THREE

Other Places, Other Spaces

Jabalpur and Jhansi

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Introduction

SMALL CITIES AND towns offer a glimpse into tightly knit groups of people whose friendships span generations and who were, and are, connected through employment in the railways. Railway workers are highly networked socially, through the mobility of the work and their resulting transience. In this chapter, I revisit interviews I conducted in 2012 with elderly Anglo-Indians living in Jabalpur and Jhansi, with a focus on the adaptive nature and vibrant culture of Anglo-Indian life. My own ties to India are strong as my father was born in Agra in 1925 in a family of railwaymen. When I asked him where he had grown up and gone to school, he provided me with a dizzying list of places that included Agra, Bhusawal, Indore, Damoh, Itarsi, Jhansi, Jabalpur and Mussoorie, and then added, 'There may be more!'[1] I was to learn that some of these towns were located along the then Great Indian Peninsula Railway (GIPR) line. I have been drawn back to India many times, first as a young traveller and lately as a researcher, both of my family and the railway colonies of pre-Partition India.

Based on interviews, observations and visual methods, particularly photo elicitation, this chapter explores the contemporary lives of Anglo-Indians in Jhansi (Uttar Pradesh) and Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh). These two towns are linked by a train line that has allowed long-term friendships and connections to develop and endure between families. Both towns have large railway junctions that were part of the colonial communication system and were home to the highly mobile Anglo-

Indian railway workforce. Under British rule, railway workers and their families were regularly transferred between railway colony locales; as a result, a network of relationships between towns began, and is still evident, amongst people I interviewed in 2012. Within and around the railway colonies, whether isolated or connected to larger cities, was a complex contact zone linking domiciled communities in smaller enclaves.[2] The diminution of these clusters, through the migration of younger generations, has not been easy to track statistically because Anglo-Indians were last officially included as a category in the census in 1951.[3] Despite the fact that their physical presence has shrunk, it is apparent that Anglo-Indian culture remains remarkably vibrant in both these places through the presence of its elders.

It is essential to research these types of locales in order to closely observe the specificities of Anglo-Indian responses to change and the resilience of a culture partially informed by an attachment to a nostalgically constructed past. This kind of attachment to the past amongst the elderly, serves to maintain community ties and to inform a sense of being Anglo-Indian in post-1947 India. Throughout this chapter, I weave a personal narrative based on observations drawn from journal vignettes that capture my visit to Jhansi and Jabalpur and illustrate some of the anachronistic elements of small-town life in contemporary India. I argue that nostalgia about the past passed on to younger generations is a strong contributor to the resilience of Anglo-Indian culture.

The Role of Nostalgia

Nostalgia emerged as a feature of many of the unstructured interviews and conversations I had with the elderly, but there was also a detectable element of vicarious nostalgia evident in the voices of younger Anglo-Indians. Nostalgia is a complex, affective response to the past and 'sensory memories do not always invoke the nostalgia of good times past'.[4] Most significantly, these accounts, sometimes tinged by a rueful nostalgia, captured the voices of the last of a generation of Anglo-Indians who lived under colonial rule.

I explore the current Anglo-Indian life in these two railway towns (now small cities) by considering narratives, anecdotes and memories influenced by nostalgia. I found that nostalgia was an element in the

transmission of cultural information, such as ancestry and social habits, between older and younger generations. Nostalgia contributes to psychological survival and resilience,[5] which can have a positive impact on the preservation of a particular kind of culture—in this case, one forged under colonial rule. It involves looping backwards and forwards in time , with 'positive perceptions of the past', which eventually create a 'continuity between past and present selves'.[6] Alison Blunt's seminal work focuses on 'productive nostalgia', generated in the intimate spaces of domestic life, as a form of longing for a home.[7] However, I have focused on the elderly who remained in India, whether through choice or circumstance, where they claimed to feel at home. Their nostalgia was 'productive' in the sense that it allowed them to live in a tolerable present informed by memories of the past.

Memories of life under colonial rule that encode modes of behavior and social conventions were passed on from older to younger generations and have been adapted to life in the complexities of contemporary India. This may translate as modifications in dress, intermarriage, fluency in local languages and to an identification that embraces being an Indian Anglo-Indian. Anglo-Indians have fought hard, politically and within their enclaves, to preserve their identity, as it has weathered threats caused by both extrinsic and intrinsic historical changes.

Domiciled Europeans, Anglo-Indians and the Census

For a while, the state legitimated the identity of Anglo-Indians to a limited extent through inclusion in the census. However, the census was an unreliable indicator of the population of Anglo-Indians, as Peter Friedlander's study of the Indian census reveals that 'census officials "corrected" data by changing details and glossing over grey areas in order to make a normative picture of what they wanted to see appear in the census reports data'.[8] In 1911, a census category appeared that included the term Anglo-Indian as 'persons of European descent in the male line but of mixed European and Indian blood'. This term was clarified in the Government of India Act in 1935, and in Article 366 (2) of the Constitution in 1950.[9] However, people from domiciled communities were often merged into one undifferentiated group[10] and, as Satoshi Mizutani argues, 'Domiciled Europeans were purely white but were seen

to be far too indigent and uncivilized to be genuine members of the ruling race. . . . Both were too unrefined and/or hybrid to be regarded as authentically white by Indians . . .'.[11] In addition, as Mizutani points out, the problematic was that the 'two communities were coupled'.[12] While Frank Anthony remains doubtful over European claims to racial purity, commenting that European families rarely had any traces of Anglo-Indian heritage,[13] Elizabeth Buettner refers to them as racially ambiguous. She argues that this identity was predicated on 'more than ancestry and biological attributes,'[14] and that it was 'border crossings that allowed individuals to maintain direct contact with Britain' that constituted their status.[15]

