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INTERPRETERS, YOUNG, OLD, AND HISTORICAL

Everyone has likely played telephone at some point in their life. In it, a group sits in a circle and one person begins the game by whispering a phrase to the person sitting next to them. This person then relays what they heard to the person beside them, and so on and so on, until the phrase eventually reaches the penultimate person in the circle, who declares something which is typically completely different from that which was originally whispered. Following this, everyone breaks out into conversation to determine how the phrase was changed as it passed from person to person. In telephone, sometimes people mishear what their neighbour says, and sometimes people hear what their neighbour says, but choose to give the phrase their own spin anyways. Boiled down to its essence, the game bears a basic similarity to the manner by which information travels throughout networks. In networks, whether they be simple or complex, each person that handles information before passing it on has the ability to interpret and to alter it, and in that act, to influence its meaning.

Truly, few understand the process of interpretation better than the historian. Based on the understanding that history cannot be replicated on a 1:1 scale, historians seek to present particular understandings of the past using primary and secondary sources. They must make value judgements about what findings to include and to exclude in their analysis, assuming that they are even able to find these sources. And even before historians can access these sources, archivists have to make these same decisions when preserving texts. This is to say that by the time the historian “discovers” their source, it has passed through many hands, each of these extensively scrutinizing, valuing, and sorting that text. As historians Barbara Brookes and James
Dunk have written, “many records have been gathered into archives, repositories which house not what is left behind, but what has been kept, and [which] organize these writings into hierarchical families which limit and shape the range of possible interpretations.”¹ They conclude their article by claiming that “historians are, in a sense, hostages to the archive.”²

Despite this gloomy predicament, with some creativity, hostaged historians can expand their horizons beyond the confines of one archive, or one method of interpretation. With regard to imperial history, prominent postcolonial theorists such as Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha have written that it is impossible to fully recover the voices of the colonized, in essence employing the same reasoning as Brookes and Dunk.³ Such concerns about historical purism ignore the wealth of historical literature that has been left by colonized and subaltern peoples, and preserved in non-state archives, many of which have online digitized collections.⁴ It is true that there is bias inherent to these sources, by the fact of their being written rather than preserved by other means, for instance orally or pictorially, and by the fact that these sources tend to disproportionately represent the views of a select few, typically being well-educated, middle-class men. This does not mean that all history is hopelessly biased, but rather that historians must be equipped to deal with these inherent biases. Rather than being held as “hostages to the archives,” historians should heed the call of those like Franca Iacovetta and Dane Kennedy, who challenge historians to experiment and engage with other disciplines.⁵

⁴ The South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA) and Simon Fraser University Digitized Collections were particularly helpful in the research and creation of this thesis.
Greater multidisciplinarity by historians is necessitated by the field’s breathtaking scope. By adopting other lenses, historians can discover innovative and comprehensive ways to interpret and represent history.

This paper focuses on interpretation and translation in both a literal and a figurative sense. It contains a study of Taraknath Das and William Charles Hopkinson, two immigrants from South Asia to North America in the early twentieth century. Both became leaders, Das as an activist leader in the South Asian community of North America, and Hopkinson as a state-paid immigration agent and spymaster responsible for monitoring this same community. Predictably, the relationship between the two leaders and their networks was fraught with tension and conflict. The first section will assess the worlds in which these two men lived, contextualizing their actions in a period in which intense global migration patterns were matched by the rise of xenophobia and discrimination under the banner of white nationalism. The second section will focus on how Das and Hopkinson were able to access powerful networks as a result of their identities as racialized middle-class men. The concept of power and networks will be heavily applied throughout this thesis, and deserve definition. At its simplest, power is defined as an exercise rather than a possession, created through the interactions and relationships between different actors. It is the ability for Actor A to convince Actor B that A’s views are correct, and for B to act upon this newfound belief. Through this process, more actors are increasingly brought into association, resulting in the formation of actor-networks united by some common objective or experience, networks which exercise greater power as they grow larger. Finally, the third section of the thesis will assess how interpreters and translators were able to exercise power in their intermediary relationships, and will consider the conflict between Das’ and Hopkinson’s
networks, and why the latter prevailed over the former. Ultimately, through the positions the two bourgeois racialized men occupied in their respective networks, Taraknath Das and William Charles Hopkinson exercised power as interpreters, straddling liminal spaces in between white and South Asian audiences. Their interpretations were by Asians, of Asians, and to Asians, interpretations made necessary by the wide gulf that separated white from non-white communities.

1. CREATING A SENSE OF PLACE

The mixed feelings that many South Asians had about North America were laid-out in a travel article penned in 1914 by a South Asian tourist to Vancouver, who wrote that;

An ugly, rickety, weather beaten row of sheds… adorns the pier and forms the gate to this great Terminal City…. It was as if it were a studied design; at every few hundred yards dirt and ugliness alternated with pleasing and beautiful sights until this short walk of a few minutes’ duration had been traversed, ushering one into Vancouver. Because, no sooner you pass the platform where passengers board the train for the east, than you have to crouch over a wooden sidewalk, about three feet wide, along a muddy and slimy road of a very sharp grade. Then immediately you encounter a massive brick and stone citadel, looking like the castle of some great European feudal lord… with a fine, pretty, pleasing interior.⁶

Before studying Das’ and Hopkinsons’ lives, an understanding must be established of the worlds in which they lived. The west coast of North America during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was not entirely a hinterland, and yet neither was it metropolitan. The region had only recently been colonized and expropriated, and was still being settled. It was a gateway through which settlers from Europe, the Americas, and the Asia-Pacific entered, although doing so became increasingly difficult for non-white settlers. It was in this period that

white bourgeois men across the world discovered and trumpeted their commonalities, practicing a “new religion of whiteness,” as described by the African-American activist and sociologist W.E.B. DuBois.7 While this ‘religion’ of whiteness proved popular and powerful, those barred from this congregation were not powerless, and organized themselves to resist discrimination and xenophobia. Biographical summaries for Hopkinson, Das, and other South Asian activists will introduce the personalities central to this study, and the lives and powerful networks that they created within the white man’s world.

1.1. THE WORLDS IN WHICH THEY LIVED

As bourgeois white men divided the world’s territories between them, the global balance of power changed, as did justifications for the stewardship over other peoples and nations. By the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, white settler states such as Canada and the United States had grown increasingly prominent. European and American empires reached their zenith, although this growth came with insecurities and dissent. It was a period in which notions of scientific racism and civilizational incompatibility were the norm. This world was painted as white and non-white, a dichotomous positioning of all non-white peoples as separate, alien, and incompatible.8 Both imperial powers and settler states employed this new discourse of difference, although there were variations between them. Even within a single white man’s country, interpretations of whiteness differed based on the locale. White Vancouverites and San Franciscans viewed whiteness more commonly with each other than with white Haligonians and New Yorkers; collaboration ran as deeply north-south as it did west-east, if not more so. Yet,

while colonizers’ justifications of colonialism changed and evolved throughout the ideology’s history, the core aspects of colonialism, namely, the subjugation of other peoples and the creation of hierarchies differentiating the colonizers from the colonized, remained the same.

In the period being studied, most Asian immigrants in North America were Chinese and Japanese, although there was a sizable influx of South Asians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Canada, the Chinese began to arrive in the 1860s, the Japanese in the 1880s, and the South Asians in 1903. Most Asians lived on the west coast, this concentration corresponding with the region’s status as the hotbed of anti-Asiatic sentiment. Asian immigrants had originally been allowed into North America as an early form of temporary foreign labourers, working in labour-intensive industries such as railroad construction, agriculture, logging, and mining, while not being expected to settle permanently or to establish roots.

Many Asian immigrants did not see themselves as temporary foreign labourers, and more closely resembled transnational migrants with established roots in multiple countries. Many were not anchored to the countries where they landed. Many Asian immigrants moved between South Asia, Canada, and the United States, these movements inspired largely by their search for economic and/or educational opportunity, and the maintenance of familial obligations. Of the approximately 5,000 South Asians who arrived in Canada between 1904 to 1908, around 3,000 of them moved southwards to the United States, although this does mean that they remained in

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the same locale after they had moved. However, in the summer of 1909, this transnational mobility became more difficult as Asians were barred from moving freely between the United States and Canada. This free movement had previously facilitated the seasonal employment upon which many Asian immigrants relied. Some Asian migrants then turned to irregular migration to cross the Canadian-American border, often aided in this pursuit by professional smugglers, indigenous guides, and Asian ethnic labour contractors. However, the closing of borders was soon accompanied by the buildup of an extensive border regime, effectively halting most Asian transnational migration between Canada and the United States.

The South Asian community of North America was largely divided into two groups. The majority were working-class Punjabi Sikhs. Most were young, with around 90% between the ages of 14-44, and most of these between 20-29. Few were literate in their mother language, and few spoke English. Most had set out to find their fortunes, as they came from large families unable to support them. The second, smaller, yet influential immigrant group consisted of middle-class South Asians, typically being Hindus from Bengal, the United Provinces, and the North West Frontier Province, although a smaller number of middle-class Muslims and Sikhs were present as well. These middle-class immigrants were typically professionals, students, and businessmen, and they became leaders within the community. Regardless of class, religion, or origin, almost all South Asian immigrants were men. South Asian women were barred from

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12 Ibid 6, 16.
14 Ibid, 14.
entry as policy, with only nine accepted into Canada between 1904 to 1920, this decision only being revoked in 1918. The community was fairly homogeneous during this period, and so long as individuals shared the same political beliefs, which was not always the case, religious, caste, class, and other such differences were put aside.

Canada and the United States were designed as white men’s countries, privileging the intake and citizenship of white over non-white immigrants. As such, each group of Asians successively faced exclusionary policies, the Chinese beginning in 1885, and the Japanese and South Asians beginning in 1908. South Asians were excluded from Canada through the Continuous Journey regulation of 1908. This regulation determined that only immigrants travelling to Canada directly from their country of origin would be considered admissible. As there were no direct routes between South Asia and Canada, the regulation predominantly affected South Asians, despite not explicitly naming them as the targets of exclusion. By 1911, there were 2,342 South Asians in Canada, most of whom were concentrated in British Columbia. By 1921 the population had decreased to 1,016. The below figure visualizes the effects of the

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18 Johnston, *The East Indians in Canada*, 6, 9. Two women were allowed in by an “act of grace” in 1914.
19 Jagpal, 107.
21 Takai, 36.
Continuous Journey regulation upon South Asian immigration to Canada between 1905 to 1925.

For a short period of time after the passage of the Continuous Journey regulation, the US became the destination of choice for North America-bound South Asians, many of them arriving via Hawaii and the Philippines, both of which had been colonized by the Americans.\(^{24}\) In the first issue of Taraknath Das’ activist publication, *the Free Hindusthan*, in 1908, he commended the American government for not excluding South Asians as the Canadians had done, although he worried that they would soon.\(^{25}\) These fears were soon realized. In 1911, William Charles Hopkinson visited the US Immigration Office in San Francisco and spoke with Immigration


\(^{25}\) *The Free Hindusthan*, Volume I, No 1, April 1908, South Asian American Digital Archive, 1. [https://www.saada.org/item/20110901-312](https://www.saada.org/item/20110901-312)
Inspector Frank Ainsworth. Ainsworth described how a recent change in staffing combined with pressures made upon the government by the Asiatic Exclusion League, a transnational group consisting mainly of white labourers and European immigrants, had resulted in South Asian immigration being practically halted. Over 50% of South Asian applicants were rejected by 1909, and 90% of applicants by 1911, after they had been “subjected to the severest of both medical and physical examinations.” South Asian immigrants to the United States were also required to have $200 in order to enter the country. These more indirect forms of exclusion were virtually identical in Canada. Additionally, the United States soon after created explicitly exclusionary immigration policies with the passage of the Immigration Act of 1917, which excluded any entry into the United States of peoples from South and Southeast Asia. In the US, population censuses recorded 2,545 South Asians in 1910 and 2,507 in 1920. The number of South Asians living on the west coast dropped dramatically in this same period, from 2,478 in 1910 to 1,961 in 1920. Both Canada and the United States were envisioned by white citizens as

28 Ibid.
30 The Hindustanee, Vol. 1, no. V (June 1, 1914), Simon Fraser University Digitized Collections, 1. https://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-2054/hindustanee-vol-1-no-v-page-1; On the topic of the medical basis for excluding immigrants, Hussain Rahim, a South Asian activist who quite annoyed Hopkinson, commented that “Yes, hookworms are a great danger to Britishers. Then for heavens [sic] sake let the British evacuate India at once, before they become infected with them and endanger Great Britain with the epidemic.”
countries which belonged exclusively to them, and the presence of Asians in these countries
directly contradicted the ideal of a white nation.

