

**Photographs, Railways, Partition:
domiciled Europeans in the late Raj**

**By
Deborah Nixon**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
The University of Technology Sydney
2015

Certificate of Original Authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of student

Production Note:
Signature removed prior to publication.

Deborah Nixon

Acknowledgements

‘But our beginnings never know our ends’ (Eliot 1963, p. 21)

Perhaps when I began my project I thought I knew my ‘ends’ in terms of the thesis as an artefact but I could never have predicted the unquantifiable ends that accompanied it. Not only have I gained an understanding of the research process through my peregrinations in India, Australia and Britain but I also made friends as I went. The hospitality I was shown as I travelled helped to transform the unfamiliar to the familiar and eased my journeying.

This thesis would never have come to fruition without a whole ‘team’ comprised of family, friends and colleagues spurring me on through the years it took to complete the research. Chief amongst those who supported me are my mother and father. My father, Leslie Nixon, became the star of this thesis; without him there simply would be no ‘story’. He was always willing to answer questions and provide as much detail as he could about his family life, his experiences growing up and his service with the First Gurkhas Rifles in India. Of equal significance is that he entrusted me with his cache of family photographs and a few military documents many of which I had not seen before the project began. This year (2015) he turns 90 so at an age when he might have preferred not to return to some of his memories he tirelessly revisited incidents from his past that I knew were painful for him to recall. But in some way I hope it has helped him make peace with himself over these troubling events. I would also like to express my gratitude to my mother, Margaret Nixon, for her unending patience and encouragement.

I want to thank the wonderful people I met on my travels through central India where I was welcomed into homes, fed, housed and regaled with stories of life in the railways, the army and colonial India. In particular, I would like to mention Dunstan Gamble (‘the Cricket’) and his family. Dunstan was a lynchpin contact who introduced me to the elderly Anglo-Indians in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. He then referred me to the amazing Peggy Cantem and Roy Abbott in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh. Peggy knew everybody in town where her tiny house acted as a fulcrum for the Anglo-Indian community. I spent every night of my three-week stay in Jhansi at her table eating and talking to all the people who dropped by. Roy Abbott took me on a memorable drive to his farm in Sagar where I was a special guest for a week. I felt that I was privy to a different India at the farm – Roy liked to say it was the ‘real India’ – I learnt there that there are many Indias.

Furthermore, whilst in Nepal I went to Pokhara and was able to spend time with retired Colonel (Retd) John Cross who also took me into his home and confidence and told me the story of his life and relationship to the Gurkhas with whom he served as a younger man. In London the Dorudi-Cross family made it possible for me to spend time rummaging in the British Library for a longer period than I could otherwise have afforded.

I doubt any thesis is ever completed without friends to occasionally despair and find solace with, as without them it would be a lonely process indeed. I have to afford special thanks to my original PhD ‘study buddy’ Dr Kerry Little who ‘arrived’ before I did but who continued to share her war stories and triumphs with me when I felt overcome by the whole process. In addition, Dr Adrian Kelly lent me his ear and many of his books for most of the time it took me to complete. After my latest trip to India Dr Ursula Nixon and Vera Moxey ensconced me in their guest accommodation for three months where I was freed from domestic responsibility as I literally unpacked my bags and my thoughts. They were ever ready to engage in conversation with me and we shared many evenings talking about Vera’s girlhood in Bangalore and my travels. Dr Ross Forman has also been a steadfast presence throughout; I thank him for patiently listening to me and offering his counsel.

I am also indebted to Dorothy McMenamin principally for publishing ‘Raj Days Downunder’ (2010) her valuable collection of interviews conducted in New Zealand with elderly Anglo-Indians, Parsis and domiciled Europeans. It is fascinating reading and came together just in time for me to profit from her labours! Through capturing these voices Dorothy has performed a great service for the families and researchers in this area. I also thank Dr Laura Bear whom I met in London at the London School of Economics very early in my research. Dr Bear encouraged me to follow my family trail in India and was curious and enthusiastic about the provenance of the photographs. Her research has informed much of my work.

My supervisor Dr Devleena Ghosh and co-supervisor Dr Heather Goodall have both offered me their wisdom and guidance. When I was struggling with a busy work schedule Dr Ghosh ‘cracked the whip’. She insightfully pointed out a path through the research when I was overcome by the richness of the material I was dealing with. I thank her for her provocations and kindness.

Dr. Guenter Plum provided copy-editing and proof reading services in alignment with the guidelines provided by the University of Technology Sydney, Graduate Research School.

I dedicate this thesis to my parents Leslie and Margaret Nixon.

Original Work Published during Candidature

Nixon, D. 2007, 'Memories I never had', *Life Writing Journal Curtin University*, vol 4, no 1, April 2007, Taylor and Francis, pp.123-127, (refereed journal).

Nixon, D. 2008, 'Race, railways and domiciled Europeans', *Transforming Cultures Journal* vol 3, no 1, February, University of Technology Sydney, (refereed journal).

Nixon, D. & Ghosh, D. 2008, 'Fires in the Kangra: A British soldier's story of Partition' in Roy, A G & Bhatia, N (eds), *Partitioned Lives: Narratives of Home, Displacement, and Resettlement*, Pearson Education, Delhi, India, pp. 174 -191, (book chapter).

Nixon, D. 2011, 'Multiple realities plus one', *Look*, Art Gallery New South Wales August /September, pp. 36-38, (magazine).

Nixon, D. 2013, 'Movement and stillness: speaking and silence', *International Journal of Anglo-Indian Studies*, August 2013,
<<http://home.alphalink.com.au/~agilbert/nix13.html>>

Nixon, D. 2013, 'Track changes', *National Geographic Traveller India*, July 1st 2013, pp. 65-67, (magazine).

Table of Contents

Certificate of Original Authorship	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
‘But our beginnings never know our ends’ (Eliot 1963, p. 21)	iii
Original Work Published during Candidature	vi
Table of Contents.....	vii
Abstract	xi
‘Chapter 1 – Introduction	1
‘an unfortunate afridi tribesman’	1
Family Connections.....	2
Speaking remembering forgetting eliding	7
Colonial <i>habitus</i>	8
Interviewees.....	10
Photography collection memory.....	11
The photographs	13
Photo elicitation	17
Railways: space, place and time	17
Train travel	18
Cartographic consequences.....	19
Partition: maps boundaries and new nations.....	20
Outline of chapters	23
Chapter 2 – Family narratives, and differently remembered pasts	26
2.1 Introduction.....	26
Vernacular photographs	28
In the beginning: finding the photographs	28
The technology: photography in India.....	32
Portraits : who did they think they were?	37
2.2 Memory.....	42
Servants at the ‘edge of sight’	46
<i>Shikar</i> and manly pursuits	48

2.3 Gardens and ruins.....	52
The context – leading to the railways	53
Smaller towns: other places, other spaces.....	55
Conclusions.....	57
Chapter 3 – Photo elicitation using vernacular photographs	60
3.1 Introduction.....	60
A little more history	62
Photo elicitation	65
Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians	65
The participants.....	67
Subject position	68
Sites for interviews – pitfalls and perils.....	69
3.2 Interviews.....	71
The influence of captions.....	72
The anteriority of photographs	73
3.3 Memory and narrative	75
Interviews: trust.....	76
Left behind	78
Clothing and context.....	80
Jhansi 1929-1923.....	85
3.4 Weaving narrative and history.....	86
Narrative.....	86
Ancestors	88
Restoration	88
Indian by birth, Anglo-Indian by culture	90
Conclusions.....	94
Chapter 4 – Inside the Railways and the Colonies.....	96
4.1 Introduction.....	96
Railways	101
Traversing landscapes	101
Railway colonies.....	105
4.2 Foregrounding the background	113