However, Friedlander points out that from very early on in the census of India, identity was predicated on religion and language, and that this 'impacted on the creation of a sense of self identity amongst communities' including Anglo-Indians. After scrutinizing data from the nineteenth century, he concludes that to be an Anglo-Indian was based on 'race, religion . . . [and] being English speaking'.[16] The term Anglo-Indian was first used in the census in 1911 and was removed in 1961; the exclusion of 'Anglo-Indian' as a category in the census is evidenced in the extract below:

> . . . the 1951 Census marked a complete departure from the traditional recording of Race, Tribe or Caste and the only relevant question on caste or tribe incorporated in the Census Schedule was to enquire if the person enumerated was a member of any "Scheduled Caste", or any "Scheduled Tribe" or any other "Backward class" or if he was an "Anglo-Indian". In 1961 and 1971 Censuses the information was collected only for each Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Government of India 2011).[17]

Laura Bear asserts that domiciled communities 'occupied a space that lay between the boundary lines that marked European and Indian: a marginal sphere formed by the construction of the boundaries themselves'.[18] For Domiciled Europeans (those of unmixed descent) and Anglo-Indians (of mixed descent) of the working class, being born and living generationally in India put one beyond the boundary of what was truly British.[19] Mizutani argues that neither group represented the 'right kind of whiteness' to the British.[20] However, for Anglo-Indians, this boundary may have been more sharply drawn because of the mixed ancestry of the community.

Those from Anglo-Indian and Domiciled-European backgrounds were, to some degree, conflated under the term 'domiciled community . . . people of European descent who were permanent residents in India'.[21] Lionel Caplan also argues that drawing a binary between 'races' obfuscates the picture of a '*colonial* milieu . . . informed by porous boundaries and fluid identities'.[22] Anthony, President-in-Chief of the All Indian Anglo-Indian Association. 1942–93, commented that under colonial rule 'in the *mofussil* areas where clubs existed the social barriers were less rigid', allowing for more relaxed social encounters.[23] Thus, under colonial rule, smaller towns may have experienced a less segregationist society than was actualized in the bureaucracy of the railways and colonies that housed middle-to-upper-level workers. Away from the purview of colonial control in the metropole, there may have been more opportunities for social mixing than would have been tolerated elsewhere.

In some railway photographs taken in the late 1920s and early 1930s in Jhansi and Jabalpur, and one in particular from Damoh,[24] this mixing is evident in the arrangement of bodies, at least where people were perhaps less self-consciously separated on an ethnic or colour continuum rather than on their ranking in the employment hierarchy of the railways (Plate 3.1).[25]

Shared Behaviours and Beliefs

The phrase 'shared core values' is often used to evoke connection and commonality amongst people of a similar background.[26] It might, therefore, be more useful to think of values and behaviours inflected by the uniqueness of locale. At another level, these values can also be considered shared by Anglo-Indians beyond the spatial confines of the local in places like Calcutta, or Jhansi and Jabalpur, or Sydney. Similarly, the claim that Anglo-Indians share core values and practices based on embodied signifiers such as forms of dress, choices of food, religion (Christianity) and language (English), can result in essentialist claims about 'common values', even if these values are self-identified,[27] implying that they are unchanging entities.

However, as Blair Williams astutely observes, the narrowing of the gap between non-Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Indians in the context of contemporary India's Westernization in 'language, food, dress, and

PLATE 3.1: Images taken in the 1920s showing railway workers and their families in Damoh (Sagar division), a railway town connected to Jabalpur through the GIPR line. *Source*: Author

recreational pursuits'[28] has impacted the way younger generations of Anglo-Indians see themselves and the relationships they form with non-Anglo-Indians of their own generation. In response to local conditions, many young Anglo-Indian women now wear clothing that mixes Indian and European styles so as to not draw attention to themselves. In fact,

in many department stores (e.g. Westside, Big Bazaar and Pantaloons), sections are labelled 'ethnic' for the sale of *anarkalis*, *churidars*, *patialas*, *salwars*, *kurtas*, *dupattas*, *pupates* and other women's wear. Young Anglo-Indian women adopt an intra-ethnic style that is influenced by European and Indian fashions so they can blend in on the street.[29] Men, on the other hand, have not had to face this dilemma as most Anglo-Indian and Indian men in large cities dress in the Western style.

Christianity, marriage, dress and food as 'emblematic' of Anglo-Indian culture often came up for discussion among older Anglo-Indian participants when referring to how they defined the Anglo-Indian culture.[30] From a small-town perspective, one of the biggest challenges to Anglo-Indian culture lies in the diminishing size of the community and a move by those of the younger generations towards a more integrated way of being. In Jhansi and Jabalpur this does not necessarily mean the culture is being lost; rather, that it is adapting to change.