There were many reasons given for Asiatic exclusion, and many ways by which Asian
migrants were excluded. In 1908, then-Deputy Minister of Labour William Lyon Mackenzie
King wrote a report on Asian immigration to Canada, after the occurrence of anti-Asiatic race
riots on the west coast in 1907. On the matter, Mackenzie King wrote, “That Canada should
desire to restrict immigration from the Orient is regarded as natural, that Canada should remain a
white country is believed to be not only desirable for economic and social reasons, but necessary
on political and national grounds.” Among other charges, Asian immigrants were accused of
accepting lower wages than white labourers, of being likely to become dependant on the state,
and of being unsuited to the Canadian climate and society. And if non-white immigrants could
not be excluded or expelled, they could be disenfranchised from the political system. In 1907,
non-white South Asians were disenfranchised from the municipal and provincial vote in British
Columbia, which also prevented them from voting federally. The 1914 Naturalization Act made
naturalization and citizenship to Canada incredibly difficult for non-white people to obtain, as
notions of “good citizenship” became racialized in favour of white applicants. Paradoxically,

33 Seema Sohi, “Race, Surveillance, and Indian Anticolonialism in the Transnational Western U.S.-Canadian
34 Chang, 10.
35 Information as to Hindu Agitators in Vancouver [Confidential Memorandum on Matters Affecting the East Indian
Community in Vancouver by Colonel Eric J. E. Swayne, Governor of British Honduras. Original], January 1908,
Simon Fraser University Digitized Collections, 9, 11;
g-east-indian; Report re Hindus [William C. Hopkinson, Immigration Inspector], 1.
36 “History of South Asians in Canada: Timeline,” “South Asian Studies Institute, University of the Fraser Valley,
In order to vote federally, one had to be registered in the provincial voters’ list.
37 Peter Price, “Naturalising Subjects, Creating Citizens: Naturalisation Law and the Condition of ‘Citizenship’ in
even while the Canadian state sought to exclude and discriminate against Asians, there was a high demand for labour and immigration. Some businesses, although in the minority, sought to fill this demand by inducing Asian immigration.\textsuperscript{38} However, in seeking to fill labour and immigration demands, the British Columbian government encouraged European over Asian immigration.\textsuperscript{39} For instance, the state subsidized European immigration with fees Asian immigrants paid to enter the country.\textsuperscript{40} Even with this incentive, European immigration by itself failed to sufficiently fill labour demands, and Asian immigrants who made it into Canada typically found employment.\textsuperscript{41} Despite this, the concept of Asian immigration to Canada remained undesirable to most white citizens, and Asians were excluded when possible.

Exclusion and discrimination were not practiced solely by the Canadian state, but by the wider community as well, in Canada and the United States. In the Fall of 1907, a string of anti-Asiatic race riots occurred across the North American west coast, in cities such as Vancouver, Bellingham, and San Francisco.\textsuperscript{42} A less violent, and yet more common instance of discrimination came through South Asians and other Asians being denied service in white-owned businesses, such as in grocery stores, barber shops, or movie theatres.\textsuperscript{43} The nativist sentiment continued for many years. One account in 1912 from the March-April edition of the Canadian publication \textit{Aryan} read, “The smoke-coloured Hindu, exotic, unmixable, picturesque, a languid worker and a refuge for fleas, we will always have with us, but we don’t want any more of him… The Sikh may be of Aryan stock… He may be near-white though he does not look it…

\textsuperscript{38} Chang 10.
\textsuperscript{39} Lake and Reynolds.
\textsuperscript{40} Chang, 11.
\textsuperscript{41} Chang, 11.
\textsuperscript{43} Jagpal, 24, 118-119.
British Columbia cannot allow any more of the dark meat of the world to come to this province.”

44 In positioning Asians as incompatible and unwelcome, white statesmen and white citizens in Canada and the United States defined their vision of their nation, and who belonged in it and outside of it.

By contrast to settler interpretations of whiteness, which were based more heavily in racist and xenophobic concepts of a homogeneous white nation, British interpretations of whiteness related heavily to the maintenance of imperial rule, specifically of white men’s leadership over both white and non-white countries. In 1917, James Campbell Ker, an agent of the Indian Civil Service, reported on the development of the South Asian community in North America from 1907 to 1917. Using the example of the aforementioned article from the Aryan, Ker highlighted and condemned “vulgar effusions of certain Canadian papers on the immigration question.”45 Settler racism often perturbed British imperial officials, who viewed such explicitly vitriolic sentiments as bellows which would stoke the fires of anticolonialism in British colonies.

46 It was not a cosmopolitan nor egalitarian conceptualization. The imperial world was one based on the dichotomy between ruling and ruled peoples, rather than between white and non-white peoples.47 In addition, to be a member of the ruling class one had to be a bourgeois white man. As one Anglo-Indian official put it, the “secrets of government...in the modern world [belong] to the Anglo-Saxon race alone.”48 South Asians and Eurasians did inhabit important positions

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45 Political Trouble in India, 232.
46 Information as to Hindu Agitators in Vancouver, 10.
47 Lake and Reynolds.
within the imperial world, yet they acted as intermediaries and were barred from becoming decision-makers; they were meant to reinforce imperial rule by aiding Anglo-Saxon superiors.

The British Empire was composed largely of non-white nations, a conglomeration believed to be maintained “by prestige alone.” It is important to recall that ever since the Indian Rebellion of 1857, a massive yet unsuccessful armed rebellion against British rule in South Asia, British officials became much warier of the strength of their rule. After 1857, imperial officials increasingly found themselves balancing between a growing transnational anticolonial community, and a growing transnational coalition of white Dominion states, with both forces expecting polar opposite positions from imperial officials on topics such as the global mobility of non-white British subjects. Imperial officials worried that upsetting anticolonial activists could lead to open rebellion, but they also worried that failing to appease white Dominions might result in the British Empire losing its leadership status of this bloc to the Americans. With regards to the global mobility of non-white British subjects, especially to white men’s countries, the British ultimately submitted to the pressures of the white men’s countries rather than those of anticolonial activists. In doing so, British leaders reluctantly adhered to a form of white nationalism more popularly-eschewed by settler states. In 1908, Colonel E.J. Swayne, the Governor of British Honduras, visited British Columbia and wrote a report in which he chastized white Canadian labourers for their xenophobic “outbreaks of feeling” which would be used “for

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49 Information as to Hindu Agitators in Vancouver, 9.
51 Lake and Reynolds.
53 Lake and Reynolds 171
purposes of agitation in India.”54 Despite this, he recommended that South Asian immigration to Canada be restricted “from the general [reason] of keeping the temperate zones of the Empire for the surplus white population, whilst giving full scope to our Asiatic subjects in the more tropical zones of the Empire.”55 In such a manner, even if they did so with some reservations, the British helped to enforce the line dividing the white world from the non-white world, a line by which immigration restriction effectively became a form of racial segregation.56

1.2. THE LIVES WHICH THEY CREATED

Both Taraknath Das and William Charles Hopkinson belonged to an elite cadre within the South Asian community, whether in South Asia or in North America. Both were leaders within their respective networks, finding places in spite of, and in large part because of the edicts of the white man’s world. Whether working in support of or in contravention of white nationalism, their experiences are demonstrative of how South Asians, or at least influential ones, navigated and operated in the white man’s world.

The life and career of William Charles Hopkinson perfectly exemplifies the complexities and differences between white settler and British imperial visions of white nationalism. As an imperial agent operating in settler states, it was through this role that Hopkinson interpreted whiteness, and it was in this role that Hopkinson monitored and policed the South Asian community. His actions did not go unchallenged, and in response to the discrimination and xenophobia the South Asian community faced, recently-arrived South Asian men such as Taraknath Das created their own community and networks. Whereas Hopkinson’s leadership

54 Information as to Hindu Agitators in Vancouver, 10.
55 Information as to Hindu Agitators in Vancouver, 10.
56 Lake and Reynolds 114
status was uncontested and monolithic throughout his career in North America, the leadership of the South Asian community shifted constantly, with power increasingly invested in more radical leaders in correlation with the rise of state surveillance, policing, and anti-Asiatic discrimination.

Born in Delhi in 1880 to an English father and a Brahmin Hindu mother, Hopkinson grew up as a Eurasian, a mixed-race person of European and Asian descent. He began to work for the British colonial police in 1896 at the age of 16, first being posted in the Punjab until 1901, and then in Calcutta until 1907, the latter post at which he attained the rank of sub-inspector. Hopkinson then left South Asia and arrived in Canada in either late 1907 or early 1908 where he worked as both an immigration inspector and as a spymaster. Throughout his career in North America, he worked towards the policing over and deportation of South Asians, instanced through his involvement in the Honduras scheme of 1908, an effort by the Canadian government to transplant all South Asians in Canada to the British colony of Honduras. He provided much of the information that influenced the creation of the Continuous Journey regulation of 1908, particularly emphasizing South Asian revolutionaries’ attempts to radicalize the community.

Hopkinson established a massive state surveillance network, which monitored the South Asian community across North America. His network of informants watched mail, tapped

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60 Jagpal, 25.
telephones, and recorded telegraphs, lectures, conversations, and meetings. Hopkinson received information from an extensive network of informants he built up. Firstly were his South Asian informants such as Bela Singh and the Swami Trigunatita who directly monitored South Asians in their daily lives, in their places of worship, commerce, and residence. Secondly, Hopkinson had white settlers who served as informants, such as Jean Sinclair and Arthur Tilton Steele, these informants providing information on South Asian activists’ interactions with the white settler community. Finally, throughout the continent and especially on west coast cities such as San Francisco, Seattle, and Vancouver, individuals were hired to take notes from activist leaders’ lectures, to look through and record South Asians’ mail, and to tap and record their phone calls and telegraphs. Gathering all of this information, Hopkinson relayed his and his informants’ findings to imperial and settler officials, including but not limited to then-Deputy Minister of Labour William Lyon Mackenzie King, Deputy Minister of the Interior William W. Cory, the successive Governor-Generals the Earl Grey and the Duke of Connaught, and American immigration inspector Anthony Caminetti. It is difficult to describe Hopkinson in solely national

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https://www.saada.org/item/20120122-595

64 Extract from William C. Hopkinson, Immigration Inspector, to William W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior, October 16, 1911, Simon Fraser University Digitized Collections,  

65 Extract from Arthur Tilton Steele, San Francisco, to William C. Hopkinson. Copy, November 22, 1913, Simon Fraser University Digitized Collections,  

66 Extract from William C. Hopkinson, Immigration Inspector, to William W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior. Copy, December 1, 1913, 2, 4; Note on the Hindu Revolutionary Movement in Canada, April 1919, Simon Fraser University Digitized Collections, 16.  
terms; from his arrival in North America up until his death in 1914, he appeared on Canadian, British, and American payrolls. And while Hopkinson spent much of his time in Vancouver, where he was based, he travelled frequently within British Columbia as well as to Seattle and San Francisco, and less frequently to Ottawa and London where his superiors were based. He was a central figure in the development of a transnational state network which could respond to transnational South Asian immigration and activism.

Hopkinson was a keystone in the thinking and policy that surrounded the South Asian community in the early twentieth century. Despite this, he did not view South Asians with the same avarice that many settlers held. Instead, he viewed the necessity of South Asian exclusion through the optic of imperial preservation and antiradicalism. He wrote in 1911 that, if a certain amount of attention is paid... to [South Asians’] grievances and wants, the agitators would stand a small chance of affecting ignorant Hindus with disaffection. Some protection I think ought to be given Hindu residents in the United States, as their appeals to British Consular Officers is reported as of no use, resulting in their application to educated men like Dass [sic] for help, and this is just the opportunity that Agitators look for to instill revolutionary feelings into their minds.

As an imperial agent, Hopkinson worried that the treatment South Asians in North America received would manifest in South Asia, where this poor treatment would be used as evidence of South Asians’ unequal and poor treatment throughout the Empire, an incitement for rebellion. Hopkinson’s view of South Asians remained prejudiced, and he tended to stereotype them based on classed, religious, cultural, and educational grounds, if not in explicitly racialized language. It is somewhat perplexing that he did not consider his own actions as filling South Asians “with

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66 Chang, 16.
disaffection,” considering the central role he took in excluding, monitoring, punishing, and deporting them. Despite this, he differed from settler officials in a manner that commonly differentiated imperialists from settlers: his perception of South Asians was one fuelled by disdain, rather than by violent hatred. This difference is best exemplified in the Komagata Maru incident in 1914, in which a shipload of 376 South Asians were rejected from entry into Canada after months of deliberation, their exclusion justified through the Continuous Journey regulation. 68

During this incident, Hopkinson served as a mediator between the South Asian party and Canadian immigration officials; In this role, he restrained his superior, immigration agent Malcolm Reid, who proposed getting rid of the South Asians by starving them. 69 While important in understanding the differences in how imperialists and settlers operated, the differentiation did not overly matter to the passengers of the Komagata Maru, who hurled lumps of coal at Hopkinson when he attempted to parley with them before an attempted raid by Dominion police officers upon the ship, this sortie foiled by yet another sooty barrage. 70

Over time, South Asians were increasingly filled with “disaffection” at their treatment, and although South Asian activists often complained of the passivity of their community, as exclusion and discrimination grew against South Asians in North America, the community increasingly invested greater power in more revolutionary leaders. The South Asian community of North America can be described in a singular sense. South Asians, whether leaders or followers, travelled constantly between cities and countries. Within this community, there were many prominent actors jostling for leadership, with particular visions of what had to be done for their community’s betterment.

68 Note on the Hindu Revolutionary Movement in Canada, 7.
69 Popplewell, 67.
70 Jagpal, 33.
There was a moderate faction in power from the South Asians’ arrival in 1903 until approximately 1909, led by figures such as Teja Singh, a professor and active leader within the community from 1908 to 1913. It was after the west coast riots of 1907 and the passage of the Continuous Journey regulation in 1908 that the need for activist leaders was realized. Singh was a typical moderate in that he focused on the development of the South Asian community in North America rather than the cause of South Asian independence. In 1908 he petitioned the Canadian and British government to allow South Asians into Canada, and condemned the Honduras scheme. In 1909 he formed the Guru Nanak Mining and Trust Company Limited as a central organization for the community’s development. Hopkinson and other state agents did not consider such men as Teja Singh as radicals, but all the same kept close tabs on them. They considered such leaders’ activism, born out of their indignation and resentment, as a potential gateway to radicalism, and as such Hopkinson reported their actions and movements meticulously.