Servants and the blocks	114
Networks	116
Parsis	119
Race and class in the railway colonies.....	123
The 'Bankwalla' incident	128
4.3 'I was there'	129
Migration	130
Conclusions.....	131
Chapter 5 – <i>Dussehra</i> – ‘the British knew what to do’ (Brigadier Retd. Panesar 2007)	135
5.1 Introduction.....	135
Gurkha deployment in unrest: 1857-1947	138
Sources and participants	138
The origins of Gurkha ‘martiality’	141
5.2 Martial races, masculinity and modernity.....	142
Martial race theory – masculinity.....	143
Creating a separate Gurkha identity.....	145
Congruency with characteristics of British soldier.....	146
5.3 Insiders on the outside.....	148
<i>Dussehra</i> and tradition	149
Tradition and history	152
Carnavalesque	160
Conclusion.....	161
Chapter 6 – Other voices	164
Gurkha deployment in civil unrest	164
6.1 Introduction.....	164
The Gurkhas	167
Who were the soldiers and who drove the trains?.....	168
6.2 Acting as an aid to the civil power	171
The task – ‘No one knew anything’ (Leslie Nixon Interview 2006)	172
6.3 First person accounts	174
Trains	178

The situation in the North India	179
The Holocaust is invoked.....	181
Conclusion.....	182
Chapter 7 – Partition	185
7.1 Introduction.....	185
Postmemory	186
No final figures	188
Trauma	191
Neutrality	195
7.2 Partition Fires	199
Trains	207
Going doolali	211
Chapter 8 – Conclusions	214
What has been	215
Resonances	218
New archives.....	219
Reflection.....	221
Appendices	224
Appendix 1: A Short Glossary.....	224
Appendix 2: List of Interviews	225
Bibliography.....	227

Abstract

This thesis focuses on an analysis of a family narrative that is imbricated with the development of two significant technologies of modernity: photography and the railways. Originally both were a product of and complementary to the colonial project which brought with it new experiences and, through the consequences of Partition, fashioned national identities. The subjects created by these technologies were represented in images captured in vernacular photographs. However, over time as technologies were deployed into everyday life their effects reflected the changes taking place in the wider context of colonial India. My account of this time weaves the core biography of Leslie Nixon into a wider historical context to create a narrative that is derived from texts, semi-structured photo elicitation interviews using vernacular photographs (taken between 1910 and 1947) of the domiciled European and Anglo-Indian communities who lived along the Great Indian Peninsula Railway line in late colonial India. During my research I found little or no mention of photography practiced at an everyday level by long term ‘settlers’ that recorded life outside major cities. My combined reading of family photographs acts as an articulation of and between private, less authorised discourses against (but not counter to) those of the colonial bureaucracy. This raised questions and challenges around how to use family photographs in interviews to elicit accounts of personal experiences of public and very traumatic events like the Partition. I interrogate the stories people tell when presented with an image that resonates with the past and unsettles the present. Through my account I argue that photographs, to some degree, reflect the increasingly unstable colonial boundaries of the day. In addition various accounts by Gurkha soldiers and British officers in the last part of British rule during the Partition contribute a different perspective to the Partition narrative. Engagement with new technologies reflects the way physical space was experienced and managed during the late Raj and the inevitable outcome of colonial rule in the mayhem of Partition.

‘Chapter 1 – Introduction

‘an unfortunate afridi tribesman’

The minimalist phrase above is a caption written underneath the photograph of a man lying on a *charpoy* (a wooden and string bed). He has been decapitated, his head placed on his chest so that it faces towards the camera. The scene looks staged, as if a magician has temporarily separated the head from the body and through sleight of hand placed it on the man’s chest. It is a confronting image and the only photograph I did not have permission to use in my thesis research. I first saw the photograph when, as a child, I trespassed into the space of my father’s home office and looked through his album unsupervised. This macabre photograph did not frighten me. I was also intrigued by the image of ‘the *fakir*’ in the picture below, his body hung with baubles attached to his skin with pins. In fact, it drew me into the rest of the album, where for the first time I saw photographs of family members that I would never meet: here they were, preserved in a time and place that seemed so remote; this fascinated me. Photograph albums usually contain the ‘normal’ world of a life that has been lived in places and times removed from the present but this album seemed to be removed from everything that was familiar to me.



about the image but not to show it. Although it contains images of family, Leslie’s album is not a family album in the usual sense. He says it is a ‘historical’ record and in

some ways it is, because it shows India on the cusp of Partition and Independence, the images record life in military cantonment towns such as Bangalore, Mhow, Jabalpur and Jhansi. The album is very masculine in tone, from the images contained within it to the maroon leather cover. The photographs are arranged into an, 'unmistakable narrative structure' (Batchen 2000, p.66), portraying a young man's army years in India. Other loose photographs sent to Leslie later by his sister were of more conventional images of weddings, christenings, picnics and family gatherings, also taken in India, mostly in railway colony towns before 1947.

Family Connections

Not only was Leslie in the army at the time of Partition, he was born in Agra (then in the Central Provinces) in 1925 and grew up during the last two decades of colonial rule. He is descended from at least four generations of railway men (his grandfather and father worked on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway line) and soldiers. Leslie's family were domiciled Europeans who had lived in India for several generations. They were railway people and in my father's generation they served in the military. Leslie, now aged 90, was deeply affected by his experience during Partition and these memories have haunted him throughout his life. The few army documents and objects he saved from his service with the Gurkha Rifles are treasured artefacts from this time. He also brought with him the above-mentioned album and a surprisingly large number of loose photographs. These photographs are of cultural and archival value in documenting life in the small towns particularly as there seems to have been very little research conducted on family photographs in this area.

Since gaining Independence, much has been written about the end of colonial rule in India and the violence and pain of the migration associated with the Partition in 1947. In this thesis I expose an aspect of that experience from the point of view of a young subaltern in the Indian Army in 1947, Leslie Nixon. In 2010, Dr Talbot, an historian with an interest in the division of India and the birth of Pakistan, informed me that little had been written about the role of the Gurkhas and Partition. Further, Dr Talbot commented that, 'refugees I have interviewed over the years confirm the sense that they felt safest when Gurkha troops were present' (pers comm 2010) during the migration. I felt reassured that I had access to a unique and significant story. When I refer to Partition I refer to it as a process that lasted from its announcement in August until late

November 1947. Tragically this was the time it took for the killings occurring during the main part of the migration to abate.

Over the last decade Leslie has allowed me to interview him at length about his life, scan his photographs and access his army documents. This modest but very rich source of data together with the family photographs became the starting point for this thesis. The photographs became a powerful tool for stimulating recollections of life in colonial India as experienced by long-term European communities. They are also used to connect and introduce the chapters, providing a photographic window into the text. The photographs do not appear in the text according to any chronological rule. The photograph below, for example, was probably taken in the 1930s judging by the age of Leslie's father, Bundy (the figure on the left), and the dress of the European woman. An element of spontaneity is captured in the discarded umbrella handle caught in the corner of the image, perhaps the photographer was hastily making the most of the opportunity presented in the scene.