Research

In 2012 I took my first research trip to Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. I flew from Delhi to Jabalpur, then after two weeks, I boarded a train to Jhansi, where I arrived at 4 a.m. to apparent chaos at the station. My wonderful contact in Jabalpur, Dunstan Gamble (aka 'the Cricket') , had contacted Peggy Cantem in Jhansi, who sent her driver to the station in the 'bumshaker' to greet me and take me to her house. Through the simple gesture of referring me to other Anglo-Indians and 'looking after me', I was already being introduced into the complex set of ties between people. I was richly rewarded by the hospitality and generosity of the people I found still living in cantonment areas and civil lines where my father's family once lived and worked.

Listening to people from these two places and providing participants with evidence of my own family heritage (in the form of family photographs taken in Jabalpur and Jhansi) established my positionality as someone not quite of the community—in that I was generationally separated from most of the people I interviewed—but entwined through a common connection to the railways. The use of photo elicitation, i.e. the insertion of photographs into interviews, was key to stimulating memories.[31] I was interested to hear how people remembered themselves under colonial rule and how that has resonated across generations. In both Jhansi and Jabalpur I immersed myself in the social life of the

people I met in informal; settings, in what Clifford Geertz referred to as a form of fieldwork that required periods of 'deep hanging out'.[32] This included playing 'housie', shopping at markets and having long lunches and afternoon teas with participants and their friends. Though not a habitual churchgoer, I attended church services, visited cemeteries and local tourist sites and shared my history and connection with the places to the places I visited. In this context, unstructured interviews were the best method for eliciting responses from people about their lives. The key participants were elderly, with three of them in eighties and one in her nineties. and one in her 90s. So simply being in their homes was the most suitable way to begin many of our conversations.

Despite the fact that the participants in my research were for the most part, very old, and that their numbers were declining, their presence as elders is still influential and has affected the manner in which Anglo-Indian culture is preserved and passed on. Reminiscences and more tangible markers such as local bungalows, food, fusion-style clothing, photographs, language (English) and religion (Christianity); come together to inform this culture in its present state. However, it is extended family and work relationships facilitated by the railways that also play a large role in the preservation and coherence of shared cultures, particularly in places such as Jhansi and Jabalpur. Geographic distance is also taken into consideration in the spatial limitations implied by the word 'community' and the particular boundaries this creates around spaces because, as Massey argues, 'Communities can exist without being in the same place'.[33]

Being in Jabalpur—Three Sisters

On my visit to Jabalpur I went to a service at Christ Church (Plate 3.2) and met the sisters Fran and Mary, both in their eighties. They were willing to share their stories and memories of life before and after Independence.

It was a feature of all the Anglo-Indians that I met to be very committed Christians and to attend church regularly. When I was asked about my own religious practices, I had to clarify that Australia was a more secular country than India and that I did not always attend church. I noticed in many of the houses I visited that there were visible markers of Christianity and, as Andrews and Otto in their analysis of Christianity

PLATE 3.2: Christ Church, Jabalpur, 2012. *Source*: Author

practised by Anglo-Indians point out, 'the materiality of their religiosity was evident'.[34] Christianity in itself was often referred to by participants as an important (but not the sole) indicator of being what Fran referred to as 'an absolute Anglo-Indian'. The following account of contemporary life in Jabalpur is derived from conversations with Fran and Mary. They were both generous in their hospitality and were wonderful storytellers. Over endless cups of tea and biscuits, the story of the three sisters emerged.

Mary, Fran and a third sister Verity (who is now deceased) were raised in India under the colonial rule. Mary, the quieter of the two remaining sisters was married to the chaplain (now deceased) of Jabalpur's Christ Church parish and had led a relatively comfortable life. Fran had divorced two husbands and her children did not live in India (one son had passed away in Australia and the other lives in Bahrain). The church she attends supplies her with accommodation through the Lima Memorial Foundation, which was originally set up to provide for 'Poor Widows and Poor Orphans' of Christ Church parish. Fran's loquacious and colourful storytelling ranged from talk about her past husbands to the darker powers of magic.[35] Fran and Mary both

referred to the ghost of their deceased sister Verity, who had once made an appearance to Fran. This belief in ghosts and black magic did not seem to be at odds with Christianity.

Whilst walking with Fran around her local area, she pointed out the bungalow that was once Anthony's home (Plate 3.3) and, at the same time, also commented on its dereliction. The two sisters often decried the parlous state of buildings and roads. The day I met Mary and Fran for lunch involved walking across a number of busy roads. Mary commented, in a discussion over some photographs at lunch, that she felt life had become disorderly and chaotic in Jabalpur and she talked about how hard it was to just walk along the street in the confusing traffic. As she made the comment, she was looking at a photograph of a group of railway workers from the 1920s seated in a formal, tiered arrangement of bodies fanning out from the figures in the middle. The notion that life was more orderly then (pre-1947) was often invoked by the sisters.

