

## Cold War Cosmopolitanism: The Education of Santha Rama Rau in the Age of Bandung, 1945–1954

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When Santha Rama Rau burst onto the international literary scene in 1945 with her first book, *Home to India*, she was just twenty-two years old. Over half a dozen books and half a century later, she was anthologized in a Norton reader as a writer, a writing teacher, and the prototypical cosmopolitan of the twentieth century: “Born in Madras, India . . . [she] lived all over the world, from England to South Africa to Japan, until she settled in the United States.”<sup>1</sup> Rama Rau’s transformation from fledgling author into the embodiment of the modern cosmopolitan ideal was largely a function of her elite status, her family connections, and the opportunities available to her as an educated Indian woman. The daughter of a diplomat father and an activist-feminist mother, she had all the credentials of the classic cosmopolite, including a transnational childhood lived across the spaces of the British Raj and an equally mobile adulthood facilitated by marriage to an American, Faubion Bowers, and a career as a travel writer. Though she did not recognize herself as exceptional, she conceded that her contemporaries might find her life “odd, peculiar, even a little mad . . . or exotic.”<sup>2</sup> Exoticism was, of course, a fate to which many ex-colonial people who aspired to a cosmopolitan identity were subject in the decades following the breakup of the British Empire. But Rama Rau’s story does more than reveal the possibilities and limits of cosmopolitanism. Taken together, the books she produced

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in the wake of her travels in the 1940s and 1950s articulate a shifting vision of global community: from an earlier, Eurocentric model—rooted in a British/imperial worldview—to a pan-Asian model—rooted in the realization of an emergent America-centered global hegemony. Like most if not all women’s travel writing, Rama Rau’s work demonstrates how the sentimental journey of development articulated in the travelogue helps to shape a gendered narrative of political education—in this case, that of a privileged Indian woman in a newly postcolonial world. It also enables us to see with particular vividness the intersection of a historically specific form of cosmopolitanism with the realities of the late-twentieth-century world order as symbolized by the 1955 conference in Bandung—and to appreciate the role of India, and Indians, as sites of translation between one anglophone empire (Britain) and another (the United States).

And yet in suggesting this I do not wish to reclaim formerly Eurocentric versions of cosmopolitanism as postcolonial Indian property (“natives” can be cosmopolitan too). What is historically significant and politically consequential about Rama Rau’s work is that her performance of cosmopolitanism—its riff on the Kantian ideal of universalist, worldly disinterest—was the enactment of a very particular, highly contingent promontory perspective on both Asia and the decolonizing world more generally.<sup>3</sup> An inheritance of both British colonialism and Indian nationalism, Rama Rau’s cosmopolitanism was also the effect of her desire to be seen as an extranational Indian expert in first decades of the Cold War. As we shall see, Rama Rau was above all an uneasy cosmopolitan, in part because she came to realize that a peculiar brand of orientalism animated her aspiring cosmopolitan visions—a phenomenon she recognized with surprise, puzzlement, regret and, finally, a very publicly staged political transformation. In the process, she mapped the progress of her particular postcolonial education for the benefit of postwar readers in Britain and the United States especially: readers who had a growing appetite for what Christina Klein has called “cold war orientalism.”<sup>4</sup> Equally provocative is the pointedly gendered dis-ease Rama Rau experienced as she tried to negotiate the shifting role of “India for Indians” at once within the parameters of the cosmopolitanism she had inherited from a pre-postcolonial world *and* against the backdrop of a pan-Asianism with which she felt a deep and unanticipated sympathy. Nor, as we shall see, did the so-called new world of Asia represent the territorial limit of her Cold War cosmopolitanism. She viewed Africa, through the lens of Kenya’s Mau Mau, as an object lesson in the challenges of managing insurgent nationalism and “the race question” in the years leading up to the Bandung Conference. Reading Rama Rau as one instance of an emergent and uneasy cosmopolitan allows us to begin to historicize the cultural politics of nationalism in the age of Bandung. Rather than fetishizing the conference as an unequivocally liberatory or even inaugural event, made possible by the demise of European empires and the emergence of avowedly nonaligned postcolonial leaders on the world stage, we need to appreciate Bandung,

its immediate prehistory, and its aftermath as an extended historical moment during which a set of “semi-imperialisms” (India over Japan, India over Africa, India as *prima inter pares* in Asia) also emerged.<sup>5</sup> These semi-imperialisms were animated by postwar realignments, by the colonial legacies that helped to shape the ideological character and the political culture of new states (India prime among them), and by the exigencies of that quintessential Cold War figure, the postcolonial expert.<sup>6</sup>

Rama Rau’s diasporic childhood and adolescence set the stage for the kind of Cold War cosmopolitan she became. Her father, Sir Benegal Rama Rau, had been financial advisor to the Simon Commission and, later, secretary to the Roundtable Conference. As a result, the family lived in England for much of the 1930s, with the two Rama Rau children, Premila and Santha, attending a Quaker school in Surrey as boarders, and in South Africa, which is where they were when World War II broke out. Rama Rau’s mother, Dhanvanthi Rama Rau, was a prominent social reformer with a special interest in family planning. A past president of the annual All-India Women’s Conference (AIWC), she had a reputation as a firebrand, not least for her willingness to stand up to British feminists of the period over issues like child marriage and *purdah* in the interwar years.<sup>7</sup> The Rama Raus were Nehruvians, in deed as well as word: Santha’s father served the postcolonial Indian state as the first Indian ambassador to Tokyo and then to Washington, DC, career moves that were to shape his daughter’s apprehensions of the global arena in life-changing ways. Her mother, for her part, was a staunch defender of the Nehruvian vision, with its secular commitments and its developmentalist agenda of social progress.<sup>8</sup> But she eschewed the companionate marriage model that had undergirded Indian nationalism (at least of the Congress variety) since the nineteenth century, refusing to accompany her husband on his diplomatic mission to Tokyo, for example, in order to carry on her work with the AIWC on the eve of independence.<sup>9</sup> Limits of space do not permit me to give more than this cursory background, but suffice it to say that Santha Rama Rau’s privileged childhood predisposed her to appreciate the connections between cosmopolitanism travel and politics—and especially between Indian nationalism and transnational mobility.

Santha Rama Rau’s first book, *Home to India* (1945), not only announced her arrival on the literary scene, it also established her credentials as a cosmopolitan traveler on the very threshold of a postcolonial India. As she framed it, at least at the start of the narrative, such cosmopolitanism depended on an identification with and an allegiance to Britain and things British for its vision and its cachet—articulated here through the idiom of orientalism. Set in 1939, the book chronicles Rama Rau’s return to her grandmother’s house in Bombay, and to India more generally, for the first time in nearly a decade. Though born in India, Rama Rau sees herself as a foreigner in her own land—someone who is “homesick for London” and recognizes India in a vague sort of way from “Hollywood’s Orients.”<sup>10</sup> Drawing on a twentieth-century practice among elite women writers of conjuring domestic space as the

nation, Rama Rau stages her grandmother's home as all of India.<sup>11</sup> Thus the Colaba house emerges from the very first pages of the book as a space whose interiors represent local tradition, even as they open onto the entire subcontinent—all of which Rama Rau can experience simply by walking “across the deep veranda in to the cool twilight of the house.”<sup>12</sup> Rama Rau performs her discovery of India experiences as a coming-of-age travel narrative in which growing up entails coming to terms with her Indian-but-not-quite identity. In the first instance, she positions herself as a tourist in her grandmother's home. As such she is appalled by pigeons in the bedroom, surprised by the presence of a radio in the drawing room, and bemused by her grandmother's determination to reconcile her to her destiny as a proper, high-caste Indian woman. Both Santha and her sister Premila see themselves as explorers, at least of a certain privileged landscape: yacht clubs and the Taj Mahal Hotel figure prominently, though they do also take the train to Delhi to experience the winter “social season” (68–73). Their promontory perspective on home and India produces both as tourist sights: “out of the way places” that require them to “rough it” and above all to be schooled in their own national identity—as chapter 2, “On Learning to Be an Indian,” suggests (14–21).