Uncaptioned

Bundy is wearing a *sola topi* and tropical suit (note the 'Bombay bloomers') the woman in dark glasses standing next to him is unknown to me although I detect a family resemblance. I imagine the picture may have been taken for her, to capture a typical small town scene, Bundy had lived in India since birth so I can posit that a scene like this was not novel to him. A blurry figure lingers on the far side of the road, almost out of frame. There is a stark contrast between the smart dress, and clutch purse of the

European woman and the dark figure of the woman carrying cow dung; she wears a torn, dirty sari and is barefooted. The three Indian women appear to have been reluctantly drawn into the frame as they are scattered across the surface of the photograph. Were they together or just passing by? Is the woman in right middle of the road the 'boss'? Again the surface becomes almost problematic it is intriguing but like the dark doorway, it surrenders very little. It is the central figure of the woman bearing the cow dung whose stance dominates the picture for me.

Drawing on visual texts, primarily family photographs taken roughly between 1910 and Independence in 1947, I explore the narrative arc of my own family story in the last forty years of colonial India. All the photographs included in this thesis and those used in interviews came from my family collection; Leslie brought some to Australia in 1948 and some were sent later by one of his sisters. Leslie took many of the later photographs (1945-1947); the others were either taken by members of the family or by official photographers of family members. Not all the photographs were captioned; many were loose and of those some had only spare notes on their flipsides. I have indicated under each of the photographs whether they were captioned or not and for some I have supplied a speculative comment or an explanation derived from my knowledge of the content. What the photographs create is a delicate web that links the narrative together. They reference a fascination with the technology of cameras that, once made more affordable, compact and freed from the strictures of studios, expanded their visual repertoire to include the world outside the orchestrated space of the studio.

My work weaves elements of biography with ethnography to create a narrative that is both analytical and interactive derived from texts, semi-structured photo elicitation interviews and photographs of the Anglo-Indian and domiciled European communities. I use the word 'community' with caution because these communities were not homogeneous – they included people from a variety of European and Indian cultural backgrounds. So when using the word community I do not mean to imply that all Anglo-Indian groups are or were the same; they may differ from region to region. Hawes (cited in Caplan 2001, p.120) argues that it might be more realistic to see Anglo-Indian populations as 'loosely ... connected ... each with its own particular identity'. I felt this to be true of Jhansi and Jabalpur, in what was Central India, two towns once home to large enclaves of railway staff closely linked by the train line and the workers

who moved between them. According to the 1935 Government of India Section Act 366 (2),

An Anglo-Indian means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only.

As Andrews (2005, p. 4) points out, Caplan (2001, p. 88) suggests this definition is problematic as it is unclear as to who is being referred to and it could include domiciled Europeans. The way in which I will use the term Anglo-Indian is to indicate a person of mixed Indian and European heritage and ‘domiciled European’ to refer to a person who identifies as having only European parentage. Caplan (2011) refers to both groups of people as being part of the ‘domiciled community’, with distinctions drawn along racial lines underneath this homogeneous label. It is important to clarify these terms as their meanings have changed over time but in the period of the late Raj it was racial mixing that delineated people. By this time people who identified as having only European descent were called domiciled Europeans and those who were of Indian and European descent were called Anglo-Indian. However, as McMenamin suggests the term Anglo-Indian overshadowed ‘the marked social gradations amongst domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians’ (2001, p. 110). It was not difficult to hide one’s origins if one’s family were light skinned and both Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans could claim to be European-based on the basis of the racial descent of their fathers (Anthony 1969, p. 5). However, in the early 19th century, ‘the term “Anglo-Indian” ceased to apply to the British’ (McMenamin 2001, p. 106) and those who claimed to have only European forebears were considered domiciled Europeans.

Through investigating the use of photography I perceived it to have the quality of providing the domiciled European and Anglo-Indian communities with an effective means of representing themselves as a coherent and distinct culture. To limit the function of photography in colonial India to surveillance narrows the place that photography took in the early part of its history and ignores all the other possible uses it was put to, and as Mahadevan (2013) points out, its relatively swift uptake in Calcutta and the building of portrait studios attests to its popularity. In colonial India photography had evolved to become a useful tool not only for official record keeping

but also for self-recording, particularly in and by communities who were sometimes marginalised by colonial powers because of their complex unfixed racial and social status (Mizutani 2011). Pinney (2008b) argues that photography, once valued for its indexical qualities, changed from a 'cure' to a 'poison' as it developed and became loosened from its colonial *habitus*. This change meant that photography was less controlled by authorities and so began to reveal more about the living conditions of those who would otherwise have been overlooked such as the victims of the Amritsar massacre to be discussed later in this chapter.

I began my research by interrogating the layers, and what I first perceived to be incongruities, in the story Leslie tells of his life growing up in India and serving during Partition. I have then imbricated this account with my own retelling of the experience. My combined reading of family photographs acts as an articulation of and between private, less authorised discourses against (but not counter to) those of the official bureaucracy regarding colonial life in railway towns. This raised questions and challenges around how to use family photographs in interviews to elicit accounts of personal experiences of public events like the Partition. Through my account I argue that photographs also to some degree, inadvertently, reflect the increasingly unstable and ill-defined colonial boundaries of the day. I wanted to explore what the photographs could tell me about what it was like to live under colonial rule in a space between the coloniser and the colonised. The work of Cooper and Stoler (1997) challenges the idea that the colonial situation could be divided into binaries such as colonisers and colonised, European and those of mixed heritage. Caplan (2001, p. 6) suggests that the complexity of the race and class divide, as it played out in India, blurred the divide between coloniser and colonised. The photographs show how these ambiguities might have been experienced. This in-between position was inhabited by people who may have been trapped in a set of racially defined boundaries that researchers such as Mizutani (2011), Bear (1994, 2007), Buettner (2000, 2004), Collingham (2001) and Dirks (2001) point out was riven with a sense of racial insecurity. This insecurity can be sourced to the ruling power's fear of miscegenation (Bear 1994; D'Cruz 2006; Stoler 1995) and perceived biological and social degeneration (Mizutani 2011, D'Cruz 2006) derived from proximity to local communities (Collingham 2001). Fischer-Tine (2009, p.17) recasts the domiciled European as a 'subaltern white', repositioning whiteness and non-whiteness in the Indian context. Leslie's dissonances raised questions about

sensitivities as to his own racial positioning and the role he found himself in as a subaltern in the British Indian Army just prior to Independence.

Leslie Nixon served with the Gurkhas during Partition, escorting refugees from Nagrota to Pathankot. He then migrated to Australia in 1948. Although he would not admit to it, he is quite adversely affected by this last experience of India. He still talks with some reluctance about events that occurred around the upheaval of Partition. Greenberg (2005, p. 91) suggests that the impact of a trauma of this magnitude ‘smashes and disfigures our lives’, so that layers of affective factors distort memories of the Partition. Leslie was unable emotionally to return to India. He has never expressed a desire to go back as if his ‘basic trust’ or sense of security, not in India but of himself in India, was damaged beyond repair. Erikson (cited in Caruth 1995, p. 198) makes a salient comment on the pervasive erosion of trust engendered by trauma that seeps into all aspects of lives, going beyond the intimate to ‘governments and institutions’ affected by these kinds of events. Leslie still expresses his anxiety about my traveling to India in terms of security about train travel, travelling alone and the possibility of falling ill and not receiving adequate treatment. My arguments about the lack of logic in his concerns do not make any difference to his own deeply entrenched fear of returning to a place ‘where they might remember’ him and kill him (Leslie Nixon 2012, pers. comm.). Like many who have suffered through a harrowing episode he carries an, ‘impossible history within’ (Caruth 1995,p.5); he is forever caught in its maw, because he was unable to fully process events or experiences at the time.