Emma Tarlo, writing more generally about clothing worn in India, argues that under colonial rule, losing one's standards in dress could not only affect those living in India but could also have an effect on those who returned to English society.[36] Losing 'standards' had the potential

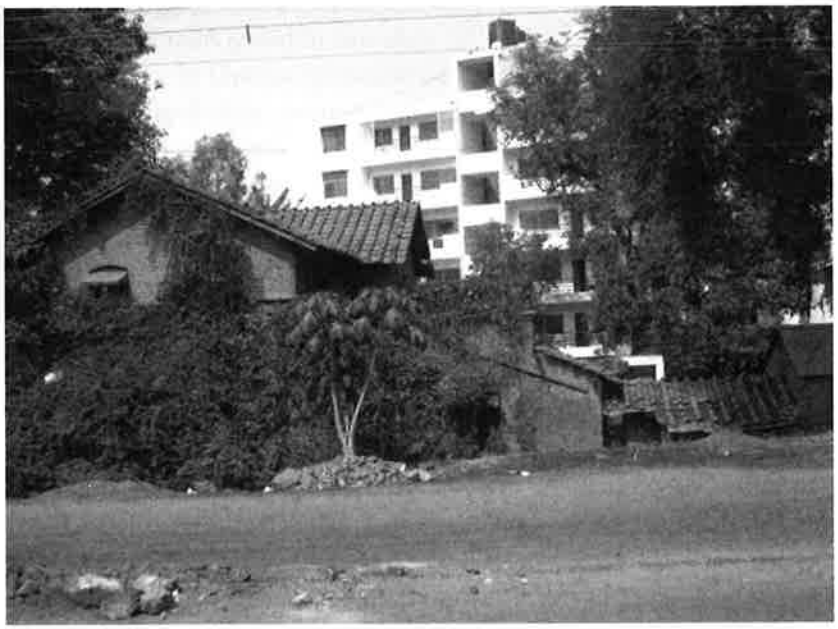

PLATE 3.3: Frank Anthony's home in Jabalpur. Source: Author

to destabilize a British-referenced identity. This idea resonated through the discussions I had with the two sisters. Elizabeth Collingham, in her study of the management of the embodied experience of colonialism, argues that through the body, differences were inscribed and even reflected in Indian repose, such as sitting cross-legged.[37] Both sisters agreed that the difference between Anglo-Indians and Indians lay in what they referred to as 'culture', giving examples such as cleanliness, personal habits, eating with fingers, sitting cross-legged on furniture and attitude to community and family. In none of these comparisons were Indians regarded as having the same practices as Anglo-Indians. The sisters had very fixed notions of what constituted being Anglo-Indian; the first concerned appropriate dress, which for them meant wearing skirts or Western-style trousers. They were very adamant about this. They also talked about the requirement of having a Christian name (saying, 'All our names are English') and displaying certain behaviours. Mary commented that at church, 'You can tell an Anglo-Indian by their dress and name although now Anglo-Indians girls are wearing salwar kameez.' Fran commented that she was often asked where she came from (despite living in Jabalpur for most of her adult life) because she wore Western-style dress.

As Caplan points out, the 'emblematic qualities' of being Anglo-Indian and performing identity through codes of behaviour, dress and so on . . . have changed. However, dress styles and the practice of attending church are two of the more visible markers that remain on display amongst a number of Anglo-Indians. In the eighteen years since Caplan's study, practices may have changed somewhat towards the 'immodesty' of some types of Western dress.[38] Be that as it may, Fran and Mary openly expressed sensitivity around clothing very early on in our acquaintance. Mary told me that when attending church:

> . . . Fran and I were the only two in frocks; the others were in salwar kameez and saris. Do you remember the Smiths? Pam Smith is an out-and-out Anglo-Indian but she was wearing a sari! We've got a lady here, Heather, out-and-out Anglo-Indian but, in a sari! And Wendy out-and-out Anglo-Indian but married a Malayala now . . . you will NEVER ever find Wendy in a sari.The men you can't tell but the ladies—definitely. [39]

Fran and Mary, like many in their age group, expressed a partially anachronistic notion of what constitutes an Anglo-Indian. In addition,

they commented extensively on clothing and associated more formal dress as a sign of a 'time when people dressed properly and they knew how to behave'. The sisters lived in a world that was changing faster than they seemed to be ready for or could accept, and yet they manage to navigate their way through it by commenting, contradicting, opining, laughing and going to church in their Sunday best.

'A Holy Mix Up'

Fran and Mary agreed that it was one's male ancestors that created an 'out-and-out Anglo-Indian'. Fran later commented that 'Mummy's people were English but Daddy was a simple Anglo-Indian'. It was agreed by both sisters that 'you take your father's background', and both Fran and Mary adamantly denied being Indian. They said they were 'one hundred per cent Anglo-Indian' and that their mother, according to Fran, '. . . was very fair. She lived like a Britisher. My mother was thoroughly English . . . so clean and strict.' When I reported that other Anglo-Indians in Jabalpur had told me they also had other 'blood' in their family including Portuguese, German and French, Fran wryly observed that the community was 'a holy mix up', thus identifying the heterogeneity of the community.[40] When referring to her own family and differences in skin tone and fortunes, Fran remarked that one family is like: 'five fingers on a hand, each one is different', but they all belong together. Fran's skin was darker than her sister's and she commented several times on her own skin colour in comparison to Mary's paler complexion. Their younger sister Verity was likened in looks to 'an American movie star with red hair and pale skin'.