*Home to India* tracks Rama Rau's educational development by mapping it onto a travelogue of India that moves gradually outward from the house at Colaba to New Delhi society and, eventually, into the heart of nationalist political circles. What follows retains the character of an orientalist ethnography with very specific pedagogical purposes. Santha and Premila venture into the bazaar, for example, to see how much a pice will purchase: “It seemed to us incredible that one could buy anything at all for half a penny, but apparently millions of people were doing it” (57). Their trips to Kashmir and Tibet have the same kind of “slumming it” cast to them, all the more so because Rama Rau continues to frame her account in the language of curiosity, tourism, and discovery and to differentiate herself and her sister from “real Indians.” The fact that the Kashmir trip brings them into contact with photographers from *Life* magazine reinforces the touristic quality of the narrative. When a group of Tibetans rejects the peaches the photographer offered them but keeps the tin they came in, Rama Rau remarks, “the people we met along the way were a constant source of diversion” (84).

Such comments are typical of how Rama Rau dramatizes her return from exile and her attempts to negotiate the relationship between her elite status and a certain kind of cosmopolitan/nationalist politics in situ. At the same time, as *Home to India* progresses, she represents herself as increasingly invested in critiquing Western visitors and registering her dissatisfaction with British imperial views about India. Although this critique produces a more knowledgeable and sympathetic view of Indian nationalism, the long-term effect of Rama Rau's political education is not an embrace of India, but a geographical reorientation of a different order. As *Home to India* draws to a close, Britain is eclipsed as the source of culture, knowledge, and

possibility—to be replaced by America, which, as Rama Rau recalls, “seemed to all of us a remote and wonderful land: freedom, education, democracy for everyone” (65). Although the reasons for her decision to go to college in the United States (she opts for Wellesley from among the list of Seven Sisters) are never fully addressed, the choice is nonetheless significant. It signals a break not just with Raj traditions but with certain elite Indian nationalist ones as well: rather than being “England-returned,” Rama Rau will be “America-returned” instead. Ending up in the United States rather than Britain for her education, political and otherwise, also makes for a dramatic break with the Anglo-Indian world of her parents, revealing the bildungsroman at the heart of *Home to India* in the process.<sup>13</sup>

*Home to India* launched Rama Rau’s career as a minor literary celebrity. It was critically acclaimed in the *New York Times*, and she was heralded as the embodiment of “East meets West.”<sup>14</sup> If some of her success was derived from the self-consciously staged orientalist tack she took for narrating her discovery of India, her next book adopted an even more didactic approach to the question of a cosmopolitan identity in a postcolonial world. *East of Home* (1950) finds her in full professional travel-writer mode as she journeys from Japan to China through Southeast Asia during tumultuous political times. It is shaped inexorably by the fact that she begins her tour in the midst of occupied Japan, where her father was the first Indian ambassador and she his official hostess during the 1950s. A career diplomat, Rama Rau senior took rather a dim view of his young daughter’s naïveté, and especially of her “shock” at seeing war-torn Tokyo for the first time. The extent to which Santha’s apprehensions of “the East” are set up, if not determined, by his diplomatic perspective may be gleaned from this anecdote, which opens the book:

My father, who feels less need to talk than anyone I know, made one of his rare comments. “Americans,” he said, “get homesick so easily.”  
 “And I suppose we don’t?” I said. “East is east, and . . .”  
 “It’s all very well,” he told me, “to be flippant about it, but you have only traveled in the West, and you know nothing about your own continent. Here you now feel a foreigner to the Japanese; soon you will feel increasingly foreign to the Americans and Europeans.  
 After all,” he said unemphatically, “you belong to Asia, you know, not just India.”  
 “Yes,” I said, not believing him.<sup>15</sup>

*East of Home* is, in many ways, the fulfillment of this prophecy. At every turn in Japan, and indeed throughout her Asian travels, Rama Rau stages her experience as a series of confrontations between the realities of American power and the call to identify with “the Orient” as a transnational phenomenon.

Given the neo-imperial status of the American conquering force in Japan in 1947 and after, the former can hardly seem surprising. That Santha Rama Rau

identified with the occupation forces appears somewhat more provocative. At one level, such an identification was perhaps inevitable, given her family's nationalist connections and her father's diplomatic status; this is especially so as the Diplomatic Corps in India was officially designated as "Occupation Personnel" in Tokyo in 1947, with all the privileges, both official and unofficial, that that entailed (265). Occupation personnel ate food flown in from the United States; they rode on the trains and had access to cars while the mobility of Japanese was severely curtailed by the expense of petrol and the general breakdown of the urban infrastructure. In her capacity as hostess for her father, Rama Rau socialized with General MacArthur and his wife when they were in Tokyo. Structurally at least, this gave Rama Rau a promontory perspective on the Japanese; the Japan in her account is thus a defeated imperial power but also an emerging colonial one by virtue of the American occupation. Rama Rau clearly understood this, though her critique was not of the American military presence, but rather of her father who, she claimed, "seemed relatively unimpressed by the curious Occupation dream world in which we saw the Japanese on the streets, requisitioned their houses, used their movies and clubs, but never met them" (4-5).

Elsewhere, Rama Rau's narrative suggests her own take on the complex relationship of imperialism, colonialism, and the new world order as she encounters remnants of what is left of "high" Japanese culture in the immediate aftermath of war, defeat, and occupation. In the excerpt below, Rama Rau recounts a meeting with the mother of a member of the Japanese reconstruction government, Mrs. Matsudaira:

The ground floor had one long room with a veranda opening onto the garden all along one side. Beyond that there was only a kitchen. The main room was divided into two with the usual light wooden Japanese partitions. It had tatami matting on the floor and parchment window panes.

The old lady began the conversation on a light diplomatic level, chatting in good, careful English about Europe and people.

Her husband, as ambassador for the old government of Japan, and she had traveled over most of Europe and America stationed first in London, later in Paris and still later in Washington.

Her daughters went to school in Cheltenham and were presented at Court, of which she made rather an amusing story about the difficulty of keeping ostrich feathers in the straight, heavy, Japanese hair.

I gathered that she and her family had been among the most powerful in prewar days, with several town and country houses and all the attendant luxury, but she made no reference to her change of circumstances. The whole conversation had a most unreal quality like a scene from one's childhood. (16)

This lost cosmopolitan world of Japanese elites proves especially poignant for Rama Rau because of its resonances with her own family history. At the same time, it

allows her to construct Japan as the past: not primitive in any kind of organic way, but thrust into the past because it has been overtaken, both literally and figuratively, by a new world order, albeit one of an uncertain future. Her response is wonderment, even pity; in what was perhaps an unconscious imitation of the classic American soldier's gesture, after she leaves the Matsudairas, she sends her monthly ration of chocolate to the children (22).<sup>16</sup>

Despite the fact that the Japan that her father's and future husband's connections brings to her sight line is what shapes her initial encounter with the East, as in *Home to India*, Rama Rau represents her developing political education—and her growing expertise—as an effect of encounters with powerful women figures who compel her, with their own “insider” knowledge and frank political commitments, to admit her own ignorance and confront the complexity of perspectives that post-colonial geopolitics brings into view. The first is Miss Hani, an instructor at the Jiyu Gakuyen (Freedom School where Rama Rau also does some teaching) and a proponent of progressive, mixed (boys and girls) education. Hani's mother laments how hard the project of coeducation is in a traditional culture and bemoans what little help they have in running the school because there are no servants available. “You are an Asian,” she tells Rama Rau, “so you will understand how strange that seems here.”<sup>17</sup> Rama Rau's account of her time in Japan is punctuated by recurrent references to her “shared” Asian identity. When she tells Hani that she, too, aspires to be a teacher, Hani replies that “to an American I would speak about salary, but . . . we understand each other, and I would not insult you with such a discussion” (8). And when Hani asks Rama Rau to tell her about the West and the latter says she does not really know anything, “Miss Hani smiled as though she had expected just such Oriental humility from me” (9). As these experiences accumulate, Rama Rau reflects that “there is a curious solidarity between Asians of which I had never been conscious until I went to Japan, and here I began to notice it in my own attitude too” (30).

