policy Statement of the Office of South Asian Affairs confirmed that the region faced serious threats to stability, inherent in mass illiteracy, communalism and poverty, disease and hunger. The report recommended development of an

¹⁰ National Security Policy report (NSC 68) April 14, 1950. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (henceforth FR) 1950 v. 1 234-292.

attitude in South Asia which would assist the United States and its allies to obtain facilities in times of peace and war. It also suggested development of domestic information programs and expansion of training programs for South Asian language and area specialists.¹¹

From these suggestions it can be assumed that American officials showed a new interest in understanding South Asian people in terms of their own language and culture. But these recommendations have to be examined in the context of the mind set of the American officials regarding India and also in view of the general perception of India in the United States. A framework had been established within which the area specialists could easily confine India. It is evident from the examination of more current literature on India that American scholars tend to study India within the confines of established images and often use a comparative framework in which America's distance from India is reinforced.¹²

The State Department not only proposed a study of India in the United States but also recommended efforts to create a better understanding of the United States in India. George McGhee recommended intensifying American information and cultural programs in India.¹³ Consequently, more Americans were sent by the State Department to India. These Americans seemed to be

¹¹ FR 1950 v. 5 245-254 October 9, 1950.

¹² Carol Breckenridge has noticed a lack of competitive accounts in the western studies on South Asia. These studies in general, use a comparative framework in which "the West" is contrasted to "the rest." Decolonization does not entail immediate escape from the colonial discourse. "Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament" in Breckenridge ed. *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993) 2. This contention can be interpreted as the dominant beliefs obscuring and obstructing alternative thoughts on India from developing. Ronald Inden believes that now western area specialists and their colleagues in the government and business aid and advise, develop and modernize countries of the Third World. "Orientalist Construction of India," *Modern Asian Studies* 20.3 (1986) 401-446.

¹³ *Records of the Office of South Asian Affairs* RG 59 lot 54D 341 box 18. December 27, 1950.

indoctrinated not only in anti-communist rhetoric, but also in deeply entrenched views of India. The images of an impoverished, passive and illiterate India had once confirmed its incapability to develop self rule. Now, with the threat of communism looming large, the same images were applied to address similar notions of India's inadequacies and vulnerabilities. Arthur Goodfriend, of the United States Information Agency in New Delhi, and two African American journalists, Carl T. Rowan and Saunders Redding sent to India by the State Department to interpret American life to the Indians reflect the general trends regarding India in American policy making circles in the 1950s.

These observers may have been sent to create an understanding between Americans and Indians, but could not overcome the deep chasm that divided them or the images that guided them. If the official recommendations to create a better understanding of India in the United States through the study of India's language(s) and culture were implemented, then these observers certainly did not subscribe to that proposal. In fact, they provide a glimpse into the firmly entrenched opinions of India in the State Department. They did not seek a different perspective but confirmed what they expected India to be. Goodfriend concluded that many Indian ways of life corroborated Kipling's edict that never the twain shall meet.¹⁴ Reddings similarly concluded that "We are as apart...as primitive asceticism and the current western fashion in human nature could have put us."¹⁵

These observers could not place their faith in the survival of democracy or even in the survival of India itself. They resurrected the entrenched

¹⁴ Arthur Goodfriend, *The Twisted Image* (New York: St. Martin, 1963) 95.

¹⁵ Saunders Redding, *An American in India: A Personal Report on the Indian Dilemma and the Nature of Her Conflicts*, 1st ed. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1954) 163.

impressions of India's social, cultural and religious characteristics to overpower any impulse which could deviate from the standard behavior pattern of India. In the process, they not only affirmed the superiority of western values but also assigned a permanency to the gap between India and the United States. Goodfriend was convinced that in India dictatorship would succeed while an elected representative of a 'civilized people' [probably Nehru] would be lost.¹⁶ According to Redding, the communist rival for power in India was not democracy or socialism, but traditional Hinduism which, he believed, was also "bitterly inimical to the West." It was the "terrible orthodoxy" which choked off the avenues of freedom and turned India to national slavery.¹⁷ Rowan believed that it was impossible to eat heritage and bathe in the glorious past.¹⁸ These Americans would have agreed with Malcolm MacDonald, the British High Commissioner in India, that the Hindus were sustained by a religion which made them other worldly rather than practical citizens of the world. It deprived them of the discontent which made other people strive eagerly to improve themselves.¹⁹ None of these observers considered the Indians as individuals but only as mind sets, propelled by forces beyond their control. The survival of images of India developed in the colonial period is evident in these expositions. The strangulating, undemocratic traditions imposed by Hinduism which sapped the Indians of initiative continued to define India. These opinions may have been developed by the British, but had become accepted American opinions as well.