This paler sister married a Hindu, and her son Ross now lives in Australia. He maintains a close connection with the Jabalpur Anglo-Indian community and has found success as an academic. He practises Hinduism and rightfully, according to the Constitutional definition, identifies himself as Indian rather than as an Anglo-Indian; as his father was Indian and his mother was Anglo-Indian. So, despite being brought up by his Anglo-Indian Aunty, Mary and being acculturated to the Anglo-Indian lifestyle, he identifies as an Indian[41] and now has an Indian partner. I rang Ross in Australia and went to visit him. He suggested that the Anglo-Indian community has 'failed to mix' because of a reluctance to learn Hindi or eat 'real Indian food', and because they

'stick together' and dress in European style. What Ross inadvertently identifies here are some of the characteristics that older Anglo--Indians refer to as constituting their uniqueness.

Ross is the new generation; his Australian lifestyle is very different to the one he would have had if he had stayed in Jabalpur. However, he loyally returns every year to visit his aunts and maintains close ties with his friends in Jabalpur. He has found a way to be happy and to stay connected. Through travel between countries and communities he has become transnational.

The second town I visited was Jhansi, linked to Jabalpur by rail as well as social networks.

Being in Jhansi with Peggy Cantem

Jhansi's seven-platform railway station is extremely busy, as trains pass through on their way between innumerable stations on the North Central Railway line from Mumbai to Kolkata. As previously noted, Anglo-Indian railway workers and their families were regularly transferred between railway colonies, resulting in a network of relationships still visible amongst Anglo-Indians. Under colonial control, Jhansi and Jabalpur were (and still are) fulcrums of activity with railway junctions, telegraph lines and military cantonments,[42] but the Anglo-Indian population in both places has diminished considerably.

The links between the towns became more apparent upon meeting Dunstan in Jabalpur (after seeing his name in the community magazine *Anglos in the Wind*), who then introduced me, by phone, to the indefatigable Aunty Peggy Cantem (Plate 3.4 and 3.5). Peggy, in turn, introduced me to Roy Abbott (a domiciled European) in Jhansi. I was reluctant to leave Jabalpur, but a train ticket was purchased and I was off to Uttar Pradesh. Roy (who was perhaps the only remaining domiciled European in Jhansi) and Peggy, represent two sides of the community. Both Peggy and Roy grew up in Jhansi under different conditions, and out of choice (in Roy's case) or circumstance (in Peggy's), had lived out their lives in Jhansi.

One of the first things I learned about Peggy was that she looked after the British cemetery in Jhansi, which she had determinedly transformed into a serene park. It serves as a memorial to the Europeans who died during the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857. The original mausoleum

PLATE 3.4: Peggy Cantem (right front) and friends. *Source:* Author

PLATE 3.5: Peggy's front door. *Source:* Author

was located near Jhansi Fort, once home to the Rani of Jhansi. The mausoleum was erected over a well where British and Anglo-Indian soldiers were killed during the Mutiny, but it fell into ruin after 1947 and was being used as a urinal. This motivated Peggy to relocate the marble memorial plaques to the cemetery, where they are now seen at the entrance gate. Peggy's legacy to the community was to restore the Jhansi cemetery where, since 2016, she is also at rest.

Whilst in Jhansi, I observed people attending church, wearing European-style clothing, sharing food and playing 'housie' with other Anglo-Indians. These social activities united people and created a sense of family or oneness in the Jhansi group.

In terms of clothing, Peggy said she had never worn a sari and always wore Western-style trousers and shirts; but her Anglo-Indian cook wore a sari and I observed at Jhansi's St. Jude's church that many younger members of the congregation wore a mix of Indian and western-style dress.

Of relevance to this discussion of Jhansi from the Anglo-Indian perspective is the church of St. Jude's, which hosts a shrine and apparently has a relic (a bone) of the titular saint buried in its foundations. This is a major attraction during October, which is when pilgrims and visitors pour into Jhansi for feasting and festivities. I attended one Sunday service with Peggy and was amazed by the number of attendees in comparison to Australia where church attendance is very low. The service I attended was lively and ended with social exchanges, which in Peggy's case meant organizing visitors and an afternoon tea.[43]

Peggy told me that she had intended to migrate to the UK with her husband in 1963, but her plans changed when her husband died and so she stayed on in Jhansi. By 2012, Peggy was almost completely crippled by arthritis and was unable to walk unassisted. However, she had lived alone for decades (assisted by servants during the day) in a small rented house that turned into a salon every evening, providing an informal social site for the Anglo-Indian community in Jhansi. Her door was open to all visitors and the phone rang constantly as people filed in and out to socialize, play games, share food, gossip and connect. In her younger days, Peggy also took care of elderly Anglo-Indians who were unable to look after themselves and who had no one to help them; in particular, she told me about an old army veteran who had become housebound and had no living relatives left in India. These

elderly people were living in poverty and had become isolated from the community.

Roy Abbott: 'My India'

I must mention a little of Roy's life history here as he was introduced to me via Peggy, who urged me to go to his farm if possible. Roy's family history was long and tangled, with many comings and goings between Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The Abbott family was once prominent in India. James Abbott was a career soldier who came to India in the eighteenth century and worked on the North-West Frontier and Punjab in an area where 'the new district capital of Hazara was named "Abbottabad"'.[44] Roy is the last remaining Abbott in Jhansi and the owner of a huge tract of land near the bustling market town of Sagar.