Significantly, Rama Rau's own attitudes do not take shape without conflict, both direct and indirect. Indeed, the conflicts and the knowledge they produce for her about the East become the basis for her expertise in the realm of Cold War politics. Her father needles her about her Western presumptions and prejudices, and at least one student at the Jiyu Gakuyen challenges Rama Rau's critique of Japanese imperialism, especially because of its “atrocities.” Those come in any war, the young female student responds.

“Well, the Allies did not go around beheading captured airmen,” I said on surer ground.

“Yes, those should be punished. But is it worse to behead a man than to shoot him or hang him or kill him with an atom bomb?”

“It seems barbaric to the West or rather,” I said, thinking of the far worse atrocities that the West has been guilty of, their concentration camps,

and torture chambers, “to the democracies.” Then I amended that to “to Americans,” because of the atrocities of democratic countries in their Asian colonies. (24)

Here as elsewhere in *East of Home*, Rama Rau exceptionalizes the United States and sidesteps the relationship between the American occupation and imperialism tout court. She also displays the extent to which her claims to expertise are forged through encounters with Asian women who help her, by challenging her, to arrive at the kinds of postcolonial knowledge not generally available to American audiences. This is evident in her replay of her conversation with a Japanese woman journalist, Kumiko Nomura, who declares (on hearing of Gandhi’s death in 1948) that she loved the Mahatma because he fought for “freedom for Asia . . . that was what brought him close to our [Japanese] hearts” (67). Their exchange, as Rama Rau recorded it, is worth reviewing in full:

“Oh heavens!” I said, in final exasperation. “Wars and murder, conquests and concentration camps, people dead, and people wounded, and everybody poorer and the world unable to right itself for ages afterward—why do we all have to pretend that . . . it was for freedom or some such thing? Why can’t you, Kumiko, be honest and say it was for economic gain, or you had to, or from fear—”

“Almost all one’s actions are from fear, I think [Kumiko replied].

We were afraid of fighting, but other fears, stronger fears, made us fight. But you,” she said calmly and furiously, “an Indian, you should understand what we did. You, at last, have your freedom in your country, and you are the first nation in Asia to do that. But the rest of us? Are we not in chains? The Dutch, the French, the British rule Asia. In China, Americans try to build up their idea of a ‘good government’ with bullions and dollars. Siam is so small, and every western nation has a share in her government. And now we, the last to be subjugated, are a conquered nation too.

Oh,” she said painfully and in despair, as though it was an old sore, “if only you had helped us. . . .”

“You should be thankful,” I said, sounding like a governess, “that you are occupied by the Americans. They are doing more to set your country on its feet than you could ever have done.”

“But,” she said, surprised into pleasantness, “that’s not what I was talking about, . . . I was talking about Asia and its freedoms. Look at the movements that have started now, since the war, in Indo-China, Indonesia, in Malaya and Burma, didn’t we organize them, arm them, lead them to ‘democracy’?”

She put the world in verbal quote marks. “It was only possible for them—weak countries—to fight their conquerors after they had seen the white men beaten. Beaten by Asians, working for Asians—that was when their prestige vanished and the subject peoples had morale enough to revolt.

That is why you should have helped us. After the war,” she finished quietly, “‘the democracies’ returned those nations to their foreign rulers.

Like all wars, it ends in mysteries. . . .”  
 She picked up her teacup. “Come, let us drink to Asia’s freedom.  
 It is what Mahatma Gandhi would have wanted, I am sure.” (68)

Although it somewhat conveniently overlooks Japan’s own experience as an imperialist power, Nomura’s passionate discussion of Asian freedoms offers Rama Rau a history lesson—thus contributing to her ongoing political education and, not incidentally, shoring up her own position as a cosmopolitan expert on the postcolonial scene by allowing her visibly to draw on the authentic voices and experiences of “natives.”

Beyond recounting the sheer drama of this geopolitical debate, Rama Rau stages a crucial moment in her postcolonial development here, one in which she comes face to face with her own prejudices, not least of which is her patronizing attitude toward Nomura (“‘You should be thankful,’ I said, sounding like a governess”). Rather than accepting the Japanese woman’s authority, Rama Rau responds to her provocations by organizing a pan-Asian trip, proposing to Bowers (to whom she was not yet married) and some of her friends that they tour Indochina, Thailand, Malaya, and Indonesia as well as China. This firsthand witness approach is crucial to the case for expert knowledge that Rama Rau builds throughout *East of Home*. Her account of this trip forms the bulk of the rest of the book, in which she effectively tries to work out “the problem” of the East for herself and for her readership—which is (as the Harper imprint indicates) largely an American one. Her literary mechanism for doing so is instructive: for after her heated discussion with Nomura, Rama Rau rarely takes up for the United States as she had done in the exchange above. Instead, she allows America, and American expertise, to be represented in the figure of her friend Clare Harris, the gendered equivalent of the ugly American who appears in *East of Home* almost a decade before the emergence of that term in the public sphere via William Lederer and Eugene Burdick’s 1958 book of the same title.<sup>18</sup>

Though Rama Rau tells us that Harris is an American who works for the Public Relations Office in occupied Japan and that she has been dispatched to research the “new Japanese woman,” we know little else about her personal details, except that she epitomizes that unabashed strain of Cold War orientalism personified by that would-be expert, the American journalist.<sup>19</sup> Rama Rau tries taking Harris to Kabuki plays but the American has no interest, dismissing the performances as “feudalism” and “perverted.” In China, Harris is shocked and disgusted by the “scenes of confusion and uninhibited atmosphere” of the city streets, where mock fights and obstreperous market bargaining are everywhere to be seen—not to mention dead bodies unattended to. “‘How appalling,’ Clare would say, or, ‘How callous—they just walk by.’”<sup>20</sup> And their discussions with a Miss Wang over the lack of a Western-style women’s movement make Harris indignant. When told that “the Chinese woman occupies a position of great serenity and dignity in her family,” Harris sits

straight up and replies: “Do you mean that a Chinese woman looks forward to being no more than a wife and mother[?]” (75). Such scenes recur throughout their trip and give the narrative a dramatic edge it would not otherwise have had. The trope of the ugly American—in this case, the amateur who parodies American professional knowledge and expertise—is thus not just a straw figure but becomes critical to the pedagogical aims of the book as a whole. Harris’s sins are many, and they are highly gendered as well. Not only does she “shop European” everywhere she goes, but she provokes politically charged discussions with “natives” and her friends alike—a tendency which Rama Rau falls short of calling unbecoming, though her unease at Harris’s audacity is nonetheless clear. In Siam, Harris wants to know why the government collaborated with the Japanese. In Bali, she demands to have eastern marriage practices explained to her satisfaction and asks other more politically dangerous questions that her Balinese interlocutors try politely to parry. And at Angkor she insists on a conversation with Bowers motivated by her frustration that people they meet seem to think that America is always to blame. “It was the same in China, and now here,” she complains. “We’re wrong if we do send arms and wrong if we don’t. Why does everyone expect handouts from America?” (171).