The leadership of India, represented by Nehru, was criticized for not

¹⁶ Goodfriend, 205.

¹⁷ Redding, 254-55, 273-74.

¹⁸ Carl T. Rowan, *The Pitiful and the Proud* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941) 10, 30.

¹⁹ Malcolm MacDonald, *Titans and Others* (London: William Collins, 1972) 216.

accepting the American point of view regarding communism or the necessity of the West to assist India's social and economic development. Once Gandhi had been implicated for being politically irresponsible by obstructing the western effort to rescue the world from fascism, now that perception was transferred to Nehru on the issue of communism. Western observers had found it easy to place Gandhi within the framework of the Hindu image and had marginalized the apparently westernized Nehru as a misfit in a traditional culture. In this respect, Nehru's rejection of American policy objectives acutely disappointed these American observers. Rowan seemed puzzled that Nehru had the best western education yet adopted a non-aligned policy. He was convinced that if the "free world" left Asia, communism would triumph, and that non-alignment had been successful only because of the stabilizing influence created by the western world.²⁰ At the South Asian Regional Conference of the United States Diplomats and Consuls, held in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) between February 26 and March 2, 1951, McGhee rejected the idea of developing a regional association of South Asian nations because it would come under the domination of India which would encourage other countries emerging from colonial domination to adopt non-alignment.²¹ Non-alignment had challenged American interests and like communism had to be contained.

The opinions expressed by these observers fit within the framework of Hunt's contention that American foreign policy is guided by an active quest of national greatness, promotion of American values and limits of acceptance of political and social change in other parts of the world.²² This hierarchy, according to Augelli, was established on the basis of power and wealth, which

²⁰ Rowan, 126, 178-179

²¹ FR 1951 v. 6 1664-1679. March 20, 1951.

²² Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U. S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1987) 77, 162.

separated the backward nations from the advanced nations. America's destiny to extend the liberal economic creed to the world had become linked with their crusade against communism. Since it was assumed that poverty led to communist successes, it became essential for the American model of development to be emulated.²³ In the case of India, according to Gyan Prakash, caste driven and otherworldly India was reformulated as 'traditional India' and old projects of modernizing the colonials, renovated and deployed as economic development.²⁴

It is apparent in these analyses and in opinions expressed by American observers that Americans, as westerners, had inherited colonial assumptions and as Americans projected the superiority of their own culture, belief and values. Operating under such beliefs, American observers of independent India classified India according to western, particularly American standards of development and advancement and the deployed established images to confirm India's stagnation and backwardness. Furthermore, India's apparent unwillingness to adhere to American objectives reaffirmed India's political, economic and cultural irrationality.

India's resistance to American policy objectives were not well received in Washington. Once again, entrenched images of India helped explain India's deviance. Dean Acheson, the Secretary of State, resurrected old images and reinforced the notion of Indian irrationality in their mental makeup. He informed Loy Henderson, American Ambassador in India, on April 21, 1950 that the impediment to better Indo-American understanding was the "mental compartmentalism" which seemed to characterize Indian officialdom as well as

²³ Enrico Augelli and Craig Murphy, *America's Quest for Supremacy and the Third World* (London: Pinter, 1988) 62-65, 82-83.

²⁴ Gyan Prakash, "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* . 32.2 (April 1990) 383-408.

articulate Indians. They want American aid yet complain of dollar imperialism.²⁵ Augelli's contention that Americans deal with dissent by isolating themselves from the dissenters (or the dissenters from the Americans), by converting them or by destroying them²⁶ may not apply in its totality to India, but Acheson's exposition does express a political and cultural distance from India. American officials may have responded similarly to dissent elsewhere, but in the context of India, these opinion could easily become linked to American understanding of the Hindu mind and character which had been consistently presented as illogical and elusive. These opinions become apparent in McGhee's attempt to decipher Nehru's political and philosophical beliefs. McGhee seemed confused by Nehru's "double talk" and sought an explanation in the difference in the inner working of the Indian mind and the Anglo-Saxon mind.²⁷ Similarly, Acheson found Nehru emotional, unrealistic and confusing.²⁸ Sulzberger, who had access to officials like Acheson and Loy Henderson, was privy to these opinions. He considered Nehru disorganized, indecisive, confused, indirect and a "vain feminine personality."²⁹

The American reliance on the entrenched images of India in order to

²⁵ FR 1950 v. 5 1464-1466

²⁶ Enrico Augelli, *America's Quest for Supremacy and the Third World*. (London: Pinter, 1988) 37. In a proposal made on August 29, 1950 McGhee wanted to combat India's neutralism and to limit Nehru by increasing the capacity of other non-communist Asians to exert influence and leadership. This proposal was eventually withdrawn. On September 11, 1950 McGhee acknowledged that United States had taken action in Asia without consulting with the Asians. Now he wanted Britain to win India back for the Americans. Records of the Office of South Asian Affairs, RG 59 Lot 54D 341 box 17, 18.