Peggy was a close friend of Roy's wife (who is now deceased), and there was a lot of affection remaining between them; however, Roy remained at a distance from the Peggy's social circle of Anglo-Indian friends. He lived a rather isolated sahib-like existence that was entirely at odds with the time he actually lived in. It became apparent after visiting his farm that he was in danger of losing his hold on the land because of a dispute with the government. Rob Abbott, Roy's cousin, who had migrated to New Zealand, referred to Roy as still living like a 'nawab', and as far as I could see, that was true. In contrast to Peggy's extremely simple dwelling, Roy's house (Plate 3.6) was set in a huge garden in the middle of Jhansi,[45] just off the eponymous Abbott Road. Roy's servants wore white gloves, hats and uniforms, and served us lunch from silver platters in the dining room of his house.

Peggy was delighted that after her introduction, Roy invited me to accompany him to 'his India'—Abbott Farm. Roy had dressed for his role as landowner, donning a beret with regimental badge and placing his pistol and a rifle next to his seat in the car. The Abbott property was about an hour away from Sagar on a bone-shaking potholed road towards a village called Behrole. The main revenue for the farm was from the villages, and Roy laughingly referred to the Abbotts as 'petit rajas'—a role he inhabited the week I was there. The farmhouse was deliberately located and built on an old burial ground. In the garden was a *suttee* stone. As we approached the farm, he pointed to a tree in

PLATE 3.6: Roy Abbott's house in Jhansi, 2012. *Source*: Author

a field and commented that he had shot a panther from that very tree. Villagers and workers began to appear along the route to the farm and the car stopped at every group for a short chat. Roy commented that the word 'was out' that he was visiting and so everybody was looking busy. The farm was clearly a place where he felt comfortable, and despite being in poor health, he played his part with relish, upon our arrival.

The fields on the farm were full of ripening wheat, crops of peas and a grove of eucalyptus. Dotted throughout the land were several villages, five of which still 'belonged' to the estate where Roy and his forebears had built temples and schools. We stopped in Sagar on our return to Jhansi so Roy could visit an elderly village headman who had fallen ill and was in the hospital. I felt honoured to have been invited to the farm and Peggy was very pleased that I had been afforded the experience.

Roy was not an Anglo-Indian but a comiciled European. His life in the largest house in Jhansi: waited on by uniformed servants in a house full of antique furniture and unoccupied rooms; referenced a different era and a relatively high level of material comfort. Peggy, on the other hand, scraped together money from donations made by the many visitors to her house and the British Association of Cemeteries

in South Asia (BACSA), to preserve the cemetery. Even though she was childless and widowed, Peggy did not suffer from isolation and loneliness, which can be attributed to her strong engagement with the church, the cemetery project and her sociable nature. Peggy was a visible and dynamic contact for all those who came to Jhansi. She embodied the interconnectedness, anachronisms and resilience of her community—all brought together through her silver mobile phone in her tiny house.

Ways of Remembering

In a BBC Radio interview conducted by Claire Jenkins in Jhansi with Peggy and her younger neighbour Gwendolyn Khan, Jenkins asked Peggy, 'Do you feel that there is a British side to you?' to which Peggy responded, 'Oh yes, we always feel that. We've seen the good days.'[46] Peggy expressed no regrets about, 'staying on in our own little world' after Independence. Despite her circumstances, Peggy had a great sense of humour informed by a pragmatic optimism. Hardiness, nostalgic responses to loss and a positive perception of one's current circumstances were characteristics I observed in the elderly participants in my journeys to Jhansi and Jabalpur.

The memories of their colonial life as Anglo-Indians—as passed on to their children and grandchildren—is indicative of a desire to 'claim India as home, both as a historical principle and as a contemporary imagining'.[47] However, glorification of the past also glosses over its difficulties and creates a kind of vicarious nostalgia as expressed here by a young Anglo-Indian, Greg Fran: 'I feel kind of homesick for those old times although I never knew them'.[48] This is a reference to the kind of nostalgia Anjali Gera Roy observes in the '"Kharagpur Diaspora", a virtual community formed in cyberspace by those who had lived in Kharagpur at a certain stage of their lives, [which] produces an idyllic colonial outpost with a quintessential Raj lifestyle'.[49] Gera Roy explores the limits of nostalgia when comparing the memories of a Raj-inspired notion of home in the colony with the current reality of Kharagpur.