Then, there were more revolutionary activists, most of them being young, well-educated, and middle-class students, who came to power from around 1909 to 1912. These men strongly advocated anticolonial resistance by any means, but often their actions fell short of their words. Taraknath Das was one of these men. Born in 1884 to a middle-class Brahmin family in Calcutta, Das had been an activist from an early age, and became a full-time anticolonial activist in 1903.

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71 Jagpal 28, 29.
72 Information as to Hindu Agitators in Vancouver, 6; Parnaby and Niergarth, 45.
when the decision was put before him to either stop his activism, or leave the house. He toured eastern South Asia as an activist, preaching and teaching to the masses about the tyrannies of British imperialism, and printed and distributed literature to the same effect. He was nearly arrested for his activism, and after a brief stint in Japan, arrived in the United States in 1906. There he was unable to find solid footing outside of groups of South Asian students, and travelled around the continent seeking out education, work and community. Das, similarly to Hopkinson and to many other activists and South Asian immigrants, was a transnational migrant. In the early twentieth century, he spent a great deal of time travelling between San Francisco, Seattle, New York City, as well as smaller towns such as Northfield in Vermont, and Sumas in Washington State. He spent much time writing and lecturing on the evils of imperial tyranny and advocating for resistance against it “by any means,” and he was worriedly written about and followed by Hopkinson and other officials at all times. However, Das’ tongue was sharper than his sword, and as an author and lecturer he was most prominent from approximately 1908 to 1911. Firstly, he published and distributed anticolonial literature, such as his publication the Free Hindusthan, which was distributed across the world. Secondly, he lectured and liaised with white audiences, whom he and other activists viewed as potential allies and financial sponsors. Finally, he also worked to organize student groups and the South Asian community, but was only

75 Mukherjee 3-4.
76 Mukherjee 7.
moderately successful in this.\footnote{Political Trouble in India, 227-228.} Leaders like Das were more bark than bite, enablers who encouraged others to bite on their behalf.

By contrast to Das was Har Dayal, a scholar-revolutionary in word and in action. Men like Har Dayal came to the fore between 1912 to 1914, a time in which South Asians more noticeably began to chafe at colonial and settler policies and mindsets. In 1912, Har Dayal had been involved in the nearly-successful assassination attempt upon the Viceroy of India, Lord Hardinge. Hopkinson took Har Dayal very seriously. When he heard from an informant planted in Har Dayal’s entourage that he had been boasting about the attempt, Hopkinson expanded his operations in an attempt to ensnare Har Dayal.\footnote{Mukherjee, 42.} With such a dramatic entrance, Har Dayal assumed a premier importance within the South Asian community of North America. In 1912, he formed the Hindi Association of the Pacific Coast, which would later become the Ghadar Party, a militant organization which actively promoted and worked towards the overthrow of British rule in South Asia.\footnote{Extract from William C. Hopkinson, Immigration Inspector, to William W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior. Copy, December 1, 1913, 2.} The Ghadar Party had its own publication, the Hindustan Ghadar, which espoused rebellion and violence in a way that Das’ Free Hindusthan had only hinted at.\footnote{Mukherjee, 56.} South Asians’ frustrations came to a head with the Komagata Maru incident of 1914. In the aftermath of the incident, up to 500-900 South Asian immigrants from North America returned to South Asia to revolt against the British, in what became known as the Ghadarite Exodus. These South Asians had been encouraged to return and revolt by the Ghadar Party. The revolt failed.\footnote{Sohi, “Race, Surveillance, and Indian Anticolonialism in the Transnational Western U.S.-Canadian Borderlands,” 433.} During this same period, a string of assassinations and assaults took place in the South Asian community.
in Canada, primarily between South Asian informants and South Asian activists, culminating with Hopkinson’s assassination on October 21, 1914.\textsuperscript{85} After this, and after the outbreak of World War I, the state clamped down on South Asian radicalism, all but eradicating it for decades to come. Leaders such as Har Dayal and Taraknath Das fled to other countries during WWI, and Das was later accused and imprisoned, albeit for a relatively short period of about one year, on charges of treason against the United States.\textsuperscript{86}

Hopkinson and Das belonged to a group of South Asian immigrants who carved out leadership statuses for themselves, each in their own respective ways, within the white man’s world. While short-lived, their tenure proved to be influential in forming state policy and responses to and against it. Their experiences demonstrate the importance of considering how non-white leaders exercised power of their own.

\section*{2. CONSTRAINTS AND POSSIBILITIES OF IDENTITY}

Actors’ identities influence the paths and choices they can make in their lives. This does not mean that identities are standalone and immutable entities, existing independently of social construction. Regardless of whether identities are socially constructed or not, identities do place constraints or possibilities upon people that influence, but do not determine, their thoughts and actions. Classed, racial/ethnic, and gendered statuses all serve to influence the possible choices laid out before each person, and others barred to them due to their identities. In some situations, one actors’ constraints acted to another’s advantage. In the creation of “white men’s countries” in which the white ruling class segregated itself from non-white subjects, a side effect was that

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[85] \textit{Note on the Hindu Revolutionary Movement in Canada}, 7.
\item[86] Mukherjee 66, 119.
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rulers effectively shut themselves off from populations with whom they had to interact. The necessity of this interaction led to the reliance of both white and non-white networks upon middle figures who were capable of being accepted by both groups, who could effectively mediate information, knowledge, and commands between them. As bourgeois racialized men, Das and Hopkinson were two such intermediaries, interpreting one audience to the other.

2.1. CLASS, EDUCATION, AND LANGUAGE

In his book, Black Skin, White Masks, Frantz Fanon wrote that, “The Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter - that is, he will come closer to being a real human being - in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language.” Language and education were and are useful tools, unlocking doors and pathways to new relations of power for those able to access these benefits. However, in British-ruled India, only a select few classes were able to access English educations. As such, any analysis of education must also be associated with an analysis of class. And although useful to know the colonizers’ language, bilingualism or multilingualism in the languages of the colonized as well as of the colonizer was the most valuable asset one could possess. These classes typically formed intermediary positions between British rulers and South Asian subjects. The creation of a native elite dedicated to supporting and maintaining colonial rule was one clear objective by the British in the establishment of English education in

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Leela Fernandes, “The Historical Roots of the New Middle Class,” in India’s New Middle Class: Democratic Politics in an Era of Economic Reform, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 5.
India. The policy had mixed results. Regardless of their politics, Das’ and Hopkinson’s linguistic proficiencies were highly-marketable in Anglo North America, where the need for such intermediaries existed between immigrants and the state. Das and Hopkinson were able to access relations of power in ways that were not open to those incapable of expressing themselves jointly in the languages of the colonizer and the colonized.

One marker of the South Asian middle-class was their improved access to socioeconomic resources such as English educations and modern forms of employment. Das’ access to education was increased by his status as a middle-class Brahminical Bengali man, while Hopkinson’s access came from his being a Eurasian man. The two had comparatively auspicious births compared to most South Asians; Das claimed that the adult literacy race in South Asia as of 1914 came to 5.3% of the population. Das learned English and Hindustani in Calcutta, one of the most prominent cities in which colonial English education was concentrated. He attended primary school in his village, and secondary school in Calcutta afterwards. Das was also very likely educated based on his family’s caste status as Brahminical Hindus, the highest-ranking South Asian caste, whose members historically formed the religious and academic elite in South Asia. Das began his post-secondary education at Calcutta University, but abandoned his studies after being kicked out of his family home in 1903. Despite the abandonment of his studies,

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90 Fernandes, 4.
91 Fernandes, 2.
93 Fernandes 4
94 A brief autobiographical sketch written by Taraknath Das, 1.
96 Mukherjee, 3.
Das’ education was far more advanced than that of the overwhelming majority of South Asians, this access made possible given his family’s background and residence within Calcutta.

By association of their partially white ancestry, Eurasians were almost always guaranteed certain privileges, such as modern forms of employment and western education. Hopkinson’s correspondence and writings evidence his fluency, so there is no doubt that he obtained an education. Male Eurasian students were to be prepared for government employment, whether that be in the military or civil branches of the colonial state. Eurasians would be particularly useful in such roles, given that they often spoke South Asian languages as well as English. Hopkinson was one such individual. Given the commencement of his career as a police officer at sixteen years old, he likely finished his education after attending secondary school. We do not know the exact details of Hopkinson’s childhood. However, his experience is typical enough to fit his education within that of most Eurasian children of the period.

As men, Das and Hopkinson automatically had better access to education. British goals in educating Eurasians and the South Asian middle class were primarily for the purpose of creating a petty bourgeoisie, capable of acting as intermediaries. Therefore, while some basic education existed for women, they were often discouraged or barred from obtaining higher educations due to the domestic positions that most were expected to maintain, as mothers and as wives.

The educations of middle-class South Asians and Eurasians emphasized the essentiality of British rule to South Asia and of the benefits, wealth, and progress resultant from it. It was an

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97 Anderson, 166.
98 Pomfret, 331-332.
99 W. L. Mackenzie King, Deputy Minister of Labour, to Rudolphe Lemieux, Minister of Labour, for transmission to the Governor-General, 1.
100 Popplewell, 57.
101 The Hindustanee, Vol I. No IV, 7; Anderson, 163.
attempt to indoctrinate an acceptance of imperial rule into this colonial petty bourgeoisie from a young age, and to train them to support its continuation.\textsuperscript{102} For educated South Asians, regardless of whether they bought into this narrative or not, their educations provided them with opportunities not available to the uneducated masses. Indeed, many of the new South Asian middle class rejected using their colonial educations for their intended purposes, and those like Das used their understandings of western history, politics, and philosophy to contemplate South Asia’s colonization, and to work towards its independence.\textsuperscript{103} By contrast, other middle-class South Asians relied on the colonial state for their employment and used their education in conventional manners, such as Das’ father and brother, who worked as petty clerks in the Calcutta Telegraph Office and had no interest in Taraknath’s anticolonial shenanigans.\textsuperscript{104} Disregarding his family’s “misuse” of their education, throughout his life Das viewed education as a tool that would open South Asians’ eyes to their subjugation, for which reason he accused the British of deliberately withholding it from them, keeping their minds in “mists of ignorance.”\textsuperscript{105} Before he left South Asia in 1905, Das travelled throughout Bengal and taught working-class South Asians the English language and Indian history in a manner “free of government control,” countering propagandic colonial curricula with his own propagandic anticolonial curriculum.\textsuperscript{106} Regardless of whether the Das’s worked for the state or against it, all were employed in manners that made use of their educations, whether as itinerant teachers or as petty clerks.

\textsuperscript{102} Anderson 172; Fernandes 4.  
\textsuperscript{103} Fernandes, 2.  
\textsuperscript{104} Mukherjee, 3.  
\textsuperscript{105} The Hindustanee, Vol I. No IV, 9.  
\textsuperscript{106} A brief autobiographical sketch written by Taraknath Das, 1.
As for Eurasians’ subscription to imperial rule, many were considered equally as pro-imperial as the English, and by the late-nineteenth century Eurasians in India were described to be in “every responsible office under government... conspicuously employed and trusted.” Hopkinson is a prime example. A model colonial Eurasian subject, he employed his English education as the state had meant it to be used, and supported the colonial state throughout his career as a police officer in India, and later as an immigration inspector and a spymaster in North America, always mediating between the ruling white class and the South Asian community. In both cases, the two men occupied liminal positions between the two groups, in India and in North America. They used their educations to interpret South Asians’ actions to colonial officials, or vice versa. The mere fact that they possessed educations opened doors for them to access relations of power, whether that be in support or contravention of their educations’ intended purposes.

Das’ and Hopkinson’s linguistic proficiencies became even more powerful as they travelled to North America, where English alongside South Asian languages were highly valued assets to any institution interacting with or employing South Asians, as the majority of these immigrants were illiterate and incapable of communicating in English. Critical to his work as an immigration inspector and surveillance agent, Hopkinson is thought to have been able to speak multiple South Asian languages, notably Punjabi, since the vast majority of South Asian

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107 Pomfret 316, 331; Anderson, 13.
108 Popplewell, 57; Hugh Johnston, “The Surveillance of Indian Nationalists in North America, 1908-1919,” 8
109 Johnston, The East Indians in Canada, 6;
One story of the first pioneers illustrates this point. A group of Sikhs needed eggs and milk, so they visited a nearby farm. Upon arriving, they did not know how to explain this need, and so “they acted like chickens and pretended to be laying eggs... The farmer’s wife got the message though and laughed so hard that she gave them what they wanted free of charge.” (Jagpal, 103.)
immigrants were Punjabi. Mackenzie King noted that Hopkinson knew “a number of Indians well… able to converse freely with most of those who have come to this country.” In such a manner, Hopkinson became a valuable asset for the state, what with his prior professional experience as a police officer, his ideological commitment to the empire, and his multilingualism. It was a background few, if any, other South Asians in North America possessed.