Speaking remembering forgetting eliding

When interviewing Leslie about particular incidents that occurred during Partition and about his life in India I noticed dissonances emerging between his recounting, and as far as the camera can be relied upon, what appeared in his family photographs. These discordances in memory seem to reflect a sense of competing desires to be known and not known in different contexts. It was at this point that I began to recognise the potency of the photographs to free up other dialogues about the wider world from which the images came, for the image to be the starting point rather than the end point. For the first time I recognised the abundance with which I was being presented. The spaces in between the photographs hold the unseen elements of the images – the wider contexts and circumstances of the world to which they respond to and represent. There are very

few images of the Partition in this collection. But this apparent void is filled with intense and vividly remembered incidents.

The substance of Leslie's experience tracks across national and racial identities. Leslie maintained an idea about his own neutrality based on what he was not: Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Parsi or Meo. Nor was he fully 'British'. But he was a soldier participant and a witness, generationally connected to India and compelled by political changes to migrate himself after 1947. This is a little told aspect of the Partition that reveals the moment of the British control from a viewpoint that is underexplored. In many references to the movement of refugees the army is referred to but rarely identified yet in some photographs of crowded platforms I can recognise the uniforms of Gurkhas (Talbot & Singh 2009, p. 94.).

I am to some degree a member of what Hoffman (2004) refers to as the 'hinge generation', one of those whose parents survived a 'mass atrocity' but which that parent (Leslie) insists was neutral or on the outside of the events. Thus Leslie's narrative is re-narrativised by me through this research, particularly in Chapter 7 when the focus is firmly on the Partition. According to Hirsch (1997, p.22), 'post-memory is distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection'. Writing this thesis has some elements of a 'post-memory' (Hirsch 1997) treatment because I am the daughter of a soldier survivor, whose often dark and troubling memories have been passed on to me. In a discussion of the post-1947 generation of writers and historians who have subsequently grappled with the difficulty of writing about the Partition, Greenberg (2006, p. 256) suggests that 'telling one's own family stories (acts) as a moral and intellectual imperative'.

Colonial *habitus*

When considering how to navigate through interviews with the use of the photographs I had to take into consideration a number of factors that would affect negotiating the meaning of the images and their sense or interpretation. This included considering the interplay between the actual visual representations, when and where the photographs were taken, and the knowledge, experience and age of the interviewees. This kind of negotiated meaning speaks to what Bourdieu (1997, p.86) identifies as the embodiment of both individual and collective experiences. In this case, colonialism lived through dress, food, smell and corporeal memories carried through from a 'past which survives'

(Bourdieu 1997, p. 82) and that sometimes rudely intrudes in the present. Collingham's¹ research on the physical experience (control of the body, anxiety about food, climate, disease and dress codes) of the Raj, references Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* in as much as she sees it acting as a social bridge 'between personality and social structure' (2001, pp. 2-3). What can be stimulated through the photographs is a recollection of a past colonial *habitus*. Pinney (2008, p. 33) agrees with the notion that photography lies somewhere between 'truth' and 'falsehood' when situated in 'a colonial habitus'. In other words, viewing these old images stimulates a highly affective experience of revisiting the past.

Corporeal 'memories' were often invoked amongst interviewees by the photographs: the smell of cordite, the sweetness of strawberries (Robert May Interview 2007) or the 'cool smell of wet *mats*' (Leslie Nixon Interview 2006), even dancing at the Railway Institute (Fay Wills Interview 2012). Collingham also includes in her understanding of this embodied experience 'the structures of the class specific social world in which the individual finds him or herself are transferred onto the individual' (2001, p. 2). So the colonial is experienced both through the senses and an awareness of where one 'belonged' socially, 'the body is the site where social structures are experienced' (Collingham 2001, p. 2). For elderly interviewees photographs can stimulate unexpected memories of the quotidian of a life remembered at a distance partially through the body.

What interviewees were responding to, when viewing the photographs, was the recognition of a life style, of objects and places that reminded them of their earlier lives. As such the photographs act as a prosthetic device to 'support human memory' (Bate 2010, p. 245); they are products of a variety of technologies employed for their mnemonic qualities. For example, several elderly interviewees commented on the apparent orderliness in the street scenes of Jabalpur in the 1930s and compared them with the current state of ruin they observed around them. Visual methods such as photo elicitation can be used not just to reveal aspects of *habitus* but also to engage participants in a 'socio-analysis' or 'critical awareness' (Bourdieu, cited in Sweetman 2009, p. 611) of what they are looking and at and remembering.

¹ Collingham confusingly never clarifies to whom she is referring to as Anglo even though it was made clear in the 1911 census that Anglo-Indian referred to people of both Indian and European ancestry and this definition was adopted in the Indian Constitution of 1950.

Interviewees

The interviewees who participated in this project were for the most part elderly Anglo-Indians, some of whom had migrated after Partition to the United Kingdom or Australia and several of whom had remained in India. In 2007 and 2012 I travelled to Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh in order to interview remaining members of the Anglo-Indian and domiciled European communities who lived in the same places in Central India where Leslie's family had lived. In seeking to interview people who had lived through Partition, age was a major consideration and naturally this narrowed the field of participants. As Stoler (2002,p.179) reflects on her own memory work in Java, what emerged from the interviews was not a homogenised body of accounts. She observes that her interviewees moved between 'concrete detail and pat statement ... rich commentary and terse responses' (2002, p. 179). With such a small number of participants I was able to focus on individual experiences, as I was not in pursuit of a convergent account. Instead I found a narrative that varied from tropes of segregation, lost opportunity and betrayal to survival, vitality and a culture that was clearly 'Anglo-Indian'. In the smaller towns where I visited elderly Anglo-Indians from the railway communities, a strong sense of community survives. Many interviewees would begin responding to the photographs with a sort of 'good old days' nostalgia. However, that would sometimes give way to divergent reflections that often revealed more difficult times. I did not conduct the interviews with the aim of identifying consensus and I tried to allow as spontaneous a response as possible to the images.

Benedict Anderson (2006, p. 184) chose to focus on the census, maps and museums so as to analyse how colonial domains created a seemingly 'bounded determinate and ... countable' entity. I have chosen to explore the way 'domiciled communities' (populated by both Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans) experienced the domain of British colonialism in India through the lenses of the technologies of photography and the railways. The chapters in this thesis are organised around an engagement with products associated with technologies of modernity: that of the image (photography), mobility (railways) and the cartographic consequences of the creation of two new nation states, those of India and Pakistan, as a result of Partition. Railways, maps and photographs reorganised, reconfigured and reconceptualised location, space and boundaries in late colonial India. These technologies are brought together here through a family narrative that exemplifies the ways technologies of modernity also found

expression in family stories, photographs and the explosive and shattering experience of Partition. Technology became the incarnation of the European idea of a progressive modernity. Aguiar argues that to experience modernity is to engage in voyeuristic possibilities where 'to be inside the train is to be in modern times' (2011, p. 79). Railways symbolically related modernity and mobility more clearly than any other means of transportation (Prakash 2012). Through this level of mobility new vistas and experiences were opened up not just to the colonial powers, but to local people and the long-term domiciled European and Anglo-Indian communities who populated the railway colonies along various railway lines. As Kerr (2003, p. 291) suggests, the idea of railways as metonyms of modernity was also expressed through station architecture, photography and rhetoric.