Rama Rau occasionally intervenes in these discussions, as when she defends the dramatic violence of Kabuki as customary rather than simply backward-looking, commenting that she was “rather surprised to find myself arguing as an ‘Asian’ to a ‘Westerner’” (60). But for the most part, Rama Rau absents herself, representing the conversations in a realistic, as-they-happened mode—one in which she emerges as an observer, a student even, of the political lessons on offer. Most often, Harris is sparring with men in these exchanges, whether it is a local dignitary or Faubion Bowers—who often gets the last word. In response to Harris’s perceptions that America could do nothing right, Bowers replies (in what Rama Rau calls “a puzzled voice”): “Isn’t that strange, I was just thinking that we were the ones who expect handouts. We want Asia on our side and expect it to conform to our way of thinking” (171). If Harris had a retort, Rama Rau does not record it, leaving the impression in this instance, as she does across the whole of *East of Home*, that Harris is repeatedly silenced by both political and philosophical wisdom so persuasive that there is no possible response—at least not one that Harris has the capacity to imagine. Rama Rau thus implies that in the face of rational argumentation offered by either “authentic” natives or a “professional” expert such as Bowers, Americans like Harris are quite literally dumbstruck. Harris emerges as a caricature, and a narratively effective one at that. She also functions as Rama Rau’s ventriloquist. She asks the kinds of questions that Rama Rau, given her investment in displaying the tension between her attraction to the cause of Asia and her sympathy for (even identification with) American power, was interested in raising for her American readers in order to underscore the dilemmas and the unique contributions of the Cold War cosmopolitan. In the meantime, Harris also comes to represent the very kind of expertise

to which Rama Rau offers herself as a counterpoint. While she may be sympathetic to American power, unlike Harris, she is not its representative in Asia, but rather an ex-centrally mobile cosmopolitan who has acquired expertise not simply by being Indian but by learning about Asia as an Indian from other Asians—and by claiming a degree of insight about America and Americans as well. And she offers this cosmopolitan expertise apparently unthreateningly, in the guise of travel writing pitched at American consumers just as Asia was emerging as one of the major global flash points of the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>21</sup>

All of which leads us to ask: What exactly is on display in *East of Home*, to what political purposes, and with what ideological effects? “The East” itself as a series of tourist sites *and* as a pan-Asian whole is clearly one of the spectacles that the book produces—evidenced as much by the way the chapters carve out the local (“China,” “Indo-China,” “Siam,” “Indonesia”) as by the map (“The route of Santha Rama Rau”), which literally centers Asia for the reader. On display, too, of course, is India’s place in the postwar order. It is of Asia but ahead of it; it is superior to it, not simply because of its “success” at independence but because of the capacity of people like Rama Rau (and at a higher geopolitical level, Nehru) to act as translators of the world beyond the West and to navigate the new world order with old world civility.<sup>22</sup> In addition to Rama Rau’s class position, her Brahmanical Indian background gave her a privileged status over the fallen British, the unsophisticated Americans, and the multitude of East Asians who peopled the postwar stage. Equally powerful is the gender politics that the figure of Harris—and by implication, Rama Rau herself—enacts for readers. Rama Rau emerges as the quintessential modern woman, circulating all over the globe as an independent single female and giving new meaning to “the East as a career.” But in contrast to Harris—or at least, when Harris is present—she often does not speak, let alone speak her mind, allowing Harris to draw the fire and Bowers to pronounce the definitive political statements. Moving east of home renders Rama Rau less certain of herself than when she went home to India. And, I would argue, although she is no less disposed toward a certain form of orientalism than in her first book, the promontory perspective that characterized the previous story is now attributed to Harris, while Rama Rau, equally aloof but less articulate about it, ends up in a position of ambivalence. Rama Rau is still a self-avowed cosmopolitan, and an expert one at that, but she is also one whose inherited confidence in the possibility of its disinterestedness is more precarious than when she began. This unstable position, with its embrace of the pedagogical power of cosmopolitanism and its residual dis-ease with the status of the expert, was perhaps one of the only ones available to a diasporic Indian woman in America, a woman who was subject to an orientaling gaze herself simply by virtue of being an Indian woman in public. Her ambivalence about the possibilities of a triumphalist, heroic model of cosmopolitanism operates, significantly, as an interesting contrast to what was on display at Bandung itself, where Nehru and Chou En-lai especially per-

formed decidedly masculinist models of postcolonial cosmopolitanism in the context of fading British imperial power and the realities of the new American-Soviet superpower system.<sup>23</sup>

As *East of Home* moves to its conclusion, Rama Rau becomes more critical of the West but less inclined to include the United States in that designation; she is simultaneously less identified with India and more comfortable with her new-found Asian identity. In many respects she anticipates what Neloufer de Mel has called “lateral cosmopolitanism” to refer to the extranational spirit among women and feminist organizations in South Asia in the earlier twentieth century, with *lateral* signifying a gaze that moves across the subcontinent rather than simply toward the West.<sup>24</sup> To be sure, there are moments when Rama Rau is actively critical of the United States in Japan, especially with respect to the war trials, which she deemed “one of the most expensive and futile projects the Occupation had embarked on.”<sup>25</sup> And she is chastened by both Harris’s brazen Americanness and the challenges to American neo-imperialism that women like Hani and Nomura pose to her. The book ends with Rama Rau recording Bowers’s rant: Americans are extremely ignorant of Asia, they know no Asian languages—a fatal attitude, in his view, while “the world . . . is growing bigger every day.”<sup>26</sup> And yet the implication is that such knowledges—of eastern languages, arts, politics, people—are necessary for, and instrumental to, the success of the United States’ new role in the decolonized and decolonizing world. Bowers may not have been an apologist for the regime, but as an employee of the occupation and the personal aide to no one less than General MacArthur himself, he was not a critic either. A linguistic expert of the kind that would end up imagining, creating, and defending the project of area studies in U.S. universities in the late 1940s and after, he was “perilously close to those sensitive American specialists unleashed to ‘uplift’ the post-war world.”<sup>27</sup>

The same may be said of Santha Rama Rau, for whom Bowers’s earnest, benevolent, and utterly unself-critical embrace of things “eastern” stands as the model political position at the end of the book: one that she implicitly valorizes and even mimics. In this sense, the political education she stages in *East of Home* is a reorientation on several levels: from India to Asia via America, from tourist to emergent expert via Harris and Bowers—two very different models of expertise she implicitly rejects in order to fashion her own. On their last stop in Jakarta, while taking photographs of the ruination left in the wake of the Dutch colonial regime, her group is hailed by a soldier. “Are you for the Republic” he calls out. “‘Oh yes,’ we shouted back decidedly,” is the reply. This would-be populism is tempered by the advantages her elite status affords her—“Before we left . . . we had dinner with President Sukarno and his wife. It was like being at home again”—but the message is clear: Rama Rau has embraced the spirit of pan-Asian solidarity as her parents did that of Indian nationalism as against the old-order, European colonialism.<sup>28</sup> We might reasonably conclude that what Rama Rau does by the end of *East of Home* is

to domesticate the unbridled and uncritical cosmopolitanism of *Home to India*, so that travel east of home produces a political reorientation from one colonial power (the postimperial British) to another (the neo-imperial United States) and a new register for domesticity (feeling “at home” with the new Asian nationalisms) as well. Rama Rau does so by accommodating pan-Asian sympathies without countenancing the full, and one must say radical, implications of such an ideology for the new world order. In this sense, and importantly, hers is not the same kind of pan-Asianism articulated by Nomura; that incarnation is unavailable to her as an extranational figure, someone in basic sympathy with the postwar American global project.<sup>29</sup>