By contrast to Hopkinson, Das had difficulty communicating with Punjabi immigrants by himself, and relied on his network of activists to communicate with the immigrant community. It seems that he was not proficient in the languages most commonly spoken by South Asian immigrants, such as Punjabi, Gurmukhi, and Urdu, and this deficiency prevented him from individually reaching wider immigrant audiences in Canada. Despite this, he must have been adept at understanding others and making himself understood, as he did work as a translator for the American Immigration Service at Vancouver from July 1907 to April 1908. Outside of this work, he made himself understood best through his writing and publications. One government report notes that Das distributed Gurmukhi-language newspapers, and had the Free Hindustan translated into Gurmukhi and Urdu and sent back to the Punjab and to Calcutta. Likely, he had help translating his publications from fellow activists, such as Guran Ditt Kumar, a Punjabi Sikh who arrived in Canada in 1907. Das had helped Kumar to set up a grocery store where Kumar surreptitiously sold South Asian-language revolutionary publications, including his own

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110 Parnaby and Niergarth 44.
111 W. L. Mackenzie King, Deputy Minister of Labour, to Rudolphe Lemieux, Minister of Labour, for transmission to the Governor-General, 1.
112 Political Trouble in India 1907-1917, 228.
113 A brief autobiographical sketch written by Taraknath Das, 2.
114 Information as to Hindu Agitators in Vancouver, 1-2.
Gurmukhi-language publication entitled *Swadesh Sewak (Servant of the Motherland).*115 Das’ strength in interacting with the South Asian community came from his collaboration with other activists, and it was often in this manner that language barriers between him and and immigrants were most effectively bridged.

By contrast to his difficulties in communicating with South Asian immigrants, in interacting with the white English-speaking community, Das’s command of English uniquely poised him as a representative and as a translator. In 1914, four South Asians crossed the US-Canadian border to enter the town of Sumas in Washington State. There, they met with Taraknath Das and bought revolvers and ammunition to transport to the Komagata Maru, whose passengers were still waiting for a decision to be made about their application for entry into Canada.116 Mewa Singh, one of the members of this party who was arrested upon his re-entry into Canada, claimed that he had not understood what was being said when the revolvers and ammunition were purchased, as “all the conversation took place in English and Das was the spokesman.”117 Regardless of his difficulties in communicating with the wider South Asian community by himself, Das often acted as a translator and as a spokesman for the South Asian community to white audiences. Das’ and Hopkinson’s educations and ensuing multilingualism differentiated them from both South Asians and white people, allowing them to access liminal positions between the two in a society which required such skills.

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115 *Note on the Hindu Revolutionary Movement in Canada*, 2.
117 *Statement by Mewa Singh*, 1.
2.2. MEMORY OF NATIONALITY AND RACE/ETHNICITY

Das’ and Hopkinson’s roles as intermediaries between white and South Asian audiences was affected by the performance of their national and racial/ethnic identities. Frantz Fanon commented that “In every country of the world there are climbers, ‘the ones who forget who they are,’ and, by contrast to them, ‘the ones who remember where they came from.’” On a surface level, one could read Das as having remembered where he came from, advocating for his homeland’s independence, while Hopkinson forgot who he was. In stressing his paternal over his maternal heritage, he socialized towards an English lifestyle and worked for the body responsible for colonizing South Asia. However, their categorization is not so simple. Firstly, it is problematic to ascribe national identity with an individual’s set of political beliefs and values, rather than with a person’s residency and sense of belonging within a country and nation; such a categorization implies that certain belief systems are extranational. Secondly, Das and Hopkinson were both clearly racialized by others as well as by themselves as white-adjacent. White adjacency brought many benefits to those able to access this identity, yet it never enabled the accession of incontestable white citizenship. Furthermore, in being white-adjacent, Das and Hopkinson retained their skills and life experiences as a South Asian and a Eurasian respectively, allowing them to understand and to interpret South Asia in manners inaccessible to white actors. Depending on the networks in question, whiteness could in fact prevent access, while being non-white would grant it. When their circumstances allowed it, Das and Hopkinson acted as chameleons in order to access powerful networks, acting as white-adjacent or South

118 Fanon, 25.
Asian/Eurasian as the need arose. However, this was not always a possibility, and to their detriment they were sometimes confined by others to a category not of their choosing.

In one sense Hopkinson quite literally “forgot” who he was. Upon his arrival to North America, he claimed to be an Englishman born in Hull, Yorkshire, who had moved to South Asia when he was a young child. In reality he was born in Delhi, and would not have been considered an Englishman based upon his mixed-race background.\textsuperscript{119} In contemplating why Hopkinson fashioned himself as an Englishman, consideration must be paid to the fact that he was born in a period lukewarm at best to Eurasians and the unions that brought them about. By the late-nineteenth century, white imperialists and settlers, backed by supposed scientific expertise, viewed racial intermarriage as producing “mongrel offspring” with mixed-race children having “the vices of both sides and the virtues of neither.”\textsuperscript{120} Eurasians were generally treated as second-class and “semi-civilized... drifters living on the margins of European and native society.”\textsuperscript{121} However, despite commonly held views of Eurasian degeneracy, they were given English educations and well-employed, partly to avoid embarrassing the white race on account of Eurasians’ partially white parentage, and also to raise a useful class of intermediaries who could act as buffers between the white ruling class and non-white colonial subjects.\textsuperscript{122} By the late-nineteenth century, Eurasians occupied a paradoxical status. They were widely derided, yet occupied a societal status similar to that of middle-class South Asians.\textsuperscript{123} Despite the distaste with which Eurasians were viewed, they were raised to emulate whiteness as closely as possible,

\textsuperscript{120} L/R 3782 3807. Of course, it is worth noting that the continuing presence of Eurasians meant that interracial relationships continued, even as they became “outfashioned.”
\textsuperscript{121} Pomfret, 318-319.
\textsuperscript{122} Anderson, 13.
\textsuperscript{123} Anderson, 13.
and were on the cusp of enjoying the legal and social benefits granted by white citizenship. In South Asia, to even be able to identify as Eurasian required that individuals be Christian, educated and literate, and socialized towards a European lifestyle. Beyond changing how Eurasians would be viewed and treated in the colonial social hierarchy, this identity could have legal ramifications, since British-ruled South Asia had separate laws applying to Christians, Hindus, and Muslims, with no variation allowing for mixed-race subjects. Thus, while Eurasians were pressured to racialize and abandon their South Asian heritage, most were prevented from graduating into the ranks of the “fully-white.” Realizing the benefits of white citizenship, and understanding how a person’s racial identity could affect their legal rights in North America, it seems sensible that Hopkinson would attempt to pass himself as an Englishman if possible.

Hopkinson left South Asia and arrived in North America in late 1907 or early 1908, leaving from South Asia in a period at which Eurasians’ career possibilities were beginning to stagnate. Up until the 1880s in South Asia, Eurasians were well-employed, working in jobs excluded to South Asians and unwanted by Europeans. However, there were limitations on how far Eurasians could advance. As a sub-inspector of police in Calcutta, Hopkinson was likely about to reach the peak of his career, had he continued to work in South Asia. Furthermore, the staffing policy of Indianization that began in the 1880s was synonymous with a policy of de-Anglo-Indianization, as jobs formerly monopolized by Eurasians were opened to competition

124 Anderson, 160.
125 Anderson, 53.
126 Anderson, 13.
between Eurasians and South Asians. With greater job competition and little hope of professional advancement, Hopkinson’s journey to Canada seems pragmatic.

Adding to the chances of Hopkinson’s finding employment in North America was that by the early-twentieth century there was a great demand for South Asian surveillance agents who could infiltrate South Asian groups. In South Asia, one complaint shared between two colonial officials on the subject was that “the whole Indian field is absolutely unfamiliar, in language, habits, and everything else… in short, both you and I can easily understand that the ordinary square-toed English Constable, even in the detective branch, would be rather clumsy at tracing your wiley Asiatic.” To Hopkinson’s benefit, the demand for such infiltrators was present in North America just as it was present in South Asia, and competition in this arena was scarce. The “ordinary square-toed English Constable” simply could not get the job done. In 1910, a white agent working on the east coast complained that South Asian revolutionary groups had begun to exclude non-Asians, and that as such a South Asian agent was needed to infiltrate their ranks. In the same year, the South Asian Department of Criminal Intelligence sent a South Asian agent on a mission to the United States and Canada, and department officials noted that the subsequent report submitted by the white agent was inferior to that of “his coloured rival.” In this context, Hopkinson arrived in Canada at an opportune moment for career advancement. Quickly impressing government officials with his interpretations of South Asian activism and revolutionism, along with his experience and his command of languages, he was hired, quickly

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129 Quoted in Parnaby and Niergarth, 47.
130 Popplewell, 53.
131 Popplewell, 54.
promoted, paid handsomely, and seemed to have been enjoying a period of upwards social mobility before his death.\textsuperscript{132}

To the upper echelons of Hopkinson’s state networks, occupied exclusively by bourgeois white men, Hopkinson seems to have been accepted as a nominally-white man for the sake of convenience. Hugh Johnston reports that coworkers thought of Hopkinson as a Eurasian, although this was described to Johnston in an interview with a long-retired immigration inspector in 1976.\textsuperscript{133} However, in 1908 Mackenzie King described Hopkinson as a man “who has lived some twenty-five years in India” having moved there as a young child.\textsuperscript{134} This latter view positioned Hopkinson as an “old India hand,” an Englishman with extensive experience in the subcontinent. It is the only view of him present in the government reports and correspondence used for this thesis. To be clear, many state-paid translators and interpreters in this period were non-white, such as Taraknath Das.\textsuperscript{135} However, Hopkinson did not work solely as a translator, but also as an immigration agent, as well as a Dominion police officer on special duty at Vancouver.\textsuperscript{136} While other interpreters were meant only to translate verbatim between immigration officials and immigrant-applicants, Hopkinson took an active role as both interpreter and official. It is extremely likely that white politicians and bureaucrats were aware of

\textsuperscript{132} Poplewell, 59.
\textit{W. L. Mackenzie King, Deputy Minister of Labour, to Rudolphe Lemieux, Minister of Labour, for transmission to the Governor-General, 1;} Hopkinson was paid an annual salary of $1,500 by the Canadian Dominion for his work as an immigration inspector, and he was later paid a stipend of $300 in addition to $300 in expenses by the India Office when he became a surveillance agent. (Hugh Johnston, “The Surveillance of Indian Nationalists in North America, 1908-1919,” 15).

\textsuperscript{133} Hugh Johnston, “The Surveillance of Indian Nationalists in North America, 1908-1919,” 5.
\textsuperscript{134} Poplewell, 59;
\textit{W. L. Mackenzie King, Deputy Minister of Labour, to Rudolphe Lemieux, Minister of Labour, for transmission to the Governor-General, 1.}

\textsuperscript{135} \textit{Report re Hindus [William C. Hopkinson, Immigration Inspector], 4;} Mukherjee 6, 16, 35.

\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Information as to Hindu Agitators in Vancouver, 13.}
Hopkinson’s mixed-race status, yet chose to ignore it due to Hopkinson’s unique importance. Having a mixed-race man, and in being mixed-race, non-white, in such an important position was out-of-sync with contemporary beliefs and racial norms of the white man’s world. Instead, Hopkinson provided the convenient story that he was an Englishman rather than a Eurasian. His doing so allowed for the nominal maintenance of white rulership and Hopkinson’s support of it, all while he employed skills and experiences brought about from his mixed-race origins.

By contrast to Hopkinson’s perception by white audiences, he was thought of by many South Asians as Eurasian, although at times he was still able to “pass” as South Asian. More often than not, he was identified as Eurasian, with one account described Hopkinson boarding a ship to receive immigrants, with “a half eastern, half western air” about him. Hopkinson was often derided in such publications as a ‘typical Anglo-Indian imperialist,’ due to his work in monitoring and punishing dissidence within the South Asian community. Despite his infamy, Hopkinson was often able to ‘pass’ as South Asian amongst South Asians. In 1910, he paid a visit to a South Asian activist’s home and found a seditious postcard affixed with Das’ signature. Upon this discovery, he claimed to have casually questioned the residents “in an offhand manner,” and found out that the postcard had been published in the Free Hindusthan and circulated to South Asian students all over the world. It is hard to imagine a white man being able to pay such a visit to an activist’s home, and question its residents so casually. Indeed, it did

137 "Canada as a Hindu Saw It,” 6.
138 Newclipping - Vancouver News-Advertiser: Correspondence: The situation in India, June 12, 1908, Simon Fraser University Digitized Collections, 4. https://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-10508/newclipping-vancouver-news-advertiser-correspondence-situation-india-page-4
Anglo-Indian and Eurasian were terms used interchangeably, although Anglo-Indian can also refer to an English person who was born or who had lived a long time in South Asia.
not occur. In Swayne’s report on South Asians in Canada, he details how in his own interviews with South Asians, they avoided giving any answer that could be incriminating, seeking to reassure him of their loyalties due to their fear of being deported.\textsuperscript{140} By contrast, with Hopkinson’s apparent ethnicity and his command of South Asian languages, in the early years of his career he was able to pass as a South Asian, doubly ironic considering that he was responsible for the deportation of many South Asians.