However, assigning a correlation between modernity and technology also raises the questions of 'whose' modernity is discussed, where it is played out and how it was experienced. Lalvani (1996) suggests that discursive practices around photography and train travel are 'embedded in a larger visual discourse ... of modernism' (p. 196). The new spaces that were connected to both these technologies allowed power to operate 'in the grids of photographic space, urban space, transport space, [which] produced iconic bodies, spectator bodies and regulated bodies' (Lalvani 1996, p.197). Aguiar (2008, p. 66) posits an argument for a 'fluid modernity' that both accommodates and problematises the relationship between technology and the ideologies that accompany it. The darker side of modernity, as argued by Aguiar (2008, p.66), lies in the counter-narratives that surfaced around modernity and the railways, particularly in relation to the repurposing of trains during Partition. The border between India and Pakistan became a source of anxiety and violence. Through the images captured by members of the communities who inhabited railway sites, images of the railways through family photographs offer an intimate connection to this gridded past (Batchen 2011; Lalvani 1996).

Photography collection memory

Although Leslie may have referred to himself as a neutral observer in interviews, as a photographer his position as a participant is exposed. Tagg argues that 'the camera is never neutral, the representations it produces are highly coded and the power it wields is never its own' (1988, p. 61). At the same time photography allowed those who owned a

camera to participate in a practice that directly connected them to a modern technology of representation. Through these photographs, memories could be returned to, not just in relation to the photographed subject but also to that which occurred outside the frame. With any set of interviews around a shared past punctuated with a memory of a traumatic events the interviewees will remember different details. Stoler argues that in colonial studies memory does not necessarily act 'as a repository of alternative histories and subaltern truths' (2002, p. 169) because memory itself is contextual and a reflection of the political concerns of the day. Stoler and Strassler (2002, p. 169) argue that recalling past events brings them into a contemporary context and that conceptualising memory as a form of 'hydraulic' retrieval limits its potential. A more 'processual' model of thinking about memory transforms the past and the present into something more 'consubstantial' than as changeless (Argenti & Schramm 2009, p. 7). Leslie remembers as much as he was able to talk about, but his memory, like others who have been through a trauma, is also linked to the same devices as forgetting (Argenti & Schramm 2009, p. 8).

In her study of Dutch colonial governance in Java, Stoler (2002, pp. 184-188) became aware of the presence in family photographs of un-named servants, whose service enabled the running of households. The family albums Stoler (2001 pp.184) analysed contained photographs of 'cozy images' of Dutch colonial life whereas servants talking about their experiences as child carers revealed a contrasting perspective. The divergence of two narratives around family portraits with servants and nurses in the background alerted Stoler to the fact that that little had been written on the 'colonial era of family photography' (2002, p. 278). Through interviewing servants she also discovered a point of view that was at complete variance with the 'good old days' (Stoler 2002, p. 184) tone of family albums. Since then Strassler (2010, p. 4) has analysed the use of family photographs in her analysis of photography and modernity in Indonesia. She contends that photography as a practice is revealing of the way in which people were able to express themselves as 'consumers ... producers and subjects' of images. Strassler argues that, historically, photographic practices are enmeshed with the 'archive' of family and personal photographs, thus producing both 'a history of vision and a vision of history' (2010, p. 28). Family photographs do not constitute a subaltern narrative that sets out to challenge the colonial archive but they allow the viewer to access a more intimate life that can be more telling of intimate places. I argue that using

photographs in interviews acts to connect memory to the present through talking about the past in a material representation.

Through a new interest in investigating the private domain of photography, ‘voices that [were] previously marginalized in history have become important archives of cultural knowledge’ (Cross & Peck 2010, p. 129). Stoler (2002, p. 87) also reasons that, ‘Scholars need to move from archive as source to archive as subject’. This approach allows the polyvalence of photographs to surface, as an example of one archival source, to be explored in different ways. In deference to the interconnectedness of ‘photography archive and memory’ Cross and Peck (2010, p. 127) correlate memory and archive as processes that rely on recall and images to make sense of the past. Thus photographs also exist as a material archive of memory. In his research on the development of photographic practices in India, Pinney (2008, p. 108) argues that photographs possess a contiguous quality that connects them to the referent and that this ‘was deemed to be of a higher semiotic order than ... pen or brush or ... testimony’. He is referring here to the belief in colonial photography as evidentiary, not only of photographs taken by families in everyday practice, and this notion of the truth of the image persists. Barthes refers this evidentiary power when he remarks on the incontrovertible record of the referent (2000, pp. 88-89): a photograph is indistinguishable from the person or thing it refers to. When we see ourselves in a private snapshot it is the referent we see, a past that is caught in an eternal present.

The photographs

So the challenge of using photography in interviews is to encourage a meta-view of them as part of the archive of knowledge rather than the source of knowledge. This means transcending the view of photography as merely a technology of rule to one connected to more ordinary practices of representation (Strassler 2006), and also, in my case transcending the very close connections I have to the subjects of the photographs used in this research.



An English seaside is suggested by the image on the small cardboard photograph envelope on the left: the figure of a European woman holding what looks a camera with a fold-out lens; children play on an almost empty beach. But the names Waman [Hindu] and Dastur [Parsi] and the address locate it in Poona [sic], far from the ocean and Europe.

Photography emerged in Europe in the late 1830s and soon afterwards was also being used in India for a range of purposes: recording, legitimating

political and social practices, and researching anthropological subjects. As Tagg notes, 'photography was mobilized as an instrument of administrative and disciplinary power' (1988, p. 20). It rapidly came to be used (Stoler & Strassler 2002, p. 163) for constructing the 'colonial imaginary' under colonial states. As Lalvani also observes, photographs 'affirm and celebrate particular discursive and ideological formations' (1996, p. 43). In India, as in Europe, 'society was increasingly mediated by visual interaction' (1996, p. 63). Of course in India there already was an existing culture of the visual, as noted by Pinney (2010, pp. 17-18), but photography introduced new opportunities because of its accessibility and portability. Over time, as Pinney (2010) suggests, what broadened its appeal were modifications to the techno-material aspects of photography: the lowering of costs and the miniaturisation and mobility of the equipment. Photography became popular very quickly as was evidenced by the number of photographic studios that opened in India and were managed by Indians (Pinney 2006). Arnold (2013, p. 11) contends that modernity in India was not always expressed through 'big' technology (railways, telegraph, irrigation systems) but also through 'everyday technologies' such as bicycles, typewriters, sewing machines and cameras. Advertisements relying on images of these technologies were ubiquitous, exposing a huge number of people to their existence. My family was no different; although located as long-term domiciled Europeans in small railway towns, they too would have seen the

billboards and perhaps desired the technology. Cars, bicycles and trains often provide the backdrop for their outdoor photos, alluding to their status as owners of an automobile for example, or their employment in the railways. Indians, Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans living generationally in India – whoever could afford it – took to these technologies with ‘alacrity’ (Pinney 1997, p. 20).