To some degree, the semi-imperial role accorded to India (vis-à-vis Japan and, with it, East Asia more generally) in Santha Rama Rau’s writing in the decade before Bandung is derivative of the Nehruvian vision of Indian nationalism to which her parents’ generation subscribed. The pan-Asian dimension of that vision stemmed at least from the 1920s, when C. R. Das had suggested the formation of an Asiatic Federation and Nehru himself had encountered Chinese delegates at the 1927 Brussels Congress sponsored by the League against Imperialism.<sup>30</sup> Influenced by such events, Nehru had emphasized India’s centrality in Asia at least beginning with the publication of his *Glimpses of World History* in 1929. Here he mapped the subcontinent’s geographical location as a rationale for India’s indispensability to the much-anticipated postimperial world order and, after 1947, used that same rationale for constructing the very bases of nonalignment. “Whichever problem in Asia you take up, somehow or other India comes into the picture,” he wrote in a speech to the Indian Council of World Affairs in 1949. “Whether you think in terms of China, or the Middle East or South East Asia, India immediately comes into the picture.”<sup>31</sup> If the boundaries of Asia proved quite capacious, India’s role was no less critical. For while Nehru decried the possibility that India should or would become the leader of Asia, he nonetheless insisted that India had a responsibility for “taking the initiative sometimes and helping others cooperate.”<sup>32</sup> This attitude was enshrined in the planning for and the execution of the first (and last) Asian Relations Conference in Delhi in 1947, where Nehru’s emphatic claim that he (and India) was not seeking the leadership of Asia was met with some skepticism.<sup>33</sup> At the moment, we await a comprehensive cultural reading of Nehru’s pan-Asianism and its meanings for postcolonial India more generally; we also lack as full an understanding as we need of the range of postcolonial Indian nationalists’ responses to the challenges posed by participation in a newly global yet highly regionalized new postwar order. In the meantime, Rama Rau’s travelogue offers us an elaborate example of the cultural politics of pan-Asianism during this postimperial, neo-imperial moment, even as it registers both the gendered subtexts and the contradictions of Cold War cosmopolitanism for a non-Western elite in the generation during and after Nehru. Given the ways in which that elite helped to shape both Indian foreign policy from Delhi and the image of India abroad from New York (especially through K. P. S. Menon and Neh-

ru's sister, Vijaylakshmi Pandit, both representatives for India at the United Nations in this period), their cosmopolitan presumptions—and the semi-imperial ideologies and practices they in turn generated—cannot easily be dismissed if we are to historicize the ideological work of geopolitical culture in the age of Bandung.

Nor was Asia the only object of an emergent semi-imperial gaze as it operated in Rama Rau's writing in the years leading up to Bandung. She wrote two pieces on Kenya, one for the *New York Times Magazine* in 1953 and one in 1954 for the *Reporter*, a now defunct New York city magazine, which brought African nationalism into view as an example of contemporary challenges to colonial rule and as a cautionary tale for American readers with respect to the "problem" of race. As she had in *East of Home*, Rama Rau cast herself as a sympathetic observer in Kenya, parsing the triangulated landscape of race relations in Nairobi (white, black, brown) and, arguably, offering a more multifaceted view of African nationalism (as embodied both by the Mau Mau and Jomo Kenyatta) than American readers were likely to get from either British or American correspondents. Rama Rau spoke with candor about the racism of white settler colonialism in East Africa and the limits, practical and political, of a "terrorist" movement like the Mau Mau. So, for example, her *New York Times Magazine* piece emphasized the insularity and presumptive racism of "the pink gin set" in Nairobi, underscoring whites' contempt for Africans and the cultural bankruptcy of white settler racism. She painted a vivid, detailed, and (as she had with Clare Harris in China) deliberately caricatured picture of a white supremacist state that was militarized not only officially but privately as well—with European dinner parties routinely ending with a revolver roll call—"you're armed, of course?"—before the guests headed home for the evening.<sup>34</sup> While she recognized that white racism and the "social insults" it daily entailed must be "deeply wounding to the Africans," Rama Rau's sympathies, however, were not with the insurgents. Her *Reporter* piece, occasioned by her trip to Africa during Kenyatta's trial, produced an ethnography of the Mau Mau that focused on the "terrifying" and often coerced oath-taking rituals by which Kikuyu were initiated into the organization and reflected an unflattering, partial picture of African nationalism to an American readership increasingly (if belatedly) alive to the growing "race relations" problem in its own midst.<sup>35</sup>

The Mau Mau was first reported in the *New York Times* in the fall of 1952, and it was labeled a terrorist organization from the outset. Perhaps not surprisingly, coverage focused exclusively on its violent deeds and especially on attacks against white settlers, though the Mau Mau also went after Africans as well.<sup>36</sup> *Slaughter*, *devastation*, and *primitive* were standard headline terms for characterizing the Mau Mau—terms often taken directly from quotes by British officials or European settlers.<sup>37</sup> Opinion on the Mau Mau was divided in African American communities, where the violent tactics generated tremendous debate and controversy, as the work of James Merriweather has shown.<sup>38</sup> In this context, Rama Rau's piece for the *New*

*York Times Magazine* in the summer of 1953 looks decidedly moderate (as does the Mau Mau itself, given recent historiographical revisions about the savagery of the final decade of British rule in Kenya).<sup>39</sup> And yet in the context of Third World politics on the threshold of Bandung, hers was a position of partial solidarity at best. I want to suggest that Rama Rau could take up this apparently balanced yet ultimately antinationalist view precisely because of her claims to a certain postcolonial identity, one dependent on a very particularly Indian relationship to both British imperialism and American global interests in the years immediately preceding Bandung. To be sure, Rama Rau's account detailed British magistrates' de-oathing ceremonies, pointing out that they employed the same "barbaric" practices (touching the mucus of the sheep's eye to the lips, for example) as the Mau Mau did. This led her in turn to wonder how challenging it must be "for the ordinary Kikuyu to decide just where the foreigners stand on the question of witchcraft."<sup>40</sup> She was not, in other words, unaware of or unwilling to make visible the impossibility of British claims to superiority on the ground, in practice, in Africa. But the Mau Mau in general, and Kenyatta in particular, come off as questionable if not illegitimate claimants to independence and postcolonial status because of the resort to violence that she then reads as the signature of African nationalism. Rama Rau, too, emphasized the Mau Mau's deadly tactics—"terrorism, murder of human beings, slaughter of livestock and, possibly, . . . a scorch-earth policy"—and she offered no larger view of either Kenyatta's political history or that of the Kenya African Union, leaving readers to draw their own conclusions about how they fit into the longer, pan-African histories of African nationalism.<sup>41</sup> The almost complete lack of attention to historical context and to evidence from across the continent constitutes a marked break from her writings about Asia, which had been characterized by attention to local histories of contact and, as we have seen, a transnational Asian panorama. These twin strategies had enabled a nuance that, for all its orientalism, worked to undermine some familiar stereotypes in the service of a larger pedagogical purpose: that is, to enunciate her own political conversion to a decidedly postcolonial pan-Asianism, albeit a promontory one. In her Africa essays, Rama Rau's perspective is no less elevated, yet it seeks no company with the objects in view, and it telescopes Kenya in ways that make it seem representative of Africa and African nationalisms as a whole. There is, in short, no bildungsroman here; thanks to the critical success of both *Home to India* and *East of Home*, Santha Rama Rau was already well established as the postcolonial expert. Her Asian narrative of development cannot, and does not, take root in the African reportage. Whereas it appeared, in the adroit prose of *East of Home*, to grow logically from the similarities and historical points of contact that Rama Rau apprehended while on her travels, it founders here on the ground of African difference. Readers of Rama Rau's oeuvre—and she was well reviewed in a host of regional and local newspapers across the United States—might well have perceived that difference in racial terms, not least because in telling contrast with her two

African essays, *race* is not a word she used much, if at all, in describing her travels and encounters in Asia, though, as Gerald Horne's work has shown, in the Pacific theater, it had been very much a "race war" at the level of official policy for both the Allies and the Japanese.<sup>42</sup>