However, Hopkinson’s ability to “pass” eroded with time, as he became known to the community. By 1914, a South Asian tourist to Canada was introduced by Hopkinson to a group of South Asians, who reacted coldly, explaining that,

they did not want to be bothered with men, even if it was a Hindustanee, when introduced by Mr. Hopkinson, as a tourist, or harmless denizen of India… the account they gave me why they hated the secret service, what nuisance and trouble they had been caused by these men while they were law-abiding straight-forward business men of quality and Hindu learning… yet harassed by the secret service, perfectly justified the attitude they adopted towards it.\textsuperscript{141}

By this same period, Hopkinson and other immigration officials had been alerted of threats being made upon their lives in meetings of South Asian activists and revolutionaries.\textsuperscript{142} Hopkinson responded by disguising himself as a poor South Asian man to infiltrate the community, even attending meetings at the Sikh Gurdwara in Vancouver, the heart of the South Asian community in Canada.\textsuperscript{143} It is hard to imagine white operatives being able to disguise themselves and “pass”

\textsuperscript{140} Information as to Hindu Agitators in Vancouver, 8.
\textsuperscript{141} The Hindustanee, Volume 1 No. 2, January 1, 1914, 7.
http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-3123/hindustanee-volume-1-no-2-page-1
\textsuperscript{142} Copy of letter from Reid to W. D. Scott confirming telegrams re purchase of revolvers by Hindus, July 19, 1914, Simon Fraser University Digitized Collections, 2.
http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-1038/copy-letter-reid-w-d-scott-confirming-telegrams-re-purchase-revolvers-hindus-page-1
\textsuperscript{143} Popplewell 59; Jagpal 34.
so effectively.\textsuperscript{144} Therefore, while it is clear that most South Asians perceived Hopkinson as a Eurasian, he was often able to “pass” as South Asian, if not as himself then in disguise.

As an honorary white man, Hopkinson enjoyed many privileges. As a British subject, he could vote after six months’ residence in Canada, ironic given his strong stance on the disenfranchisement of South Asians.\textsuperscript{145} He also became a Canadian citizen, another irony in a period where citizenship in settler states was being reworked to become racially exclusive.\textsuperscript{146} He married a middle-class Englishwoman named Nellie Fryer, which would have been impossible to him in South Asia as a Eurasian.\textsuperscript{147} His pay grew to over two times what he had made in South Asia, and he worked in a position much higher than that he had held there or likely could have ever attained.\textsuperscript{148} All of this newfound privilege was a result of his having become “a white man,” a result of his having “forgotten” his origins. However, Hopkinson’s self-reinvention was not a process that could have been adopted by anyone. Due to his identity as a Eurasian, he was raised in an Anglicized environment, and was English in all manners save by ethnicity, this small detail preventing him from fully obtaining white citizenship in British-ruled South Asia. It is important to stress that while Hopkinson enjoyed many privileges due to his white-adjacency, that this does not equate with full whiteness. There are many aspects of his life which would need deeper scrutiny before coming to such a conclusion.

\textsuperscript{144} Parnaby & Niergarth 47; Popplewell, 53
\textsuperscript{145} Political Trouble in India, 231;
\textsuperscript{146} Popplewell 59-60; Price 14.
\textsuperscript{147} “Hopkinson, William Charles (1880-1914).”
\textsuperscript{148} Hugh Johnston, “The Surveillance of Indian Nationalists in North America, 1908-1919,” 8; Anderson, 174.
Hopkinson’s may have “forgotten” the details of his birth, but these alone do not constitute an individual’s entire identity. Hopkinson may not have been South Asian in the way that Fanon or Das would identify it, but it is impossible to deny the ways in which he made use of the knowledge and skills that he gained as a result of his Eurasian background, assets inaccessible to “the ordinary square-toed English Constable.” All the same, his rejection of his non-white identity and his subsequent assumption of a white-adjacent identity cannot be ignored. It is perhaps more fitting to describe Hopkinson as having a selective memory when he moved to North America, at which time he attempted to forget the aspects of his national and racial/ethnic identity which acted as a professional and personal barrier in his life, while remembering those that enabled his growing influence.

Fanon would see Das as a South Asian with an excellent memory, in Das’ tying his racial/ethnic and national identity with the pursuit of anticolonial activism. In his *Open Letter to Count Leo Tolstoy*, Das wrote that “I am a Hindu and I wandered for over two years in different parts of India to study the real condition of the people, and what I have experienced is unimaginable by the American people.” His being South Asian was always important to his activist work, whether in working towards South Asian independence, or in contributing to the development of the South Asian community in North America. It is because of this connection with his homeland and his national identity that he “remembered” where he was from. However, in another sense, he did position himself, and was positioned by others, to be white-adjacent. He never attempted to erase or alter his origins, as Hopkinson did, but did seek to redefine how his

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149 Pamaby and Niergarth, 47.
150 *Open Letter to Count Leo Tolstoy in Reply to His “Letter To A Hindoo,”* 21.
identity was interpreted. Some saw him in this light, others did not. His re-definition did not always work in his favour.

In one sense, Das did adapt or assimilate, coding himself as white-adjacent, and accepting others’ conceptions of him as such. “First of all, Mr. Das is an American,” wrote Stuart A. Rice, one of Das’ classmates from the University of Washington in December 1910. He continues:

Beneath that dusky cuticle is an American mind filled to the brim with American ideals and a heart overflowing with sympathy for all mankind. The most provincial Anglo-Saxon needs but a glance at that rotund yet energetic face, full of never ending good humor, to know that he has found a friend… Able as a writer, he is yet more able as a speaker, and his impassioned eloquence on more than one occasion has filled his American listeners with envy at his command of their native tongue.\(^\text{151}\)

The feeling expressed by Rice was one that Fanon wrote on, noting that he had once delivered a lecture in France, after which a white French acquaintance came to congratulate him and in doing so told him “at bottom you are a white man.”\(^\text{152}\) In reflecting on this, Fanon determined that his fluency with the colonizer’s language had given him an honorary citizenship within this community, regardless of whether he had sought it out or not.\(^\text{153}\) Similarly, Rice’s description ties Das’ linguistic abilities with his performance of national identity. The revelation of “an American mind” beneath “that dusky cuticle” suggests that Das’ outer non-white layer could be wiped away to reveal an American, and subsequently white, inner layer. Rice’s description may not have been entirely offensive to Das. Das was enthusiastic about what it meant to be an American, extolling the United States as “the land which makes men dynamic,” and he remained unapologetically pro-American for the rest of his life.\(^\text{154}\)

\(^{151}\) Stuart A. Rice, “Taraknath Das - A Cosmopolitan Leader” *Cosmopolitan Student*, December 1910, South Asian American Digital Archive, 88-89. [https://www.saada.org/item/20120827-1081](https://www.saada.org/item/20120827-1081)

\(^{152}\) Fanon, 25.

\(^{153}\) Fanon, 25.

\(^{154}\) Sarangadhar Das, “Why Must We Emigrate to the United States of America?” *Modern Review*, July 1911, 75.
land. During Das’ first attempt to become a naturalized American citizen in 1906, he contested restrictions that American citizens could only be free white men or black descendants of African slaves by claiming that South Asians belonged to the Caucasian race, by contrast to other Asians, such as the Chinese or Japanese, who were descendants of the Mongolian race. Indeed, many South Asians cited their Aryan lineage as a reason for South Asians’ equality with white people. Das’ first attempt failed, although by 1914 he became a naturalized citizen, this time by relying on glowing character witness statements from many prominent American academics, who spoke to his excellent moral fibre. Even this reliance on accounts of Das’ morality can be interpreted through the lens of race/ethnicity, considering the ways in which naturalization and citizenship in the early twentieth century were racialized as focus was placed on what made a “good citizen” to Canada, an attempt to exclude non-white applicants. Therefore, in forming his North American identity, Das coded himself and was coded by white allies as white-adjacent.

While Das did ‘Americanize’, and was seen as such by some, by his opponents he was positioned as either too American or too South Asian, depending on who was interpreting him. White imperialists and settlers had no notion of his white-adjacency, evidenced by the rejection of Das’ claim to such in his citizenship claim. Bengalis in particular were perceived by white officials as being particularly suspect. Swayne suggested that the Brahminical Hindus in Canada be closely surveilled, as he believed that they had maintained connections with agitator networks in Bengal. Hopkinson cited how South Asian students hailing from the Bengal and the

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155 Mukherjee, 9
156 Bhatt and Iyer, 36.
157 Mukherjee, 56.
158 Price, 14.
159 Mukherjee, 9.
160 Information as to Hindu Agitators in Vancouver 13.
Bombay Presidencies enrolled themselves in chemistry programs and in military colleges, in his mind a sure pathway to radicalism.\(^{161}\) By contrast, Das’ Americanization, which had been so useful to him as an activist seeking white allies, was used against him by South Asian activists when Das fell from favour. In 1914, he opposed the Ghadarites’ plan to induce South Asian immigrants to return to South Asia and rebel. These activists then accused Das of treachery, of being a British or American spy. One of Das’ professors lamented, “Now, Das has been in a painful position. The crowd [Ghadarites] sought to use him as an American citizen, and they thought that he could do a great deal of work... for the last three months they have made his life absolutely intolerable. They would pass him on the street and they would say things to him such as ‘coward’ and ‘traitor’...”\(^{162}\) In this manner, while Das’ Americanization helped him to gain white allies for his activist causes, this new identity he formed was dismissed by white imperialists and settlers and his former South Asian allies alike, both groups using his identity against him.

Despite Das’ Americanization, he always maintained his connection to his homeland and its people. The manner by which he maintained this connection was through his sense of activism, as throughout his career he remained connected with causes that affected South Asians. He devoted himself to work towards South Asian independence, and the betterment of the South Asian community in North America, for whom conditions were difficult. In 1907, Das wrote a letter to William D. Scott, the Canadian Superintendent of Immigration in the Department of the Interior, the agency then responsible for administering immigration, and described how the lack


\(^{162}\) Mukherjee, 64.
of accommodation in Vancouver during the winter time had resulted in the deaths of 25 immigrants in the previous winter. Scott gave a chilling response. He retorted that the lack of accommodation was due to overcrowding in Vancouver resultant from the recent mass migrations of Asian peoples into Canada. He added that the Department of the Interior had claimed no responsibility for these immigrants, nor did they wish to.163 While Das’ political stances do not indicate that he remembered where he was from, his willingness to advocate for South Asians in any sense indicate that he maintained a strong connection to his homeland and its peoples.

To argue that Das or Hopkinson “remembered” or “forgot” who they were due to their political beliefs would be quite exclusive, implying that those involved in certain political causes are less worthy of belonging within a nation or racial/ethnic group than others. Rather, a performance of national identity should be associated with the connections one maintains to their homeland, and of race/ethnicity with the ways in which the individual acts and views themselves. Das and Hopkinson remembered their origins because of this connection, even if circumstance sometimes made it convenient for them to occasionally forget their roots. In studying identity in general, we must study the ways by which individuals build and maintain the connections and relationship with these identifiers. Our actions more than our words determine how we “remember” our origins.

2.3. MASCULINITY, EFFEMINACY, AND EMPIRE

The most obvious manner by which gender affected Das’ and Hopkinson’s abilities to access power was through their entry into North America, since women were excluded until 1918. In addition, in South Asia, Bengalis had traditionally been de-masculinized by the British ruling class, while Eurasians and Sikhs were not, although their masculinity was still considered inferior to that of British colonizers. This trend of de-masculinization led to revolutionaries like Das associating the recovery of their masculinity with the decolonization of their country, associations which they took with them from South Asia to North America. While gender stereotypes did not feature explicitly in Hopkinson’s own personal experience, Das’ and other South Asians’ masculine exercises were of great concern to Hopkinson, and he fervently policed them. In the lives and careers of both, they played with labels of masculinity and effeminacy, tacking them to the South Asian community in ways that politicized South Asians’ gender performances to fit certain political narratives.

In British-ruled South Asia, masculinity was ranked, with the top rung reserved for the British ruling class. Physical strength and virile masculinity were traits heavily associated with the maintenance of the British Empire. Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of the Boy Scouts, created the organization as a way to maintain the physical strength of British boys. Baden-Powell postulated that the Roman Empire had crumbled due to its men becoming “wissy-wissy slackers without any go or patriotism in them.” Unlike them, his scouts would be trained so that they would not lose their own empire. In that same line of reasoning, non-white men had lost their

165 Levine, 162.
166 Hyam, 2
land to British men, and in so doing had proven their lesser masculinity. However, there were some groups that the British identified as sufficiently masculine, typically being those groups who had most fiercely resisted colonization.\textsuperscript{167} These included the Punjabi Sikhs, who were often described as a “martial race.”\textsuperscript{168} Descriptions of such men were powerful, emphasizing their physical dimensions and virility.\textsuperscript{169} Eurasians were not treated as a martial ethnic group by the British, but neither were they uniformly demasculinized, an uncertainty reflective of their ambiguous status within the empire. As South Asians travelled to white settler states, these gendered constructions of different ethnic groups became somewhat blurred as all South Asians were typically generalized as “Hindus” or “Hindoos.”\textsuperscript{170} Furthermore, regardless of whether they were in South Asia or in North America, the top rung of masculinity was reserved for white men, who fought to defend this status. At one point during the Komagata Maru incident in 1914, Dominion police officers tried to board the ship and were repelled by its South Asian passengers. A British Columbian newspaper reported that, “Not only are the members of the force who were on duty during the trouble anxious to match themselves against the mutineers, but the men who were bruised and battered on the Sea Lion are more than anxious to wipe off the score with the turbanned Hindus who assaulted them, and claim that they should be preferred in again attempting to board the boat.”\textsuperscript{171} The defeat of white men by non-white men was unacceptable, a refutation of white men’s superior masculinity. From the newspaper article, the reader almost

\textsuperscript{167} Levine, 162.  
\textsuperscript{168} Brown, 17.  
\textsuperscript{169} Levine, 162.  
\textsuperscript{170} Takai, 36.  
\textsuperscript{171} Newsclipping - Vancouver Daily Province: Bring Rainbow to suppress unruly Hindus, July 20, 1914, Simon Fraser University Digitized Collections, 2. https://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-5400/newsclipping-vancouver-sun-cruiser-was-ready-slip-anchor-komagata-if-needed-part-1
feels they are reading about a sports match, the upcoming rematch in which white police officers had the goal of recovering their masculinity, over that of restoring order.