²⁷ George McGhee, *Envoy to the Middle East* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983) 100.

²⁸ Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My years in the State Department* (New York: Norton, 1969) 334-6.

²⁹ Sulzberger, 541-547, 791. Malcolm MacDonald believed that Nehru had streaks of "oriental autocrat" in his makeup. *Titans and Others*, 205-206.

understand Nehru emerge again in the November 1950 paper on 'Nehru's Attitude toward the United States,' presented by the Office of Near Eastern Affairs. In this paper Nehru was described as a 'hypersensitive egotist' with a 'Brahmanic' approach towards the masses, acting as their guide, leader and critic. The conclusion drawn was that Nehru was disinclined to cooperate with the more truly democratic Americans.³⁰ A reliance on the image of a society controlled by the caste system, breeding hierarchical and undemocratic traditions, made it unnecessary to look beyond to find any 'rational' or 'realistic' basis to Nehru's political philosophy and its appeal among countries emerging from colonial rule. Acheson's assessment that there was a fundamental difference in values that was responsible for the great gap between the thinking of our president and Nehru³¹ represents the general confirmation in the United States of an insurmountable gap between the cultural, social and political behaviors of the Indians and the Americans.

The larger question that arises out of this discussion is the difficulty in creating an understanding between different cultures. Ninkovich acknowledges that to study cultural relations is inevitably to confront the

³⁰ McGhee to Acheson, November 3, 1950. cited in Dennis Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot: The United States and India's Economic Development, 1947-1963* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990) 56-57. Another evaluation of Nehru emerges in Michael Brecher's study. Brecher believes that the Victorian disdain for the 'immature,' 'boorish,' and 'materialistic,' Americans which Nehru imbibed at Harrow and Cambridge greatly influenced his perception of the United States. *Nehru: A Political Biography* (London: Oxford U.P., 1959) 560, 582.

³¹ *Official Conversations and Meetings of Dean Acheson, 1949-1953* October 12 1949, January 9, 1951 Microfilm. Douglas Brinkley points to Acheson's criticism of the Afro-Asian bloc for attempting to undermine American influence, especially in the United Nations, by citing from Acheson's letter to Lord Patrick Devlin written on March 18, 1959. Acheson stated that one of his prejudices was the Indians, "...they and their country gives me the creeps." Douglas Brinkley, *Dean Acheson: The Cold War Years 1953-1971* (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1992) 304-305. C. L. Sulzberger found Nehru a confused man who was unquestioningly 'enveloped in a cloud of his own egotism.' *A Long Row...* 544, 79.

other.³² But in this confrontation one culture always and inevitably subordinates the other.³³ Ninkovich believes that cultural peculiarities, if studied from a dispassionate scientific point of view, can more easily be catalogued by an observant outsider.³⁴ In case of India, it was not only the scientist but an equally potent and possibly a more influential force which had the power to reach a large public and the policy makers in a language more simple and images more palatable. Herbert Matthews, the *New York Times* correspondent, professed objectivity yet he assumed superiority and criticized India for not emulating western forms of political and social behavior. Even those who came to spread understanding in India came armed with the same images and inherited the same attitudes. None of these observers were experts on India, yet they interpreted India with authority. A vast difference is noticeable in their description of India and the West. India was described as inert, otherworldly, orthodox and traditional, while the West was defined as the free world, active and practical.

On December 2, 1955, Nehru wrote to his sister Vijay Laxmi Pandit that "people in England and America are very courteous to us and friendly but, in the final analysis, they treat India as a country to be humoured but not as an equal."³⁵ In the 1970s, Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State under Richard Nixon, wrote in his memoirs about his encounter with the "intricate, complex

³² Ninkovich, 2.

³³ David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire* (Durham: Duke U. P., 1993) 4. Spurr has cited Jacques Derrida's examination of Claude Levi-Strauss's studies of the Indians of western Brazil. Derrida calls it "the essential confrontation that opens communication between peoples and cultures, even when that communication is not practiced under the banner of colonial or military oppression." The writing produced by this confrontation always involves a violence of "difference, of classification, and of the system of appellations."

³⁴ Ninkovich, 6.

³⁵ Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography* v. 2 (Cambridge: Harvard U. P., 1979) 242.

Hindus" and the "complex and apparently haughty Brahmin leaders of India."³⁶ Given the almost two decade span between these two statements, it is apparent that a mutual perception had been established within which Indo-American relations would be conducted. The notions about India had come to dominate the American psyche, thus proving that once an image has been established, it seems to become self-sustaining and all pervasive.

³⁶ Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979) 844-845, 849.

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