Two newspaper articles are, to be fair, not exactly comparable with two full-length books. And yet no account of Rama Rau's career as a Cold War cosmopolitan—of her career as postcolonial expert—would be complete without attention to them, not least because her unmarked position as an expatriate Indian national structures the kinds of Cold War cosmopolitanism and postcolonial expertise she projected in this context. Although she never references them expressly, I want to suggest that Nehru and the Indian National Congress are a shadow presence, hovering over both of Rama Rau's essays on the Mau Mau and evocative of the ways that Brent Edwards has suggested W. E. B. Du Bois functions as "the shadow of shadows" in the career of Ho Chi Minh.<sup>43</sup> Kenyatta's career in Britain, and especially his circulation through metropolitan spaces in Europe and in Moscow, makes him, potentially at least, a candidate for the cosmopolitan nationalism of which both Nehru and, to a lesser degree, Rama Rau herself had become the embodiment by the 1950s. Rather than serving as the explanatory framework for his later political convictions, Kenyatta's career path seemed "baffling" to Rama Rau, beginning with the fact that he "doesn't, for example, know when he was born" and continuing with his unconventional and largely self-made education (farm laborer, meter reader, Harold Laski student). In effect, Rama Rau cast doubt on the efficacy of East African nationalism in part because of the unorthodox cosmopolitanism of its leader. Surely this is about differences of class, and about the ways in which discourses and material structures of racial difference are coded and circulate through colonial and here, a partially postcolonial, history. But it is equally, and interdependently, about hierarchies of racial and cultural difference *within and among* colonial possessions of the British Empire past and present in 1953–54—hierarchies of black and brown with long histories in imperial discourse, despite what practices of coexistence, cooperation, and collaboration may have also occurred on the ground.<sup>44</sup> These hierarchies are very much on view in Rama Rau's *New York Times Magazine* story, which features the following observation:

Outside the hotel, standing in the brilliant crystal sunlight of Kenya, on one of the city's busiest streetcorners, there may be a group of Masai tribesmen barefoot, carrying their spears, dressed only in a dusty blanket slung over one shoulder and with their bodies and hair rubbed with red ochre. Possibly they may be in town to shop or perhaps to sightsee. A group of Indian school children wheel by on bicycles on their way home for lunch. Veiled Muslim women of Arab descent may be peering at the things displayed in shops windows—cloth from India, canned goods from England, dresses from South Africa.

These three main population groups—the Europeans, the Asian and the African—live in the same city with a high degree of mutual exclusiveness or, as a friend described it, as a racial *pousse café*, each element necessary to the whole, each retaining its separate identity and, in the opinion at least of most Europeans and some Indians, a disastrous and unpalatable failure when the various elements mix.<sup>45</sup>

If only in terms of the way her gaze moves—and in turn, directs ours—in these paragraphs, the racialized presumptions of Rama Rau's cosmopolitan vision are starkly realized. Not only are women of Arab descent absorbed into the category of "Asian," they, along with Indian school children headed for a hot lunch at home, are ranged against barefoot Masai tribesmen who loiter—perhaps with a purpose, perhaps not. And the Indians and Europeans agree not just on the failure of racial mixture but on its unpalatability as well.<sup>46</sup>

We cannot say with certainty whether Rama Rau shared Kenyan Indians' views on "racial mixture," especially given the fact that by the time she wrote on the Mau Mau she had married Faubion Bowers. And again, it needs to be said that Rama Rau was not completely without appreciation for the plight of Africans or for Kenyatta himself, whose role in the Kenya African Union she at least recognized. And yet, although she never names Nehru as a countermodel, she represents Kenyatta as such a desultory figure that it is hard not to read him as an implicit contrast with Nehru—whom Americans were coming to understand, if not exactly to like, as a cultured, intellectual, and, above all, anglophile postcolonial man. At the very least, her curt description of Kenyatta as "a stocky man with an ugly, powerful face" invites comparison with the way Nehru was treated in the American press: the combination of his nonalignment and his intellectualism made him a highly effeminized figure in print culture and State Department correspondence alike.<sup>47</sup> Rama Rau's Kenyatta is unattractive but certainly not effeminate, and the contrast sets in motion a competitive politics of colonial/postcolonial masculinity that was threaded through hierarchies of race and class even as it helped to produce, by fixing, those categories themselves.<sup>48</sup> Both Rama Rau's *New York Times Magazine* essay and her article for the *Reporter* remained, moreover, almost completely devoid of women, in stark contrast to her Asian travelogues. The *New York Times Magazine* piece featured a series of photographs of white settler men in defiant poses; where African men appear, they are either dimly recognizable as "native backdrop" or literally as ancillary, as in the photo of several armed members of the African Auxiliary Patrol.<sup>49</sup> The one exception to this is Rama Rau's reference to the white mother who cannot leave her daughter alone in the garden for fear of her being snatched by Mau Mau agents.<sup>50</sup> In the narratology of empire, both mother and daughter are classic white female victims, and there are no African Kumiko Nomuras to challenge this representation or to offer Rama Rau insider knowledge; indeed, there are no Afri-

can women at all. As significantly, the hero of the *Reporter* piece is not Kenyatta but his English lawyer, D. N. Pritt, whose cynical, opportunistic, and above all legalistic line about the trial—"it is more important to fight this case than to win it"—she uses as a dramatic end point to her narrative.<sup>51</sup>

Rama Rau recognized that Kenyatta's trial did not mean the end of the Mau Mau but the beginning of "one of the most inflammatory chapters in history—the political and emotional self-assertion of the Africans in the eastern, central and southern countries of their immense continent."<sup>52</sup> If we ignored the word *inflammatory*, it might be possible to read this as an anodyne statement, even an agnostic one, with respect to the "problem" of African nationalism. But given the tensions over racial hierarchies in Africa and the circumstances through which the postcolonial Indian state came to a public embrace of the project of African nationalism in both parliamentary debate and on the world stage, we do so at our peril. In the years between independence and Bandung, the Indian government's interest in Africa was focused on, if not strictly limited to, the problem of Indian settlers in South Africa and East Africa.<sup>53</sup> And although "Asia and Africa" were paired in Nehru's rhetoric as part of his vision for the postwar world, it was always in that order. And it was clear pretty consistently from 1947 onward that it was Asia that was to take "responsibility" for "spreading freedom . . . out over the whole human race."<sup>54</sup> What is more, Nehru's speech at the Asian Relations Conference in Delhi in 1947 articulated a patron-client relationship in which Africa was specifically imagined as the object of such Asian responsibility.<sup>55</sup> Bandung indubitably ratcheted up the stakes, both symbolic and real, of Afro-Asian unity in the face of Western anxieties about the insurgent nationalisms of the Third World, though it did not necessarily interrupt the logic of clientism through which India saw Africa, at least until events in Algeria in 1956 and the Congo in 1960 (where, incidentally, India made an army brigade available to the United Nations in 1961) compelled a more explicit commitment to Afro-Asian brotherhood (47–53, 26–27, 69). The nature of this clientism (which was one structural manifestation of the concept of semi-imperialism I have been using to describe Rama Rau's discursive maneuvers) is perforce complex. Nehru himself articulated a developmentalist logic of African nationalism through what he called in 1958 the growth of "the African personality"—a logic that was accompanied by all good wishes and exhortations to Indians to find solidarity with the new postcolonial regime in Ghana, for example (25). The conference of African students that Nehru had opened in Delhi in 1956 made for a more concrete expression of that commitment, even as it located the anticolonial training ground squarely in India. Nor should African agency be discounted here. As the testimonies of some delegates from Zambia under Kenneth Kaunda suggest, some Africans appreciated Nehru's insistence on the link between Asian and African struggles, calling him "Nehruji" and recognizing in him the architect of "Afro-Asianism" (23, 55).