By contrast to the Sikhs and other “martial races,” there were other colonized men such as the Bengalis who were demasculinized as effeminate and weak. Descriptions of them focused on their supposed unhealthy nature, small size, and physical weakness. Bengalis often responded by asserting their masculinity in physical and militant manners. In 1908, Das had attended the American military college at Norwich University. Alarmed that he was pursuing military training, British and Canadian officials successfully pressured American officials into expelling Das from Norwich University. In this process, Das and other Bengalis were described by one British official as “physically effete rascals” that “a good thick-headed Mahommedan [Muslim] would like nothing better than to be paid eight annas an hour to knock them down at the rate of ten a minute.” Even in Das’ efforts to become a martial man, he was denied his masculinity and the ability to further his goal. Many colonized men, especially those who were viewed as effeminate, bristled at these gendered constructions, and in their activism organized themselves in ways which were meant to prove and reinforce their martial masculinity.

Regardless of conceptions of male South Asians’ masculinity or lack thereof, typically all were considered as corrupting influences upon white women. In North America, many government officials, including Hopkinson, expressed worry at Das’ and other male South Asians’ association with white women. Hopkinson complained how Das and his fellow activists had duped such women into contributing to their causes by disguising the true nature of their activities, and how once under the men’s influence, the women seemed “subject to the almost

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172 Levine, 162.
173 Mukherjee, 22.
hypnotic influence of the teachers, and can be brought to assist them in whatever undertaking they desire.”174 Das and his fellow activists were seen to be corrupting forces, taking advantage of white women’s supposed tender natures. Das in particular was quite popular with women, and was reputed to be a ladies’ man; his suavity undoubtedly caused Hopkinson much stress.175 Noted as a suffragist, and vocal on his own ideas of women’s empowerment, Das was often invited to lecture to women’s groups.176 Often, these went well, with Hopkinson reporting how Das was able to secure funds for his various activist causes from sympathetic women.177 Other times, Das’ audiences were not so receptive. Once, during an address to the California Women’s Club in 1911, Das turned from the subject of Hindu religion and philosophy to condemn British rule in South Asia, and used such strong language that he was hissed at and booed off the stage.178 He clearly made an enemy in the Secretary of the Women’s Club, Jean Sinclair; only three days later, Hopkinson convinced her to provide information regarding Das’ associations with other female members of the organization.179

Furthermore, white allies and in particular women often filled somewhat parental roles in many South Asian activists’ lives, helping to establish them financially, culturally, and legally. In 1911, Das was gifted some land and funds by a Mr. and Mrs. Degassen, with Mr Degassen

175 Mukherjee 36, 39.
177 Extract from William C. Hopkinson, Immigration Inspector, to William W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior, October 16, 1911, 1.
writing of Das that “Tarak is the ideal of a son to my wife and everything we have is his.”

However, the clearest example of this pseudo-parental relationship is evidenced through a fiery letter written in 1911 by Das’ friend Sarangadhar Das to the San Franciscan Swami Trigunatita, a Hindu priest and an antiradical and informant for Hopkinson. In the letter, Sarangadhar Das blames the Swami for scaring off a potential sponsor of the activists, a Mrs. Pettie, who otherwise would have become “a mother [to the Hindu students] and finance a house.” Even with the Swami’s interference, Sarangadhar Das proclaimed that there was “not only one Mrs Pettie in this country who is a mother to us. We are young men of strength of arms and mind.” A significant manner by which South Asian activists performed their masculinity was through their associations to white women, relationships which caused Hopkinson and white officials great discomfort. Evidently, the defence of white men’s countries also constituted a defence of white women from the perceived corruptions of non-white men.

Colonized men often responded to constructions of their masculinity or lack thereof by seeking to “build themselves up” physically, often associating this with a political and moral strengthening directed against colonial rule. Das’ early activist activities in South Asia included his membership in the Anushilan Samiti, a Bengali secret society devoted to the overthrow of British rule in South Asia. The group had originated as a gymnasium for Bengali students to improve their physical strength in addition to training and drilling in the use of arms and firearms. This was done firstly to dispel British notions of the Bengalis as weak, cowardly, and effeminate, and secondly to prove the fallacy of these beliefs to the British, as these young

180 Mukherjee, 38


182 Lake and Reynolds 149.
virile South Asian men would one day overthrow them.\textsuperscript{183} Baden-Powell’s Boy Scouts were not alone in tying the performance of their masculinity with the achievement of national ideals. This notion of building oneself up, both physically and morally, continued as Das moved to North America. Das’ attendance at Norwich College in 1908 was unquestionably an attempt to gain technical military and scientific knowledge to bring back to South Asia, an objective which had been emphasized by the Anushilan Samiti.\textsuperscript{184} Despite this, Das waged war more fervently with his pen. For instance, in Das’ correspondence with Count Leo Tolstoy, he described non-violent protests as “dull and weak,” and charged South Asians to respond to tyranny with a show of strength and force.\textsuperscript{185} Towards this end, he encouraged South Asian men to build themselves up through self-help, to gain strength through “agitations, education, and organization,” writing admiringly of the strong and efficient nation of Germany, and its ability to evoke fear even in the British.\textsuperscript{186} In these manners, Das’ actions and words are evocative of the efforts of many colonized men to fight back against their demasculinization, and to recover it through physical and moral self-help. In this mindset, colonized men could only recover their masculinity by violently overthrowing colonial rulers.

Das spoke to the recovery of South Asian identity and of manhood in ways that delineated specific roles for men and for women. These were explicitly tied to his anticolonial cause, evidenced by one article of his which concluded, “Attainment of perfect manhood and womanhood through National Independence is our goal.”\textsuperscript{187} His view of women’s contribution to national independence emphasized their need to access educations to better perform domestic

\textsuperscript{183} Mukherjee, 2.
\textsuperscript{184} Mukherjee, 18.
\textsuperscript{185} Open Letter to Count Tolstoy, 5.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid. (emphasis in original)
duties as wives and mothers.\textsuperscript{188} By contrast, male South Asians were charged with taking more active and militant roles, and the recovery of their masculinity relied on their advocacy on female South Asians’ behalf. Das compared India’s situation to that of a married South Asian couple being molested by a pair of “Tommy Atkins” (British soldiers), with improper advances being made upon the wife. He called upon both the husband and wife to resist by force, especially emphasizing the husband’s duty as a man to protect his wife’s honour and dignity.\textsuperscript{189} Such gendered language energized many South Asian men, especially in North America where South Asian women were excluded until 1918.\textsuperscript{190} In one column in which Das described the degeneration of South Asian manhood and womanhood, he lamented that,

In the British Colonies we have not the equal status with the dogs of our European masters - the dogs of the Canadians, Australians, South Africans and other Britishers can freely travel in any part of the Empire with their masters, but our men, who valiantly shed their blood to cement and extent the territories of the British Empire, can not have the privilege of bringing their wives and children in the sacred lands of the British Colonies.\textsuperscript{191}

He excoriated South Asian men for not acting the part; true men would more openly resist discrimination, xenophobia, and exclusion. He argued that these existed “only because we think we are slaves and do not know how to stand up like men and fight for our rights like men.”\textsuperscript{192} He criticized South Asian leaders in the subcontinent, particularly in the Punjab, berating them to “do their duty to the cause of the oppressed people with a united effort, like men, not like cowards and slaves.”\textsuperscript{193} Many South Asian men shared this frustration with the state of South

\textsuperscript{188} The Free Hindusthan Vol. 1 No. 8, November-December, 1908, South Asian American Digital Archive, 3. https://www.saada.org/item/20120827-1080
\textsuperscript{189} Open Letter to Count Leo Tolstoy in Reply to His “Letter To A Hindoo,” 6.
\textsuperscript{190} Johnston, The East Indians in Canada, 10.
\textsuperscript{192} The Free Hindusthan Vol. 1 No. 1 April 1908, South Asian American Digital Archive, 1-2, https://www.saada.org/item/20110901-312.
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid.
Asian manhood, and the sense of masculine insecurity inherent to it. Sarangadhar Das provides a fitting example in the sign-off to the aforementioned letter to the Swami Trigunatita when he wrote, “Hoping this will open your eyes a little bit as to whether I am a baby like the other students or a self respecting man.”\textsuperscript{194} South Asian masculinity could be recovered through active anticolonial resistance, through physical and moral self-strengthening, and by clearly delineating the role of South Asian men and women towards achieving these goals. While Das and other South Asian men resisted colonial notions of their insufficient masculinity, they themselves created gendered notions of what exactly entailed proper South Asian masculinity and by extension, of femininity. Gendered constructions of South Asian masculinity and effeminacy played significant roles in how activist and surveillance networks organized.

3. EXERCISING POWER

The concept of exercises of power was defined earlier in the introduction as an exercise rather than a possession, created through the interactions and relationships between different actors. In further expanding on this definition, it is helpful to adopt the analyses of Jonathan Murdoch and Terry Marsden, two British political geographers. In considering the “exercise” rather than “possession” of power, they cite Bruno Latour’s paradox that “when you simply have power - in potentia - nothing happens and you are powerless; when you exert power - in actu - others are performing the action and not you.”\textsuperscript{195} Murdoch and Marsden attempt to answer this paradox by arguing that “power is a ‘composition’ made by many people but attributed to one of

\textsuperscript{194} Sarangadhar Das to Swami Trigunatita, San Francisco. Copy, 4.

them.” Power is produced and reproduced continuously through social interactions between actors. An actor’s ability to exercise power lies in their ability to “enrol, convince, and enlist others into associations on terms which allow these initial actors to ‘represent’ all the others.”

Murdoch and Marsden’s writing on power lends well to understandings of networks. At its core, a network is an association of actors with some element in common. Das’ network consisted of activists, immigrants, and white allies, all united by their focus on the development of South Asia and its diasporic community. Hopkinson’s network consisted of informants and state politicians and bureaucrats, all united in their objective to monitor and suppress South Asian activism and revolutionism in North America. Both Das’ and Hopkinson’s access to relations of power came through the networks that the two joined or formed. Their value came from their roles as interpreters between text and audience. This relationship is analyzed through Michel Foucault’s and Edward Said’s respective notions of the power-knowledge relationship. Whether interpreters were able to monopolize this interpretive process greatly affected their positions of authority. With more than one interpreter, any one actor’s interpretation of a text could be challenged by others. Despite this, interpreters and translators like Das and Hopkinson exercised a form of power in their role as mediators between text and audience, despite the historical marginalization of such figures’ positions.

However, activist and surveillance networks did not operate as equals. While the growth of radical activism and antiradical state surveillance were co-constitutive for a period of time, an argument advanced most notably by Hugh Johnston, this argument does not explain why radical activism would collapse by the beginning of World War I, while state surveillance continued.

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196 Ibid, 372.
197 Ibid.
198 Ibid.
virtually unchallenged. Michel Foucault’s notion of the disciplinary society is used to hypothesize that radical activism and state surveillance only grow co-constitutively so long as activists are free from constant surveillance, policing, and punishment. Once these three are put in place, unruly subjects become ruly.

3.1. KNOWLEDGE, NETWORKS, AND INTERPRETATION

The maxim that “knowledge is power” is so universally common that it cannot be attributed to any one person. In Das’ and Hopkinson’s lives, as knowledge passed from text to audience, it was handled and processed by these two interpreters. In doing so, the two actors reshaped that knowledge in specific ways. This process was influenced by their identity, their political objectives, and by their relationship to the text or to the audience. However, the nature and operation of Das’ and Hopkinson’s roles as interpreters differed significantly, due in large part to the natures of their respective non-state and state networks.

In nineteenth- and early-twentieth century Canada, state-paid translators were technically not meant to have any influence in immigrant applications in determining who was accepted or rejected. However, they often did, if surreptitiously. The potential for abuse and exploitation of the immigration system was prevalent in the translation service, as neither immigrants nor immigration agents could understand each other. Das and Hopkinson both worked as state-paid interpreters around the same time period, and both used their positions to further their own political goals, Das to facilitate the entry of South Asians, and Hopkinson to exclude and deport them. In 1908, Das briefly worked as a translator for the American Immigration and Naturalization Service stationed in Vancouver. He was accused by five South Asians of extortion
and of accepting bribes in his interactions with immigrant-applicants, and was investigated to no effect.\(^9\) Hopkinson worked as a translator from his arrival in Canada in late 1907 or early 1908 until his death in October 1914.\(^0\) Like Das, he was also accused of corruption, and likewise was investigated with nothing coming of it.\(^1\) Hopkinson would later be killed by Mewa Singh in October 1914, after Hopkinson extorted Mewa Singh into becoming a government informant.\(^2\) In Mewa Singh’s courtroom confession, before he was found guilty of Hopkinson’s murder and executed, he complained that “Hopkinson was a deceiver, both to the Government on one side and to us Sikhs on the other, and was a blood-sucker. He catches hold of two or three on one side and uses them as the tools in front of the Government… He used to take [money] from both the Government side and from our side… The Government listened to him completely.”\(^3\) Interpreters such as Das and Hopkinson were accused of taking advantage of the immigration system, of duping officials and immigrants alike. In terms of understanding how they exercised power as intermediaries, whether or not they were guilty or innocent of such accusations is irrelevant. The mere fact that the space existed for this exploitation to take place, due to the disconnect between immigration agents and immigrants, proves that interpreters were capable of exercising significant influence in immigration cases.