I heard similar sentiments to to Greg's[50] from Anglo-Indians of the younger generation. For example, Peggy's neighbor Gwendolyn expressed a desire for the 'old days' and, at the same time, acknowledged that times had changed. However, never having lived under colonial rule, her experience is different from Peggy's. She remarked that she had not been to the UK, but because her father was British she felt

in her 'heart . . . it's in my roots', that it [Britain] was her home and that she was from a community that was 'different from Indians and Muslims'. She commented that, 'Aunty Peggy is my teacher' about all things Anglo-Indian. Gwendolyn's identity and nostalgia are predicated upon what she has learnt from Peggy and her father, both a generation removed from her own. She went on to say that the number of Anglo-Indians was 'shrinking . . . and that there may be a time where there are none'.[51]

Both women lamented the current size of the community, particularly in Jhansi, where, as Peggy pointed out. the community now comprises only thirty families. Peggy commented that the population was so small that there might be a time when there would be more Anglo-Indians in the Jhansi cemetery than were living in town! In Jhansi and Jabalpur, a sense of belonging has been forged through the loss of family and community and through an expression of an identity as Anglo-Indian. Despite the reduced number of Anglo-Indians remaining in Jhansi and Jabalpur, people have maintained close intra-community connections, joined as they are by the railways (Plate 3.7).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have looked at some of the factors that influenced what it meant to be Anglo-Indian under colonial rule, the impact nostalgia exerts on a remembered past[52] and its powerful resonances across generations. Railway people, through the nature of their work, were not confined to a single location, which may have contributed to the early development of a connectivity between cultural communities that did not necessarily live in the same place. Under the pressure of globalization and migration, non-contiguous communities that do not share the same space can still share 'positionality' and vice versa, as Doreen Massey posits: 'as being in the same place does not suggest a similar positionality'. Massey argues that nostalgia marshals space, time and location and 'the imagination of going "home"' frequently means going 'back' in 'space and time' rather than returning to a real place.[53] I thought of this space, time and location continuum as I listened to the way the older generation of Anglo-Indians in Jhansi and Jabalpur talked about the past. Some regretted not emigrating when they were younger, but as Blunt observes, these decisions included a layered sense of 'loss, regret . . . adjustment and survival'.[54] Most agreed that staying in the

PLATE 3.7: The Railway Institute in Jhansi, which, according to Peggy Cantem, was 'the most beautiful place in the world'. *Source*: Author

community was important; people lived their Anglo-Indian identity and supported one another in times of illness and need. Through their reminiscences I could discern how the origins of the community were welded to colonialism and colonial practices. What has been preserved in Anglo-Indian culture and notions of home and belonging is inflected by the experience of living through the colonial era. However, this has changed as younger generations experience a different sense of self in post-independent India. However, first-hand, long-term observations by elders such as Peggy Cantem suggest that despite the decrease in the population, the culture that endures across generations is both vibrant and cohesive.

Participants

Dunstan Gamble, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, February 2012
Fran, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, February 2012
Mary, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, February 2012
Bernice, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, February 2012
Peggy Cantem, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, February 2012
Roy Abbott, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, February 2012

Notes

1. In this chapter, the focus is on Jhansi and Jabalpur.
2. As I heard from research participants, the majority of the people visited one another when they could, socialized and maintained those connections through associations and church groups.
3. Current census data reveals religion as one marker of distinction. However, this has never been a reliable indicator of the status of a population.
4. Sarah Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography*, London: Sage, 2009, p. 480.
5. Krystine Batcho, 'Nostalgia: A Psychological Perspective', *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, vol. LXXX, 1995, pp. 131–43.
6. Constantine Sedikides et al., 'Nostalgia, Past, Present, and Future', *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, vol. XVII, no. 5, 2008, p. 306.
7. Alison Blunt, *Domicile and Diaspora: Anglo-Indian Women and the Spatial Politics of Home*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, p.14.
8. Peter Friedlander, 'Religion, Race, Language and the Anglo Indians: Eurasians in the Census of British India', La Trobe University, 2002, p. 10; see www.chef.lib.latrobe.edu.au/dcd/Anglo-Indian, accessed 6 August 2018.
9. Frank Anthony, *Britain's Betrayal in India: The Story of the Anglo-Indian Community*, New Delhi: Allied Publications, New Delhi, 1969, pp. 3–5.
10. Blunt, *Domicile and Diaspora*, p. 5.
11. Satoshi Mizutani, 'Historicizing Whiteness from the Case of Late Colonial India', *Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association E-journal*, vol. II, no. 1, 2006, p. 5; see https://acrawsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/CRAWS-Vol-2-No-1-2006.pdf, accessed 6 August 2018.
12. Ibid., p. 7.
13. Anthony, *Britain's Betrayal in* India, p. 5,
14. Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 1.
15. Elizabeth Buettner, 'Problematic Spaces, Problematic Races: Defining "Europeans" in Late Colonial India', *Women's History Review*, vol. IX, no. 2, 2000, p. 277.
16. Friedlander, 'Religion, Race, Language and the Anglo Indians', p. 1.
17. Dorothy McMenamin, 'Identifying Domiciled Europeans in Colonial India: Poor Whites or Privileged Community?', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. III, no. 1, 2001, pp. 106–27.
18. Laura Bear, 'Miscegenations of Modernity: Constructing European Respectability and Race in the Indian Railway Colony, 1857–1931', *Women's History Review*, vol. III, no. 4, 1944, p. 544.
19. Mizutani, 'Historicizing Whiteness', p. 7.
20. Ibid.
21. Blunt, *Domicile and Diaspora*, p. 5.
22. Lionel Caplan, *Children of Colonialism: Anglo-Indians in a Postcolonial World*, Oxford: Berg, 2001/2005, p. 12.