As James Ferguson reminds us, such articulations of African modernity

proved as vital and necessary as nationalism itself, even if they were expressed in part as clientism in a developmentalist register. At the same time, and as Nehru understood, postwar modernity meant “global status . . . [that is,] the condition of being first”—and of course, of being able to recognize and make globally visible those “others” who came behind.<sup>56</sup> Given the geopolitical realities developing in the 1950s, then, Santha Rama Rau’s Kenyan pieces offer not just a prehistory to the solidarities set in motion by Bandung but they mark out many of the lines of tension as well—some imprinted with older British imperial legacies, others more freshly minted in light of new postcolonial realities, America’s postwar global aspirations among them. For one of Rama Rau’s accomplishments in her *Reporter* essay was to translate the Mau Mau into terms that Americans could appreciate. Near the start of her article on Kenyatta’s trial, she noted that the Europeans in the colony called the Mau Mau “‘the African Stern Gang’ or sometimes a ‘Ku Klux Klan in reverse.’”<sup>57</sup> The Stern Gang (technically, Lehi, a Hebrew acronym for Lohamei Herut Israel, Fighters for the Freedom of Israel) was a Jewish paramilitary group at work prior to the founding of the state of Israel; the Klan, for its part, was garnering increased publicity in the postwar period as it saw opportunities to both fuel and capitalize on antiblack violence in the American South.<sup>58</sup> The juxtaposition of these two terms, and the comparisons they evoke, speaks directly to the ambivalence Rama Rau registered about what she saw in Africa in the early 1950s, and to the position she was cultivating as a postcolonial expert for an American audience. On the one hand, the Stern Gang was an anti-British, if not wholly anticolonial, organization that attacked mainly British targets. On the other hand, there was nothing redemptive about the Klan, and at the end of the day, both of these analogies were drawn directly from white settler usage in ways that, whether by design or effect, offered American readers an imperial vantage point refracted through two inflammatory sites in contemporary U.S. policy and culture. As in *East of Home*, Rama Rau delivered an “Indian” postcolonial perspective that underscored her own cosmopolitan identity (world traveler, world commentator) but did so via an appreciation for American neo-imperial sensibilities. In the case of the Mau Mau and the Klan metaphor, she broached at least the possibility that America’s race relations might be viewed as a problem of domestic colonial management and containment. Given that *New York Times* coverage used the word *Negro* to describe Africans in the context of the Mau Mau, that leap of interpretation would not have been so very great for readers.<sup>59</sup>

Such an interpretive possibility has, moreover, important resonances with recent work on the links between Cold War ideologies and civil rights activity,<sup>60</sup> not least because it adds a layer of transnational complexity often alluded to in those new histories but rarely fully explored: that this, the role of India and Indians in shaping the cultural and ideological terms through which the United States struggles to become, and to imagine itself as, the post-British imperial world power after 1945. Frenise Logan’s work on racism and Indian-U.S. relations is now almost twenty years

old, but it deserves revisiting for the arguments she makes about how and why Indians in India articulated their views about American racial policy toward “Negroes” in the almost ten years leading up to Bandung. What she tracks is a resistance in the Indian press to American claims to fitness for world leadership given the persistence of Jim Crow in the U.S. South.<sup>61</sup> Such sentiment is the very kind that made the State Department anxious about nonalignment in general and Bandung in particular. It is also quite a different angle of vision than Santha Rama Rau’s. Works like Logan’s can and should be used as the basis for new histories about how and under what conditions Indians of all classes, castes, and political/geographical locations have embedded histories of British colonialism in, and articulated global power through, reference to contemporary U.S. politics—and how and under what conditions they did not, since of course South Asian history should not be completely absorbed into either American imperial history or, for that matter, into a paradigmatically “Bandung and after” history either. In any case, Rama Rau’s career does offer us a concrete example of how India and Indians have facilitated American identification with and disavowal of British imperial hegemony, as well as how flexible cosmopolitanism and its agents have been in their encounters with modernity, postcoloniality, and history itself.

Santha Rama Rau offers, in sum, a particularly vivid example of how “discrepant subjects of globalization” can and often do function as cosmopolitan ones—particularly, as Caren Kaplan has observed, when they are women emerging in post- and neocolonial moments.<sup>62</sup> Given the extent to which “practices of othering internal to the East” are a commonplace of state imaginings and national image management in the modern world outside the West, the orientalism at the heart of Rama Rau’s cosmopolitan self-fashioning may not be as unusual as we might expect.<sup>63</sup> When the correlative histories of Afro-Asian connection have been more fully engaged, her apprehensions of Africa and through it, her interpolation of African Americans, may not prove any more remarkable. The stakes of historicizing these questions are unquestionably high. For, as Malini Johar Schueller has suggested, the simultaneous invocation and erasure of blackness, and of race more generally, remains a remarkably underexamined feature of postcolonial studies, particularly in the strain produced by diasporic South Asians.<sup>64</sup> This is only one aspect of the “neo-orientalist underpinnings of postcolonial theory in the west” that critics like Schueller and Elleke Boehmer are invested in materializing and historicizing via the figures of women and through the conjoined optics of critical race and gender theory.<sup>65</sup> To the extent that rhetorics of postcolonialism are rooted in and aim to shape political practices in an age of aggressive American imperialism (not to mention runaway “globalization”), specifying the historical genealogies of these interdependent racial histories is an urgent task.<sup>66</sup> As I have tried to show here, Rama Rau is a highly particular but nonetheless heuristically productive example of the shifting grounds of cosmopolitanism in the newly postcolonial world, and of the uneven development

of cultural and racial solidarity in the age of Bandung. Indeed, Rama Rau may be said to have linked postcolonial realities and Cold War concerns in a register that few contemporaries were able to do, making lateral connections that are, even now, just being appreciated by historians of the twentieth century. Tracking Rama Rau's claims to postcolonial cosmopolitanism as they were articulated through images of and events in Asia and Africa allows us to appreciate her as a minor, if culturally provocative, player in the lead up to Bandung; to see glimpses of Cold War America as a nursery for neo-imperial ambition; and to understand the ongoing role of India in shaping a genuinely, and above all critically, transnational postcolonial history of the present as well.

### Notes

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1. Linda H. Peterson, ed., *The Norton Reader: An Anthology of Expository Prose* (New York: Norton, 1996), 1321.
2. Santha Rama Rau, *Gifts of Passage* (New York: Harper, 1961).
3. For an extended discussion of the promontory, see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
4. Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945–1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
5. In this essay I use the term *Asia* self-consciously, and somewhat narrowly, in its Nehruvian sense: that is, to refer to South and East Asian countries without including West Asia and the predominantly Muslim territories of the Middle East, Israel, and Afghanistan. Thanks to Mansour Bonakdarian for helping me to clarify this geographical ambit.
6. See Judith Butler, "Universality in Culture," in *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*, ed. Joshua Cohen (Boston: Beacon, 1996), 45–52.
7. Dhanvanthi Rama Rau, *An Inheritance* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 152–54.
8. See Santha Rama Rau, *Home to India* (New York: Harper, 1945), 28–29.
9. Rama Rau, *An Inheritance*, 277.
10. Rama Rau, *Home to India*, 4, 5.
11. This is not to say that male writers have not also done this. See my *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), esp. 6.
12. Rama Rau, *Home to India*, 1.
13. Talking about her experience of writing *Home to India* some twenty-five years later, Rama Rau had a very different take on it; see *The Cooking of India* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1969), 6–7.