In Das’ network there were many interpreters, men similar to himself: South Asian, male, middle-class, educated, and multilingual. Such men, men like Teja Singh, Hussain Rahim, Guran Ditt Kumar, and Lala Har Dayal, typically became the leaders of the South Asian community. All were responsible for interpreting South Asia, colonialism and xenophobia to white audiences.

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\(^9\) *Note on the Hindu Revolutionary Movement in Canada*, 1; Mukherjee 13.
\(^0\) Paraby and Niergarth 44.
\(^2\) “Confession of Mewa Singh” 7.
\(^3\) Ibid.
and South Asians alike. Das was a leader in his community, but he was not the sole leader. In his network, he was a node, rather than the node. All of the aforementioned leaders served as relative equals in an anarchic non-state network. As Murdoch and Marsden argue, their power came from their ability to convince others to join their networks, to view the world as they viewed it. Considering that the four actors mentioned, Das, Kumar, Har Dayal, and Rahim all had their own publications, respectively being the Free Hindusthan, the Swadesh Sewak, the Hindustan Ghadar, and the Hindustanee, how these leaders were received by their audiences through publications and through their lectures were all-important; they could fall from grace just as quickly as they rose to it. As previously mentioned, Das’ fall from grace in 1914 was swift, his downfall due to his Americanisms and his opposition to the Ghadarite exodus. The volatility of his status within the community is demonstrative of how the anarchic network in which he operated invested power only in those leaders capable of energizing the network’s members. When Das was unable to connect with his audience, he was powerless as there were alternative interpreters to whom audiences could turn.

Within state networks, there are those who make policy, and those who inform its creation. Policy does not spring from its attributed authors alone; it is the brainchild of a larger network of agents, each of whom individually played crucial roles in its creation. In relation to the imperial project, Edward Said speaks to the act of interpreting inherently different worlds from our own, and the power inherent to the process. To exemplify this point, he uses a 1908 essay by the Earl of Cromer, a British imperial careerist. In it, Cromer explains the roles of peripheral and metropolitan actors in producing knowledge to effect the management of a vast

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empire. Peripheral actors or “local agents,” typically being native informants and spies, were responsible for the immediate interpretation of the Orient into something that could be easily consumed by metropolitan actors. These metropolitan actors, white bourgeois men, in turn interpreted this processed knowledge, and shaped it into policy to “ensure the harmonious working of the different parts” of the Empire. Peripheral agents’ roles in this process have often been diminished or dismissed outright. Cromer described how these “local agents” could supply information that could potentially harm Imperial interests, and how metropolitan agents were responsible for sifting through all of this information in order “to obviate any danger” arising from peripheral agents’ interpretations.

In reality, intermediaries were anything but “lowly.” In Hopkinson’s own imperial network, he served as the node, the sole mediator between officials and his informants. He was so singularly important to the network that the Governor-General of Canada, the Duke of Connaught, warned of the risk of over relying on him, stating that “in the first place, Mr Hopkinson has to cover the entire country from San Francisco to New York and from the Canadian to the Mexican Frontiers. In the second place, the entire system - if system it can be called - is dependent on one man. If anything happens to Mr Hopkinson, the work would automatically collapse.” To a limited degree, white officials did somewhat rely on other sources of information, ranging from press coverage of South Asians, popular opinion, and white officials such as immigration agents, medical inspectors, and surveillance agents. They would not have been entirely unaware of the situation in the South Asian community, although they

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205 Ibid, 44-45.
206 Ibid, 44.
207 Parnaby and Niergarth, 52.
208 W. L. Mackenzie King, Deputy Minister of Labour, to Rudolphe Lemieux, Minister of Labour, for transmission to the Governor-General, 1.
would have remained ignorant of the finer details. Further speaking to their need for Hopkinson, as Foucault argues, to properly police a society, the police force must bear “over everything… those things of every moment,” a surveillance system requiring an intimate knowledge and awareness of those being stalked.\(^{209}\) White officials had no meaningfully direct interaction with the community save through Hopkinson, as even their own white operatives could not hope to gain access to the community in the way that Hopkinson and his South Asian informants could.\(^{210}\) Some of Hopkinson’s informants could speak English, and theoretically could have interacted directly with white officials. However, none had Hopkinson’s past experience working in policing and surveillance. Many of them, such as the Hindu priest the Swami Trigunatita, and the businessman Arthur Tilton Steele, already had jobs, reflective of the high demand for multilingualism in South Asian and English languages. More importantly though, Hopkinson ensured that he alone served as the node between his informants and the audience, never entrusting informants with extremely important tasks. He justified this by arguing that there were no educated South Asians on whom he could rely.\(^{211}\) In state networks in both British-ruled South Asia and in white settler countries like Canada and the United States, metropolitan actors were severely disconnected from the texts they were meant to interpret, as well as those peripheral agents responsible for its immediate translation. This disconnect left metropolitan actors with blinders of their own creation, with peripheral agents like Hopkinson moving in to occupy these blind spots.


\(^{210}\) Popplewell, 53.

3.2. BATTLE OF THE NETWORKS

As previously stated, the rise of South Asian radicalism in North America and the policing of the South Asian community were co-constitutive. The growth of the two networks were mutually reinforcing, even if they were dialectically opposed. However, after the Komagata Maru incident and the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the revolutionary network collapsed, while the surveillance network grew. Michel Foucault’s notion of the disciplinary society, of the state’s ability to punish unruly subjects and of its ability to make subjects ruly, is used to examine why this occurred. South Asian activism and revolutionism was monitored and punished in the lead-up to World War I, with British, Canadian, and American agents creating transnational links to achieve these objectives. By the outbreak of World War I, these states had created a transnational network to match and exceed that of the transnational South Asian community, and used the pretext of war to declaw the community of its most radical elements.

In Foucault’s notion of the disciplinary society, the discipline-blockade is an inwards-looking body on the edge of society, which functions to monitor, arrest, and punish unruly subjects. Foucault describes a plague-ridden seventeenth-century town as an example of a disciplinary body focused on the “immediate salvation of a threatened society.” In this town, state agents would go up to the different town houses and demand that all occupants show themselves at the window, in order to reveal any sickness or disease. No one could conceal themselves, as state agents had lists with residents’ names and other details. In

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213 Ibid
215 Ibid.
twenty-first-century North America, Hopkinson too was focused on the “immediate salvation of a threatened society,” yet he policed not disease, but radicalism. In these two societies, the surveillance of citizens seems to be necessary by contrast to what would happen if it did not exist. For instance, Swayne noted in 1909 how socialists “of a very undesirable type” had been interacting with South Asians in Vancouver, and worried that,²¹⁶

the return of the Sikhs to Punjab amongst their friends, spreading as they will, new, ill-digested socialistic ideas... cannot but tend to re-act amongst the military classes of the Punjab, to the detriment of British prestige. As... it is by prestige alone that India is held and not by force, the importance of a circulation of labour between Vancouver and India as affecting that prestige is such, I submit, as cannot be wisely overlooked.²¹⁷

Hopkinson was of a like mind, and worried of the results that an alliance between anarchists, socialists and South Asian revolutionaries would bring about. One of his informants, Arthur Tilton Steele, wrote in 1913 that Das had been seen associating with Emma Goldman, a notable anarchist activist and lecturer.²¹⁸ He also reported that Har Dayal had been giving lectures to the International Workers of the World, an international labour union with socialist and anarchist influences.²¹⁹ By justification of their concerns over what would happen had they left citizens to their own devices, officials, whether in locales infested with plague or radicalism, resorted to monitoring and policing citizens to prevent the spread of these undesirable strains.

Hopkinson was obsessed with collecting information, with placing dissidents under constant and evergrowing supervision. In addition to his informant Steele, Hopkinson had stenographers from the American Immigration Department of San Francisco take notes of Har

²¹⁶ Information as to Hindu Agitators in Vancouver, 4-5.
²¹⁷ Information as to Hindu Agitators in Vancouver 9.
²¹⁸ Extract from Arthur Tilton Steele, San Francisco, to William C. Hopkinson. Copy, November 22, 1913, Simon Fraser University Digitized Collection, 4.
²¹⁹ Ibid.
Dayal’s lectures. Monitoring Har Dayal and his Ghadar Party proved a fruitful. In 1914, when Har Dayal and members of the Ghadar Party convinced between 500-900 South Asian immigrants to return to the subcontinent and revolt against the British, Hopkinson and his network were prepared. Like the state agents in the plague-ridden town creating lists of the town’s residents, Hopkinson and his informants created their own lists of all the suspected Ghadarites leaving North America, sending this information through imperial networks in Asia. The majority of the Ghadarites were arrested upon their arrival in South Asia, with the Ingress into India Ordinance of 1914 passed for this express purpose.

In the plague-ridden town, Foucault describes how state agents, upon discovering disease in a household, would temporarily evict its residents while they cleaned the interior. Similarly, Hopkinson and other state agents worked towards the discovery and subsequent eviction of any South Asian radicals from North America. Hopkinson and government officials never thought of preventing South Asians from leaving North America, as it had been their goal that whole time to deport South Asians from North America, and to exclude the entry of any future hopefuls. As such, the Ghadarite exodus proved quite useful to the state, resulting in the departure of suspected radicals, and allowing for their punishment in the British Raj, where stricter antiradical laws were in place. The discipline-blockade the state established in Canada and the United States allowed for the monitoring and subsequent punishment of those within these societies, their

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221 Sohi, “Race, Surveillance, and Indian Anticolonialism in the Transnational Western U.S.-Canadian Borderlands,” 433.
222 Note on the Hindu Revolutionary Movement in Canada, 7; Mukherjee 63
punishments meted out preferably through deportation, although alternative punishments existed. Unlike in the plague-ridden town, once evicted, radicals could not return, and in this manner Hopkinson and the states he represented sought to purge radicalism from North America.

And yet, the disciplinary society did not rely solely on monitoring subjects in order to punish unruly ones, but also monitored them to ensure subjects’ continued and future ruliness. This latter approach was adopted by Hopkinson and the state agents who succeeded him. The approach is clearly explained through Foucault’s notion of the discipline-mechanism, most vividly expressed through his idea of the panopticon. Conceptualized by Jeremy Bentham, and later by Foucault, the panopticon was a circular prison with a single watchhouse arranged at the centre, in which a single watcher could theoretically monitor all prisoners at any time, while the prisoners could not see through the glass to verify whether they were being watched or not.225 As a result, the prisoner would assume they were being watched at all times, and behave in a ruly manner. The panopticon used to surveil the South Asian community was achieved through myriad methods of surveillance, be that an extensive network of informants, through mail watches, and through telegraph and telephone tapping. In 1908, Hopkinson suggested monitoring South Asians’ mail in Vancouver and in Seattle, soon after put in place.226 By 1913 this had spread south to San Francisco, a trend which would continue to spread throughout World War I.

227 Beginning in 1916 and ending in December 1919, telegraph companies in British Columbia intercepted “every telegraph message filed or received in Vancouver to or from any Indian in

225 Ibid, 201.
226 W. L. Mackenzie King, Deputy Minister of Labour, to Rudolphe Lemieux, Minister of Labour, for transmission to the Governor-General, 1; Report re Hindus [William C. Hopkinson, Immigration Inspector], 5.
British Columbia or elsewhere.\textsuperscript{228} It was through these many forms of surveillance that the panopticon was built, shining a light on almost all aspects of life in South Asian communities, while itself remaining, for the most part, unverifiable and unassailable.

The panopticon’s success depended as much upon the response of those imprisoned to constant and unverifiable surveillance as it relied upon the construction of the structure itself. In this regard, the panopticon was successful with one significant exception. To begin with its successes, the Hindusthan Association of America, one of Das’ more successful groups, captured the combined attention of British, Canadian, and American officials during WWI. As a result, state networks monitored and harassed the organization’s members and leaders, and the group subsequently lost influence with its parent organization, ceased its activities, and lost its leaders, who feared persecution.\textsuperscript{229} As for the wider community, by 1919, state agents reported that South Asians had become much more guarded in writing letters to each other, realizing that their letters were being opened.\textsuperscript{230} In that same year, American- and Canadian-based Ghadarite leaders meant to meet in person, but neither could cross the American-Canadian border, and so they communicated by telephone instead. Even then, surveillance agents noted that their conversation was guarded.\textsuperscript{231} In all of these situations, while South Asians realized that they were being monitored, they could not verify that they were being watched. Subsequently, many and especially activists, began to consider themselves capable of being monitored at all times.

Activists could do little to fight this surveillance. How could they, when there was no body to identify and counter? It had been possible with Hopkinson’s informant networks, as

\textsuperscript{228} Hugh Johnston, “The Surveillance of Indian Nationalists in North America, 1908-1919,” 22.
\textsuperscript{229} Mukherjee, 64, 99.
\textsuperscript{230} Note on the Hindu Revolutionary Movement in Canada, 14.
\textsuperscript{231} Note on the Hindu Revolutionary Movement in Canada, 16.
these were highly visible, and they were often ideologically and publicly opposed to South Asian activism. For instance, Steele reported how he had been intentionally excluded from activist circles as a result of his “ability to show up the actual conditions of the people to Americans, different from [Har Dayal’s] statements and descriptions, of the said conditions.”\footnote{Extract from Arthur Tilton Steele, San Francisco, to William C. Hopkinson. Copy, 4.} Activists interacted with the informants on a daily basis, and as such, activists could then direct all their anger and frustration into targeting and destroying them.