23. Anthony, *Britain's Betrayal in India*, p. 354.
24. Damoh is a town located towards the north of Madhya Pradesh. It lay on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway line. Damoh was connected to Jabalpur by rail. In the earlier undated picture on the left, my grandfather, a locomotive foreman, sits on the ground while other European and Anglo-Indian staff are clustered on the ground or on chairs while (non-Anglo-Indian) Indian workers are arranged behind them. Some of the same people appear in the image on the right, which was taken in 1924.
25. Both have an informality about them even though photography at this time was bound by its technology, so subjects had to be still and 'arranged'.
26. Caplan, *Children of Colonialism*, p. 7.
27. Robyn Andrews, 'Being Anglo-Indian: Practices and Stories from Calcutta', PhD thesis, Massey University, 2005, p. 198; see http://mro.massey.ac.nz/handle/10179/959, accessed 12 September 2004.
28. Blair R. Williams, *Anglo-Indians: Vanishing Remnants of a Bygone Era*, Kolkata: CTR Books, 2002, p. 34.
29. Bernice, a younger Anglo-Indian resident of Jhansi, commented in an interview that, 'It is easier to wear Indian style clothing', as it is more suited to the climate and 'you don't get stared at'.
30. Howard Johnson, 'Fears for the Decline of Anglo-Indian Cooking', *BBC News* (website), 7 February 2011; see https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-south-asia-12369759/fears-for-the-decline-of-anglo-indian-cooking, accessed 6 August 2018. In a BBC news item about Anglo-Indians in Bangalore, Johnson, the program presenter, focuses on Anglo-Indian food. He comments that, 'What really defines them is their food . . . but their recipes are dying out', the inference being that the community itself is dying out.
31. Douglas Harper, 'Talking About Pictures: A Case for Photo Elicitation', *Visual Studies*, vol. XVII, no. 1, 2002, p. 13.
32. Ben Walmsley, 'Deep Hanging out in the Arts: An Anthropological Approach to Capturing Cultural Value', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. XXIV, no. 2, 2018, p. 272.
33. Doreen Massey, 'A Global Sense of Place' in *Space, Place and Gender*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, p. 153.
34. Robyn Andrews and Brent Howitt Otto, 'Religion as Capital: Christianity in the Lives of Anglo-Indian Youth in India', *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, vol. XXXII, no. 1, 2017, p. 107.
35. Bear, 'Miscegenations of Modernity'. Bear suggests that the belief in ghosts was particularly strong amongst the Kharagpur Anglo-Indian community; however, I found it was just as strong in Jabalpur.
36. Emma Tarlo, *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India*, London: Hurst and Company, 1996, p. 37.
37. Elizabeth Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c.1800–1947*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001, p. 57.
38. Caplan, *Children of Colonialism*, pp. 201–2.

39. However, when going to church with them I noted that they were in a minority in their skirts and blouses while other women they referred to as Anglo-Indian appeared to be more comfortably dressed in salwar kameez or saris. I observed that many of the younger generation wore a combination of both European and Indian styles of clothing, just as their Indian contemporaries would.
40. Caplan, *Children of Colonialism.*
41. Anjali Gera Roy, 'Performing Britishness in a Railway Colony: Production of Anglo-Indians as a Railway Caste', in *Mixed Race in Asia: Past, Present and Future*, ed. Zarine L. Rocha and Farida Fozdar, London and New York: Routledge, 2017.
42. These two places, amongst others, were located at strategic points along the old Great Indian Peninsular Railway line.
43. For more about this shrine; see http://shrine.jhansidiocese.org/About_shrine.aspx, accessed 6 August 6 2018.
44. Charles Allen, *Soldier Sahibs: The Men Who Made the North-west Frontier*, UK: Grantham Books, 2000, p. 206.
45. Miki Desai and Madhavi Desai, 'The Colonial Bungalow in India', *The Newsletter* (International Institute for Asian Studies), no. 57, Summer 2011, pp. 26–7.
46. Peggy quoted in *Teatime at Peggy's*, BBC Radio 4, 15 May 2015.
47. Rhett Jude D'Costa, 'Shimmering Spaces: Art and Anglo-Indian Experiences', PhD thesis, RMIT University, 2016, p. 274; see https://researchbank.rmit.edu.au/eserv/rmit:161784/DCosta.pdf, accessed 6 August 2018.
48. Mian Ridge, 'Fadeout for a Culture That's Neither Indian Nor British', *The New York Times*, 14 August 2010, p. 48.
49. Anjali Gera Roy, 'The Remembered Railway Town of Anglo-Indian Memory', *South Asian Diaspora*, vol. IV, no. 2, 2012, p. 140.
50. Ridge. 'Fadeout for a Culture That's Neither Indian Nor British', p. 48.
51. Gwendolyn Khan, quoted *Teatime at Peggy's*, BBC Radio 4, 15 May 2015.
52. Alastair Bonnet, *The Geography of Nostalgia: Global and Local Perspectives of Modernity and Loss*, Routledge: New York, 2016.
53. Doreen Massey, *For Space*, London: Sage, 2005/2008, p. 24; Quoted in Eric Sheppard, 'The Spaces and Times of Globalization: Place, Scale, Networks, and Positionality', *Economic Geography*, vol. LXXVIII, no. 3, 2002, pp. 307–30.
54. Blunt, *Domicile and Diaspora*, p. 178.

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