Uncaptioned

Location Jabalpur’, car driver Bundy, Michael and khus mats hanging on the side of the house (Deborah Nixon)

The family narrative is recorded partially in photographs taken privately and publicly in railway colonies in small towns around the Great Indian Peninsula Railway (GIPR) across central India in the last 40 years of colonial rule. A compelling, nuanced and, sometimes, paradoxical story sat at the nexus of the photographs and the way they were talked about by participants in Australia so I decided to take a set of photographs to the sites of railway communities in Jhansi and Jabalpur in 2012. They were used in interviews with elderly Anglo-Indians, Parsis and other members of the railway colonies to great effect. Photo elicitation became a powerful tool for exploring memory, migration, displacement and nostalgia, exposing a convoluted (at times conflicted) engagement with the past. The photographs are used in this thesis as socially situated artifacts, products of a colonial *habitus* that reveal ‘below the surface’ information about how India was viewed and experienced at this time by a particular community. Photography in the 40s was becoming part of an everyday practice, for some people, an

opportunity to frame and record family life. These images now form part of an archive that helps to activate a different memory linked to 'processes of remembering and forgetting' (Cross & Peck 2010, p. 127). Photographic acts are also carefully mediated and are reflective of a process of selection, what and where to photograph a subject, what makes it interesting to the photographer and later to the viewer. However, the encounter between the photographer and the subject and the viewer and the subject are separated by time introducing a complex of temporalities around images. For Barthes the 'that was' element reduces the potency of the photograph but I would like to challenge that notion with the idea that viewing is a process of activating or revitalising the image in a range of affective meetings. Photographs are part of the textual chain that reconstitutes a visual and corporeal experience as Cronin proposes: 'Our personal histories are not only contained in family albums, but they are created by them' (2007, p. 78).

The family archive has a value in that it selectively preserves these visual memories of time and place (Hirsch 1997; Spence 1991) and on a broader level it represents part of 'the lost and forgotten history of photography itself' (Bate 2010, p. 245). As Spence and Holland argue, the family archive is capable of acting 'as a junction between personal memory and social history' (cited in Hirsch 1997, pp. 12-13). In addition, what the family collection attests to, in an unselfconscious gesture, is the position of the long-term European and Anglo-Indian communities as a part of this colonial world rather than apart from it. Dubow (2000, p. 101) asserts there has been a tendency in postcolonial analysis to polemicise the relationship between colonial subjects when what may have been missed is 'a desire for mutual imbrication'. Cooper and Stoler (1997) argue that racial boundaries were often less defined in reality than colonial rhetoric suggested they were, despite systematic attempts to capture the differences. McMenamin (2010, p. 9), in her oral history study of the Anglo-Indian community, suggests that 'historical critiques of colonialism' have 'grossly overlooked' the more nuanced relationships between people from vastly different backgrounds. McMenamin (2010, p. 16) goes on to note that Anglo-Indians living in Calcutta experienced wider circles of British society and its attendant hierarchies and social distinctions than those living in the more far-flung provinces. If photographs are evidential in any way then a hint of this more complex entanglement may be detected in the physical inclusion and

connectedness between people in some of the less formal photographs of the railway colonies in Damoh and Jhansi.

Photo elicitation

What the photographs also alluded to was a displacement apparent in the backdrops chosen from studios; these choices were often of elaborate European gardens or interiors with neo-classical columns and drapes in the background. The displacement is to an imaginary European referent, making visual a metaphysical yearning for a place that can be represented but has no actual referent (Barthes 2000, p. 5). From the moment of viewing the photographs, the interviewees were also commenting on the ephemera of the colonial engagement, people and buildings that no longer exist. It requires imagination to revitalise the images. Those used in the interviews bore no direct relational constraints on these readings because the content was, in most cases, of people the interviewees did not know. During interviews, the photographs were open to multiple readings, offering different entry and exit points depending on the viewer. Photographs, because of their unmanageable and contingent nature, are capable of arousing a variety of memory-based responses. It is this function, as a window into something else, which is where the real value of the photographic image lies (Barthes 1997).

The interviews provided me with accounts from those who lived in the same temporal zones captured in the photographs; the readings were the result of an active ‘collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus’ (Clandinin & Connelly 2000, p. 20). This kind of work engages in narrative enquiry to gain a living insight into the social events that surrounded the photographs.

Railways: space, place and time

...a train is an extraordinary bundle of relations because it is something through which one goes, and then it is something that goes by, it is also something by means of which one can go from one point to another, and then it is something that goes by. (Foucault 1984, p. 47)

Railway stations acted as nodal points where disparate groups of people were forced to mix in spaces that were heterogeneous in character, in a way that life in villages and

small towns did not provide the opportunity to do. Railways vectored these different groups of people into contact with one another in the carriages, stations and railway colonies that supported the technology. Railway stations may have created opportunities for mixing in social spaces that did not previously exist in India and they brought people together within railway communities but there were rules within this surface freedom of travel that also separated passengers. For example ticketed travel separated people into classes and created new divisions of race and religion (Aguiar 2011). Khan (2007, pp. 19-20) points out that these differences were an insidious way to delineate people along religious lines apparent in train stations where, for example, people were directed to use either “Hindu water” or “Muslim water”. The stations themselves served as an arena for both emancipation and ... class stratification’ (Aguiar 2011, p. 19). Schivelbusch (1979, p. 66) refers to the phenomena of train lines passing through a landscape as if they have ‘no use whatsoever for the intervening spaces which they traverse with disdain and provide only with a useless spectacle’. Trains travelled through landscapes seemingly without touching them, this is evoked most poignantly in a scene from Satyajit Ray’s 1955 film *Panther Panchali* ; two village children watch a train in the distance as if following a remote jet trail. The railways may have promised a kind of transformational conduit into modernity, but as is argued by Aguilar (2008), that they fell short of this expectation, which is demonstrated by the development of counter narratives responding to a more homogeneous form of modernity. In relation to the railways counter-narratives include the tensions within the lived experience of colonial rule where mobility can also mean displacement and ‘emancipation a place of class stratification’ (Aguiar 2008, p.19).

Train travel

Railroad lines make inroads on spaces they pass through and over by way of tunnels and bridges with little evidence of their journey along the tracks apart from the transient noise and smoke emitted by the engine. In trains, space and place conflate, accommodating multiple users with divergent uses, some passengers approaching it as a space and others as a place. De Certeau (1984) argues that inside the railway carriage order is achieved through regulations, the purchase of tickets, the status of passengers and the experience of traveling in a state suspended from the everyday. Passengers sit in a stable functional and fixed place as they travel across landscapes, passively viewing the passing world. In the same way that photography frames a scene by placing a border

around it, so the railway carriage tames space. This orderliness is governed by a 'gridwork of technocratic discipline' (de Certeau 1984, p. 113); the railway carriage is a place where 'passengers become voyeurs' (Lennon 2004, p. 1), their vision of the outside mediated by window frames and speed (de Certeau 1984; Lalvani 1996; Schivelbusch 1979). In this place Lennon applies de Certeau's theory to argue that the passenger assumes a passive role and the railway line becomes the invader 'of place over space' (2004, para. 1). Lennon (2004) is talking here about hobos 'ridin the rails' at the time of depression in North America and the nature of space as a 'rupture in ... stability'. This happened too during Partition when the ordered place inside a carriage was overcome and security and order were inverted. The twin notions of order and regulation provide a useful way to explicate place here (Lennon 2004); space on the other hand represents a confluence of social practices that has the potential to breach the stability of place.