The visibility of such informants became the Achilles’ heel of the panopticon. The seemingly fatal blow was delivered in the wake of the Komagata Maru’s departure, when a string of assassinations and assaults took place in the South Asian community in Canada, following a tit-for-tat format between Hopkinson’s informants and the South Asian activists. This violence was most notably exemplified through a shooting on September 5 1914 in the Vancouver Gurdwara by Bela Singh, one of Hopkinson’s informants, an attack which left two men dead and five others injured,\footnote{Political Trouble in India (1907-1917), 248} an event soon followed by the assassination of Hopkinson himself on October 21, 1914.\footnote{Political Trouble in India (1907-1917), 7.} The eruption of such violence exemplified the inability of the panopticon to function properly when its surveillance was visible, and as such accessible, to those being monitored. However, if Hopkinson had not used informants, and had instead relied solely on other surveillance methods, activists could have simply met in-person, leaving state agents none the wiser. Rather, truly comprehensive surveillance required the monitoring of all aspects of South Asians’ lives. More subtle and varied forms of surveillance emerged over the years, and it became much more difficult for activists to identify and dismantle these state apparatuses. Aware
of being watched, but unable to verify or confront it, South Asian activists’ ability to act and react was taken from them, as was their confidence in organizing themselves.

The discipline-blockade was present in the white men’s countries’ policing of South Asian activism and radicalism in North America. However, there was a mismatch between the Canadian and American discipline-blockades, which allowed the transnational South Asian activist networks to organize so effectively until the outbreak of World War I. The United States was more lax in its anti-radical laws than Canada and the British Empire, and due to the porousness of the US-Canadian border, South Asian radicals were often able to leave Canada and relocate their base of operations in the United States. This is what Das had done, after being forced to resign from his job as a state interpreter in Vancouver in 1908. He relocated to Seattle and San Francisco, while still occasionally travelling to Canada. Likewise, his fellow Canadian activists often visited him and others in the United States for meetings. Even though the free movement of Asians between the United States and Canada ceased in 1909, for those educated few capable of navigating the bureaucracy of borders and customs, or those capable of finding more illicit pathways across the borders, transnational movement continued. Das’ publication *The Free Hindusthan* continued to be circulated in British Columbia, imported from Seattle into the country by his friend and fellow activist Guran Ditt Kumar. Prior to the build-up of an extensive, transnational, and cooperative border regime between the United States

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235 Mukherjee, 16.
237 Chang 16.
and Canada, in which the discipline-blockades of the two states became matched, activists such as Das were able to operate quite effectively in the United States while exporting their activism into locales with harsher discipline-blockades.

This transnational activity was made all the more annoying to Hopkinson due to the fact that activists based out of the United States could not easily be punished through Hopkinson’s favoured method of deportation. In 1911 after visiting the American Immigration Office in San Francisco, Hopkinson learned that the rights of domicile differed between Canada and the United States, sourly noting that “there can be no refusal to any citizen of the United States returning to America, and if naturalization with regard to these people once gets through, there is no knowing when the end will be, for the simple reason that these are men that can never be trusted.” In 1911, Hopkinson attempted to prevent Das’ American naturalization by proving that he was an anarchist. This failed, although Das’ request was denied anyways due to an error on his landing certificate. However, in January 1914 Das submitted another naturalization claim, and despite Hopkinson’s best efforts to paint Das as an anarchist, a process in which he was aided by the British, American and Canadian officials, Das became a naturalized citizen on June 6, 1914. Das’ naturalization did not make him “immune” to being monitored, but it certainly made it more difficult to prosecute and persecute him under American law. It was Das’ naturalized status that protected him from being prosecuted when he became involved in the Sumas

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241 Mukherjee, 39.
242 Mukherjee, 56.
arms-smuggling case in July 1914, during which time Hopkinson attempted to have Das’
American citizenship revoked, “on the grounds that he assisted East Indians in offering armed
resistance to Canadian Government officers or with supplying them with arms to overthrow law
and order in this country.”²⁴³ Hopkinson’s attempt was described by Superintendent of
Immigration William D. Scott as “to say the least, slightly exaggerated.”²⁴⁴ One can only imagine
Hopkinson’s frustration, and Das’ and other activists’ satisfaction, in taking advantage of the
imbalance of the discipline-blockades between the two countries to create a transnational activist
network.

However, with the outbreak of World War I, Canada and the United States linked their
discipline-blockades. Hopkinson’s work in creating connections and in extending his network
between the two countries in the pre-war period proved integral to this linking. In speaking with
American Immigration Inspector Ainsworth in October 1911, Hopkinson’s writing reveals that
there had been little to no communication between Canadian, American, and British immigration
officials regarding South Asian immigration up until that date.²⁴⁵ Indeed, Ainsworth expressed
surprise that the British government had not paid attention earlier to the entry of South Asians
into the United States, and of the growth of radicalism in San Francisco’s universities up until
that point.²⁴⁶ However, due in part to pressures made upon the government by the transnational
Asiatic Exclusion League, South Asian immigration to the United States had effectively ceased

²⁴³ William D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, to Charles J. Doherty, Minister of Justice, re Hopkinson's
²⁴⁴ Ibid.
²⁴⁵ William C. Hopkinson, Immigration Inspector, to William W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior, October 13,
1911) 1.
²⁴⁶ Ibid, 2.
by that point.\footnote{Ibid, 2.} By the outbreak of World War I, the links that Hopkinson had built connecting American, British, and Canadian officials paid off, as the Americans began to harshly persecute South Asian radicals. One Ghadar Party member wrote that upon the outbreak of war, “America temporarily became a sort of loyal daughter of mother Britannia, and pro-British officials and newspapers began to suspect anti-Americanism in everything which was just simply anti-British.”\footnote{Mukherjee, 101.} To a large extent, the transnational linking of the United States and Canada on the west coast with regards to immigration policy was brought about by Asian immigration and activism. Because Asians travelled freely between the two countries prior to 1909, whether as labourers or as activists and revolutionaries, both white labour groups and state officials began to cooperate across the border line to crack down on the porousness of their borders, at least as it related to Asian migrants.

By the beginning of World War I, the American discipline-blockade grew harsher, and the Canadian-US border grew less leaky. No physical barrier separated the two countries. Instead the Canadian and American governments put greater funds into border management, notably by stationing a larger number of border inspectors along both sides of the boundary. This investment proved useful in the Sumas arms-smuggling case of 1914, when American inspectors trailed a party of South Asian activists who crossed the border, recording their purchase of firearms and ammunition. They then relayed this information to Canadian authorities, and subsequently the two governments coordinated their efforts and detained the whole party, arresting all save Das, the naturalized American.\footnote{Chang, 1.} Furthermore, if any Asian migrants were able to surreptitiously circumvent border officials, the population in the borderlands were encouraged
to monitor the border and act as citizen-informants. In British Columbia, telephones were
installed in areas thought to be frequently travelled by irregular Asian migrants. Residents were
couraged to call and report any suspicious activity on the roads.\textsuperscript{250} By 1914, such calls were
likely on the decline. During the Komagata Maru incident of 1914, Das was denied entry into
Canada where before he had been allowed to pass.\textsuperscript{251} Furthermore, after the subsequent Sumas
arms-smuggling case in that same year, Inspector Reid proposed in a letter to Superintendent
Scott that in the future, “no Hindu be permitted to go into the United States without first
registering out at this office.”\textsuperscript{252} In that same letter, he mentions that Harnam Singh, one of the
Sumas party, had been deported from Canada, and had also been refused entry into the United
States on medical grounds.\textsuperscript{253} Evidently, by the outbreak of World War I, the US-Canadian
border had become closed to Asian migrants.

The matching-up of the Canadian and American discipline-blockades resulted in the most
revolutionary of South Asian activists being squeezed out of the two countries. Even though
Hopkinson died and his network had been decimated, the structure they had built up continued
under the supervision of settler and imperial agents.\textsuperscript{254} The Duke of Connaught’s concerns about
the collapse of the surveillance network had not come to fruition, largely because the most
strident South Asian activists and revolutionaries in North America had already left by the
outbreak of World War I, either due to the Ghadarite Exodus or due to their concerns over being

\textsuperscript{250} Ibid, 7.
\textsuperscript{251} Copy of letter from Reid to W. D. Scott acknowledging wires sent and received, and re his visit to Sumas, July 25,
1914, Simon Fraser University Digitized Collections, 1.
\texttt{https://digital.lib.sfu.ca/km-2048/copy-letter-reid-w-d-scott-acknowledging-wires-sent-and-received-and-re-his-visit-sumas-page}
\textsuperscript{252} Ibid, 4.
\textsuperscript{253} Ibid, 1.
prosecuted during wartime. Har Dayal had heard of moves being made by the Americans to deport him, and fled to Europe.\textsuperscript{255} Similarly, Das had been targeted for some time by both the state and by radical Ghadarites, and travelled to Germany in 1914 to assist in their fight against the British.\textsuperscript{256} Even then, he was not out of the reach of the long arm of the law, and along with a slew of other South Asians, he was accused of treason in the Hindu-German Conspiracy Trials of 1917. After travelling back to the United States to stand trial, Das was found guilty and jailed for approximately two years.\textsuperscript{257} His sentence was lighter than that of many of his fellow defendants. In turn, their sentences were much lighter than those of the Ghadarites being tried in the courts of the British Raj, many of whom were either executed or jailed for life.\textsuperscript{258} With the outbreak of World War I, the white men’s countries were able to link their discipline-blockades based on the links which Hopkinson had helped to establish between them in the build-up to the war. With these new links established, the state was able to punish dissidence and repress resistance in a manner previously impossible, resulting in the declawing of the South Asian community.

\section*{STUDYING LIMINAL FIGURES IN LIMINAL SPACES}

Ultimately, the history of the lives and careers of Taraknath Das and William Charles Hopkinson is one of liminal figures working in liminal spaces. The world in which they lived was ruled by bourgeois white men, whose white nationalist and imperialist ambitions led to oppressive forms of discrimination and exclusion directed against non-white people. Despite


\textsuperscript{256} Mukherjee, 66

\textsuperscript{257} “Taraknath Das,” \textit{University of Washington Special Collections}, accessed March 11 2019, \url{http://www.lib.washington.edu/specialcollections/collections/exhibits/southasianstudents/das}

this, non-white actors were not powerless, and those who made it into North America created lives and careers for themselves. Das and Hopkinson were South Asians who originated from a British colony and operated in the settler states of Canada and the United States. As such, their writings, correspondence, and actions reveal how imperial politics, settler politics, and anticolonial and antidiscriminatory activism played out in frontier spaces. From these antithetical political objectives existing between disparate groups, transnational tussles emerged. It was in these conflicts that Das and Hopkinson operated as interpreters, as Asians who were responsible for interpreting other Asians and to Asians. In doing so, they exercised great power in shaping and influencing how audiences would receive information, due to the relative ignorances of the audiences with which they worked.

A key aspect of this thesis has been its exploration of the ways in which identity can constrain and/or enable actors to access power. In the context of the South Asian community, it was often because of the classed, racial/ethnic, and gendered constraints placed upon South Asians that individuals like Das and Hopkinson were able to exercise their identities in powerful ways. It is fair to question just how “constrained” Das and Hopkinson were. In addition to being racialized, it was in large part due to their statuses as middle-class men that they were able to access relations of power in both white and South Asian networks. By contrast, such positions were largely inaccessible to the majority of the South Asian community, as constraints in terms of language, education, and class prevented them from rubbing shoulders with the heads of networks.

However, even Das’ and Hopkinson’s partners and informants practiced a form of power of their own in their interactions with Das and Hopkinson, whether that be Guran Ditt Kumar
when he helped Das to translate the *Free Hindusthan* into Gurmukhi and Urdu, or Jean Sinclair when she provided Hopkinson with information related to Das’ interactions with the California Women’s Club. While seemingly minor acts, we must consider that power is not solely exercised through macro-level policy, but that it is also and significantly exercised daily, in the smallest of interactions. Power is constituted through a diffuse set of relations between actors, and as such these exercises of micropower are vital to properly understanding how knowledge, mindsets, and policies at the very top of society come to be formed. Such an estimation of power does not treat bourgeois white men as hegemons who monopolized power, but acknowledges their dominantly powerful and privileged statuses. It was in large part due to their privileged statuses that they were so disconnected from the South Asian community. In turn, this ignorance empowered intermediating interpreters like Das and Hopkinson, whose own need for information and help led to them diverting some of their own influence to their subordinates and partners. Power was distributed diffusely, if unevenly, throughout these hierarchical networks.

Immigration history often has a tendency to veer towards the filiopietistic celebration or the wholesale condemnation of the individual and/or group concerned, these two perspectives often being written in contrast to the other. In studying the biographies of Das and Hopkinson, I have not attempted to pass judgement on their morality or lack thereof as people, as this was not the purpose of the thesis. This is not to say that historical judgements made about them are invalid. Their beliefs and concurrent actions had real-life consequences, and as such their actions deserve judgement just as much as they deserve evaluation.

In writing about the two men, I have passed some judgement about the morality of their beliefs and actions, but have refrained from judging their morality as people. Das and Hopkinson
both made decisions about how to operate in their world based upon their identities, experiences, and beliefs. Part of the value in biographical history is that it forces the researcher to dive into the lives, beliefs, and actions of those they are studying in order to truly inhabit the world in which these subjects operated. This perspective encourages me to answer research questions about historical subjects in a similar way to how I hope others would judge me. Historical subjects, like people today, deserve to be recognized as being simultaneously capable of heroism and villainy alike, and of occupying intermediary spaces in between these two poles.
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