



EDITORIAL

Brent Howitt Otto and Robyn Andrews

We welcome you to the second of two general issues for 2025. We are pleased to feature two up and coming literary scholars in the field of Anglo-Indian Studies, Ajeet Singh Parihar and Sarvajit Mukerji, who turn their critical attention to the work of Ruskin Bond. They are joined by scholars whose work is already familiar to the journal's readers: Brian Gomes and Dorothy McMenamin. Brian Gomes, joined by Shilpita Gine and Joyce Kempe, present their contemporary ethnographic account of Anglo-Indians in the hill district of Darjeeling. Dorothy McMenamin (nee Doyle) offers a slightly reconfigured chapter from her recent book, *Anglo-Indian Lives in Pakistan* (2023). These three articles pertain to a diversity of geographical and geopolitical settings and academic disciplines, each offering a unique and valuable contribution to Anglo-Indian Studies scholarship.

The first article is from Ajeet Singh Parihar and Sarvajit Mukerji, both of the University of Allahabad. In this work they make a sociological and political intervention in the literary interpretation of Ruskin Bond's *A Flight of Pigeons* (1978) by arguing that the Anglo-Indian protagonists, the Labadoor family, are able to employ their 'Hybrid Identity' as a survival strategy which allows them to shift their allegiance as required by the changing political and social environment. The novel is set at the time of the Indian 'mutiny', aka First War of Independence (1857), when power was unstable, so an ability to shift their loyalty could make the difference between life and death.

Brian Gomes, Shilpita Gine and Joyce Kempe authored the second article in this issue, 'Cultural Assimilation and Shifting Identities: The Anglo-Indian Community in Post-Independence Darjeeling'. This work is based on their recent ethnographic research

which revealed a set of themes and an insightful distinction between the identities of those growing up in this region during two distinct time periods. Those who are younger have experienced more cultural assimilation to the ways of their Nepali and Hindu neighbours, and thus they are connected to their Anglo-Indian identity more by collective memory than by their quotidian reality, than are those from the older generation. This assimilation to the culture of the hills also marks these Anglo-Indians as increasingly different from their urban counterparts in Kolkata.

The third article by Dorothy McMenamain is derived from her book, *Anglo-Indian lives in Pakistan: Interrogating Religion and Culture through the lens of Oral Histories* (2023), which is based on her PhD research, much of it in Pakistan where she grew up. This article focusses on the period 1930-1947 and documents the impact of government policy and social changes on Anglo-Indians leading up to Independence and the formation of the new nation of Pakistan. She argues that the Anglo-Indian experience was deeply marked by and produced different outcomes due to the already differing religious and cultural milieu of what would be independent Pakistan and India, respectively. McMenamain has been a pioneer in this research space.

We hope you will appreciate this set of multidisciplinary articles in this issue, and the new historical, ethnographic and literary research that they represent. You are encouraged to share the link to this issue or any articles within it among your own community of scholars and interested readers, including posting it to social media. The *International Journal of Anglo-Indian Studies* remains committed as it enters its thirtieth year to remain open-access and free to all interested parties. Editors, authors and reviewers do not receive compensation for their work; nor do authors have to pay to publish in this journal. The only expenses pertain to maintaining the software platform, database, website and blind-review editorial process. Should you or someone you know wish to contribute financially to the ongoing operating expense of the journal please write to the editors. Contributions, both small and large, will be gratefully appreciated and acknowledged on the website.

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