Cartographic consequences

A kind of invasion or rupture occurred during Partition, in the form of attacks on train carriages; the exterior space invading the interior place. No longer reflecting the progressive technological outcome of modernity but alarmingly transmogrified into vessels of disorder and death, the predictability of timetables allowed for opportune attacks from the once more distant outside or even from within carriages. The fixed direction and timetabling of trains that had once appeared to be so modern now made it easy for ambushes to occur. There is evidence from the *Mountbatten Papers* (held at the University of Southampton, UK) of these mounting complications. In good faith refugees would have imagined that trains would transport them to safety, but often people had to travel on open trays or were crammed into carriages in the stifling heat and cautioned not to open windows. Trains were not safe, refugee escorts were inadequate and sometimes the soldiers who did travel on board understandably had communal allegiances (Aguilar 2008, p. 73). Attacks on trains, particularly the reported killing of 3,000 people on a train in the Punjab in the British Railway Gazette October 1947 (Aguilar 2008, p. 75), seriously sabotaged the idea of India as a secular nation with aspirations towards modernity. Ex-Gurkha officer interviewees (May 2006; Nixon 2007; Reynolds 2007; Twelvetreets 2007) used the frightening image of mobs swarming like 'ants' towards trains, overwhelming them and their refugee charges. There were several other descriptions of this phenomenon in the Gurkha journal *The Bugle and*

Kukri. The violence around trains during Partition ‘challenged the ideal of India as a secular nation and undermined civil dreams of modernity’ (Aguilar cited in Revill 2012, p. 98); Partition proved that trains were far from inviolate. Railway carriages and station platforms became crowded, disorganised, permeable spaces where thousands of passengers were killed or wounded.

Late colonial India (1910-47) was dynamic; it was changing politically, economically and socially and at the same time India was also being exploited by the British for its various war efforts. Ahuja argues that a connection has been made between ‘materiality and the technology’, the ‘transformation of millions of lives’ and the notion of progress and civilisation (2004, p. 96). The merging of these characteristics of the imperial project was further articulated in a cultural binary of one culture as ‘fast moving, technologically advanced, and economically powerful; the other slow moving and without advanced technology’ and the collapse of time and distance ‘as the essence of modernity’ (Spurr cited in Appleby 2010, p. 59). As Dirks (2001, p. 10) also argues, the idea of the ‘modern’ and participation by the colonised in the process of becoming modern was thought by the colonisers to be forever out of reach because of the limitations of ‘tradition’. The limitations, Dirks (2001, p. 9) suggests, are the ‘beliefs, customs, practices and convictions’ identified and simplified by the British and are thus a ‘byproduct of colonial history’. However, the lines that had been drawn under this ‘colonial rule of difference’ (Chatterjee cited in Dirks 2001, p. 10) in many ways hardened after 1857 and 1919 and would be fatally ruptured in 1947.

Partition: maps boundaries and new nations

The operation of the inside/outside antinomy serves not so much to prevent “foreign infiltration” as it does to discipline and produce the domesticated self. (Sankaran 1997, p. 86)

The borderline between India and East and West Pakistan by a British lawyer, Sir Cyril Radcliffe, was the consequence of the hasty delineating of the territories. His map was ready by the 9th of August in 1947, only five days before the Independence of Pakistan was announced. Radcliffe had taken just five weeks to draw the border the final act deployed by the retreating colonial power. Mapping and cartographic technology created a modern, scientific and immovable veneer to the ‘nation’ concept – a welcome illusion to make the ambiguity of contested borders less visible. Winichakul identifies

this process: 'the map of a territory with borders creates the cognitive container that becomes the idea of a nation of people' (cited in Jones 2012, p. 266). Similarly for Sankaran (1997, p. 82), cartography is a term that takes in more than the surface inscription of a boundary, it *is* 'the social and political production of nationality itself', in this case Indian and Pakistani. This process involves excluding people but more significantly it creates an 'inside/outside antinomy' (Sankaran 1997, p. 87) in order to be able to manufacture a supposed homogeneity of 'blood', race and religion on the 'inside'. This cannot be achieved without lines on maps and border controls. The politics of Partition marks it as modern because it involved the division of 'national' territory in order to ameliorate a national conflict over ethnic or communal tensions (O'Leary 2007, p. 888), and it also created new political borders (Talbot & Singh 2009, p. 133). The borders, written in pencil by Radcliffe, are now demarcated by 'all the paraphernalia of border control' (Khan 2007, p. 196) separating the two nations, has resonated through the lives and generations of people for decades afterwards. Sankaran calls the continuing tensions around borders in India, the 'cartographic anxiety inscribed into its very genetic code' (1997, p. 83), sourcing it to the 'amputation' of Partition. Thus the complex duality of the nation-state is expressed through claims to the 'modern' while simultaneously harking back to 'blood and soil', demanding an imaginary unity of 'ethnicity', which religion and history mark as internally contradictory or unresolvable.

Thus lines, boundaries and frames mark edges on maps in an attempt to demarcate discrete domains but these lines often bleed off the page. As White (2010) suggests, 'spatial representation is an attempt to conceive in order to shape what is lived and perceived'. Mapping does this in a removed and orderly manner: railway lines are drawn, boundaries are created, lives are changed. The set of experiences described in narratives by elderly interviewees (included in this thesis) that inevitably led to Partition, mark it as an iconic yet still enigmatic event (Khilnani 1997). These personal stories shatter the homogeneity of the official stories of the time. The lived experience of modernity as expressed in interviews did not generate a single narrative; individual perspectives fed into the facts around it like the Partition. For all its political rationalisations and the neatness of the line (based on religious demographics) drawn by Radcliffe, the pain of Partition at the messy ground level was borne by all involved in the population transfers between India and the new East and West Pakistan. The

document regarding the specific details as to how the border was decided, beyond 'contiguous majority areas', were destroyed by Radcliffe before he departed from India, giving the rationale for the border an enduring ambiguity (Khilnani 1997, p. 201). As Walker and Krishna argue, the 'lines of inclusion and exclusion' on a map that look so clean are extremely 'complex practices, sites of reciprocity, exchange and livelihood' (2002, p. 145). Khilnani refers to Partition as a 'permanent disturbance' (1997, p. 199) and an 'unspeakable sadness at the heart of the idea of India' (p. 201). This sense of unease also resides within those who experienced its terrifying effects. The fact that the violence occurred at all still carries with it an element of surprise and incredulity that filters through the stories told about Partition.

In north-west India (the focus of this thesis) those most affected were ordinary people living in the Punjab and those who were charged with escorting them across the new borders. The history of the division of the Punjab into India and Pakistan is part of the 'narrative of modernity' that also marked the final demise of colonial rule. The redrawn map of India, which sectioned off Pakistan, represented more than a geographic area, it encapsulated the 'subjectivity of the mapping process' (Hamilton & Graniero 2012, p. 243) and represented in its final excision the specific interests of those involved in the politics of nation building. As Wood (2008, p. 127) notes, in the (relative) de- and subsequent re-territorialisation new subjects with new identities were created as Hindus and Muslims. The full details of the cartography of Partition lie outside the ambit of the current study. I do not intend to rehearse the particulars of the mapping process but instead I will attend to the indexical aspects of the experience, the direct and immediate results of the decisions made by Radcliffe based on religion, a primary criterion in the categorisation of the people in the affected areas.

The politicians and architects of the new nation states, seem to have neglected to take into proper consideration the 'serious consequences of the lines' that were drawn and the boundaries that were inscribed (Deleuze cited in Pickles 2004, p. 192). The simple line on a map introduced 'forms of inclusion and exclusion, property, policing and boundaries' (Pickles 2004, p. 192); these were enacted during the months between August and November 1947. Although foreshadowed in the riots in Calcutta in 1946 and various other disturbances the level of violence and disorder Partition gave rise to, was unanticipated.