14. See Orville Prescott, "Books of the Times," *New York Times*, May 23, 1945; Isabelle Mallett, "The Reorientation of an Anglo-Indian," *New York Times*, June 3, 1945; and Elizabeth McSherry, "East Meets West," *Hartford Courier*, June 4, 1961.
15. Santha Rama Rau, *East of Home* (New York: Harper, 1950), 3.
16. For a complex and variegated account of how race played into the India-Japan, British-U.S. axes during World War II, see Gerald Horne, *Race War! White Supremacy and the Japanese Attack on the British Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 2004). Thanks to David Roediger for this citation.
17. Rama Rau, *East of Home*, 6.
18. William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick, *The Ugly American* (1958; New York: Norton, 1999).
19. In fact, as Santha Rama Rau told me when I interviewed her in 2004, the Harris character was an amalgam of many Americans, journalists included, whom she met while touring Asia.
20. Rama Rau, *East of Home*, 75.
21. See Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, and, for the Euro-American scene, Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).
22. A. Martin Wainwright calls India a "Third Force" in post-1945/post-1947 politics; see his *Inheritance of Empire: Britain, India, and the Balance of Power in Asia, 1938–1955* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994), esp. 123.
23. I am grateful to Augusto Espiritu for pressing this comparison on me. For a wonderfully evocative narrative of this performative cosmopolitanism on the part of Nehru and Chou En-lai, see Carlos P. Romulo, *The Meaning of Bandung* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956).
24. Neloufer de Mel, *Women and the Nation's Narrative: Gender and Nationalism in Twentieth Century Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 2001). This emphasis on lateralism is also taken up by Elleke Boehmer in her *Empire, the National, and the Postcolonial, 1890–1920: Resistance in Interaction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5–10. Thanks to Minnie Sinha for drawing my attention to this.
25. Rama Rau, *East of Home*, 56.
26. *Ibid.*, 303.
27. The quote comes from Mrinalini Sinha, private correspondence, February 2005. See also Shiro Okamoto, *The Man Who Saved Kabuki: Faubion Bowers and Theatre Censorship in Occupied Japan*, trans. and adapt. Samuel L. Leiter (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001).
28. Rama Rau, *East of Home*, 300.
29. I am grateful to Mrinalini Sinha for encouraging me to see this point.
30. See Iqbal Singh, *Between Two Fires: Towards an Understanding of Jawaharlal Nehru's Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1992), 1:33–51.
31. Jawaharlal Nehru, "Our Foreign Policy," in his *Independence and After: A Collection of Speeches, 1946–1949* (New York: John Day, 1950), 24. See also Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History* (New York: John Day, 1942), and his *India and the World* (London: George Allen Unwin, 1936). As Singh suggests, Nehru did not by any means invent this "tryst with Asia"; not only did his contemporaries (like Das) propose institutionalizing India's relationships with other states in Asia but there was a tradition of travel to and engagement

- with China and Japan, for example, reaching back to Rabindranath Tagore and before. See, for example, Hira Lal Seth, ed., *Tagore on China and Japan* (Lahore: Tagore Memorial Publications, n.d.), and Rabindranath Tagore, *Japanayatri* (Kalikata: Bisvabharati, 1962).
32. Nehru, *Independence and After*, 250.
  33. Singh, *Between Two Fires*, 268–96.
  34. Santha Rama Rau, “Life Goes on Under Mau Mau’s Shadow,” *New York Times Magazine*, July 19, 1953, 10.
  35. Santha Rama Rau, “The Trial of Jomo Kenyatta,” *Reporter*, March 16, 1954, 12–23.
  36. “Kenya to Fight Terrorism,” *New York Times*, September 2, 1952; “Native Terrorists Raid a Kenya Mission,” *New York Times*, September 13, 1952.
  37. “Desecration Laid to Kenyan Terrorists,” *New York Times*, September 17, 1952; “The Mau Mau,” *New York Times*, September 18, 1952; C. L. Sulzberger, “Kenya Crisis Mirrors Africa’s Changing Face: Mau Mau Terror Is Primitive Answer to a White Man’s Civilization Which has Ousted Ancient Trial Customs,” *New York Times*, December 28, 1952.
  38. See James H. Merriweather, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935–1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 124–49.
  39. See Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain’s Gulag in Kenya* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005); and David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (New York: Norton, 2005).
  40. Rama Rau, “The Trial,” 18.
  41. *Ibid.*, 12.
  42. Horne, *Race War!*
  43. Brent Hayes Edwards, “The Shadow of Shadows,” *positions* 11 (2003): 11–49.
  44. See, for example, Antoinette Burton, “Tongues Untied: Lord Salisbury’s ‘Black Man’ and the Boundaries of Imperial Democracy,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43 (2000): 632–59; Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); and Vijay Prashad, *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity* (Boston: Beacon, 2001).
  45. Rama Rau, “Life Goes On,” 11.
  46. For a recent fictional account of these tensions, see M. G. Vassanji, *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* (New York: Knopf, 2004). Thanks to Shefali Chandra for putting this in my hands.
  47. For an analysis of Nehru’s reception in the United States in this period, see Andrew J. Rotter, “Gender Relations, Foreign Relations: The United States and South Asia, 1947–1964,” *Journal of American History* 81 (1994): 535. See also his *Comrades at Odds: The United States and India, 1947–64* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).
  48. Rama Rau, “The Trial,” 15.
  49. Rama Rau, “Life Goes On,” 10.
  50. *Ibid.*, 12.
  51. Rama Rau, “The Trial,” 23. In an interview with Rama Rau, Pritt told her that “the biggest stumbling block in legal forms to most of the Africans” was the laws of evidence, emphasizing their incapacity to understand the difference between direct evidence and hearsay (21). Given the well-known legal training of Gandhi, this is another site of implicit contrast between Indian nationalism and African capacity.
  52. *Ibid.*, 23.

53. Indian Council for Africa, *Nehru and Africa: Extracts from Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches on Africa, 1946–1963* (New Delhi: Indian Council for Africa, 1964), 39–40. See also Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (Calcutta: Signet, 1946), 421. Africa appears only four times in the index of the book, with Asia registering easily five times as many.
54. Indian Council for Africa, *Nehru and Africa*, 1–25.
55. Singh, *Between Two Fires*, 289.
56. See James Ferguson, “Decomposing Modernity: History and Hierarchy after Development,” in *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*, ed. Ania Loomba, Suvir Kaul, Matti Bunzl, Antoinette Burton, and Jed Esty (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 171, 175.
57. Rama Rau, “The Trial,” 12.
58. For the Stern Gang, see Joseph Heller, *The Stern Gang: Ideology, Politics, and Terror, 1940–1949* (London: Frank Cass, 1995); for postwar violence against African Americans, see Carol Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1955* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 57–67. I am grateful to Kristin Hoganson for the latter reference.
59. See, for example, “Native Terrorists Raid,” 2.
60. See Penny Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anti-colonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Brenda Gaye Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); and Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).
61. Frenise A. Logan, “Racism and Indian-U.S. Relations, 1947–1953: Views in the Indian Press,” *Pacific Historical Review* 54 (1985): 71–79.
62. Caren Kaplan, “Hillary Rodham Clinton’s Orient: Cosmopolitan Travel and Global Feminist Subjects,” *Meridians* 2 (2001): 236. For a similar reading of very different feminist subjects, see Farish Noor, “Innocents Abroad: The Erasure of the Question of Race and Power in Contemporary Feminist and ‘Nostalgic’ Travelogues,” *South East Asia Research* 5 (1997): 57–88. I am grateful to Gerry Forbes for the latter reference.
63. Louisa Schein, “Gender and Internal Orientalism in China,” in *Chinese Femininities/Chinese Masculinities: A Reader*, ed. Susan Brownell and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 388, 401.
64. Malini Johar Schueller, “Articulations of African-Americanism in South Asian Postcolonial Theory,” *Cultural Critique* 55 (2003): 35–62. I am grateful to Dave Roediger for this citation.
65. Elleke Boehmer, “East Is East and South Is South: The Cases of Sarojini Naidu and Arundhati Roy,” *Women: A Cultural Review* 2 (2000): 67.
66. For a series of reflections on the fate of postcolonialism as a discourse and a practice, as well as on its entanglement with globalization, see Ania Loomba et al., *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*.