Outline of chapters

The thesis chapters are to some degree modular, connected through the overarching narrative of the Nixon family's experience. Firstly, there is an analysis of photography, both as an introduced colonial technology and as a tool used for photo elicitation in interviews with participants in the research. Secondly, railway colonies feature as social sites where domiciled Europeans lived, worked and chronicled their lives through the technology of photography, which, with its wider adoption, began to destabilise fixed identities in a fixed landscape. Sitting at the heart of the narrative is the particular impact of serving in the army during the shattering experience of the Partition of India in 1947.

Like a 'matryoshka doll' the central story is nested in the background of the railway colonies and its attendant social and racial structure. The photographs are partial evidence of that experience. The research questions are grounded in the oral histories revealed through interviews, photographs and practices, showing how technologies produced and shaped a particular experience of modernity in the context of colonial India. By 'colonial' I am referring to the time of British rule in India from 1857-1947 and allow that there are myriad socio-political structures associated with it. It is not within the scope of this thesis to debate the various meanings of 'colonial' beyond this.

Chapter two acts as a foundation, locating the photographs in their time and place and explaining why family photographs are such a valuable archival source. The focus of the first chapter is on both the visual of the family photograph in India and the spoken spaces between the photographs. Photographs are the still points between which the viewer as interviewer moves, trying to reconstruct an idea of colonial India that no longer exists – that may not ever have existed. In a memory impacted by time, the trauma of Partition and the complex positioning of the participant's identity in colonial India, the photographs provided spatial and temporal effects, moments for re-locating the subject between places, people and events. Chapter two expands on the deployment of vernacular (in this case family photographs) used in photo elicitation were enlisted as a qualitative research method. Jenkins, Woodward and Winter (2008) suggest that this a 'significant methodology' because it has the potential to allow for more expanded responses to enquiries about past events and this was particularly relevant for the participants in my research. The photographs also reveal what may have been kept hidden if not for their ability to include unexpected details.

In Chapter three I examine the nature and the use of photo elicitation as a methodological instrument and how coupled with semi-structured interviews they enriched the research context and provoked questions around identity. I explore how photographs can be used to elicit accounts of personal experiences of living in a particular historical context, in this case India, at a time of upheaval. Chapter three also explains how the use of vernacular photographs created an interview space that added texture in interview responses to enquiries about living in colonial India.

In Chapter four I explore the intersection of two influential technologies, the railways and photography, in late (1910-1947) colonial India and the social context created for those living in the railway colonies. This chapter explores the context for Leslie's family background in the railways in order to locate an account of Partition in relation to the time, culture, social relations and politics it has emerged from. The chapter explores what importance place, class and ethnicity/ancestry meant to domiciled Europeans and to Anglo-Indians in railway colonies and how that is revealed.

In Chapters five, six and seven I analyse the cartographic consequences of Partition through the accounts of those who witnessed it as soldiers.

Chapter five returns to the use of photographs in interviews with Leslie Nixon. First I will demonstrate that using photo elicitation combined with his recall and memory yielded a more fruitful response to simple interview questions regarding his experiences in the lead-up to Partition. I support this with an analysis of a series of photographs taken in November 1946 that show his participation in the Hindu ritual of Dussehra. Memory is unavoidably mediated through a personal relationship to photographs, but photography is no substitute for memory. This narrative of martial masculinity is derived from memories and Leslie's evocative images, coloured as they were with the uncertainties and contingencies surrounding the Gurkha regiments in 1947.

In Chapter six I will present the experiences of several British Gurkha officers who served in North India during Partition. The two British officers I interviewed were involved in transporting refugees through the Punjab during Partition. They would have seen unimaginable amounts of suffering and chaos and yet they spoke quite differently from Leslie about returning to India.

In Chapter seven I seek to explore the way in which memory and experience create the past as a different country that pervades living history. The contention is that the past is

never dead; rather its spectres haunt the present, giving it a contingent, unsettled quality. This narrative of Partition is inflected by this unsettled past; it is an extension of the experience itself no matter how long after the actual event it was experienced.

Leslie's account of his role during the civil unrest that occurred from August to November 1947 dominates in this chapter. The main part of which is derived from interviews and through numerous phone calls, emails and conversations.

Some of the photographs were originally uncaptioned; this is indicated in the text by the word 'uncaptioned'. The accompanying remarks are attributed to me and are to some degree speculative, derived from interviews and my knowledge of the family. The original captions that are provided were either written under the original photographs in an album or written on the flipside. The photographs, images of army pamphlets and scans of artefacts belonged to Leslie Nixon and have been passed on to me with permission to use them in the thesis. The photographs used in the thesis represent only a small sample of the hundreds that Leslie owns.

Chapter 2 – Family narratives, and differently remembered pasts

‘the photographic lexis has no fixed duration ... it depends rather on the spectator who is master of the look’ (Metz 1984, p. 81)

2.1 Introduction



Bhopal 1904

The above fragment of a photograph taken of a house in Bhopal in 1904 remains mysterious, the writing on the back reluctantly surrenders the barest of information, place and date emphasised with a stylish flourish. Yet its very existence is evidence that someone had a camera and took this photograph because it meant something to them. The photograph looks so empty that I scrutinise the dark doorway and try to find a way in through enlarging the image, but nothing is revealed beyond the shadow. I am stuck on the surface but this focuses me on the details where I learn to look for a story. The desire to narrativise the captured moment is overwhelming but the image is trapped in the time that informs it. While there seems to be little in the image, by excavating my family history I can find a tenuous link to its provenance. The house appears to be a colonial style bungalow. From what my father says, my great grandmother lived in Bhopal but it was not until 1912 that the Punjab Mail railway line connected Bhopal with Ferozepur, another cantonment town associated with her. Perhaps it is her house but there is no one to deny or confirm this so the mystery remains. As Ramanathan

(cited in Dados 2010) and Dados (2010, para. 29) argue, historicising the photograph enriches the image with a narrative, which ‘collapses the distinction between inside (experience), surface (image) and outside (narrative)’. This adds texture to the surface and thickens (Geertz cited in Bruner 2004, p. 702) the meaning of the images through situating them in narrative, in memory and in history.

This chapter begins the weaving together of a personal narrative within the public history of colonial India. This will be explored through an analysis of the engagement with two new technologies that represented the very essence of European modernity and its attendant notions of progress and movement towards civilisation: the railways and photography. These innovative technologies aroused new ways of seeing and created what Lalvani (1996) identifies as the ‘isolation’ of the passenger/observer from that which is being observed through the train window or the photograph. When applied to colonial India this had a particular resonance with those who were instrumental in introducing the technologies, those who worked with them and those depicted in them and had access to them. There was a surprisingly enthusiastic engagement by the public with both technologies (Pinney 1997, p. 20). These unexpected outcomes were not so much an appropriation of the technology as a direct engagement with it. Evidence of this engagement can be seen in private and public photographic collections. These technologies provided the passive but more mobile spectator with a privileged view of a world made more visible and whose subjectivity was premised on this collection of views. Smith in her study of the building of the railways in America argues that ‘photography prepared the way for the train’ because it was deployed to catalogue the progress of building the tracks (2013, p. 100). In addition, photography ‘intersected with other technologies of perception’, including speeding trains which obliterated the foreground scenery thus ‘radically altering the view’ (Smith 2013, p. 17) from the window of the railway carriage. A further narrowing of the view occurs through the selection and arrangement of photographs in albums. This creates a personal visual narrative representation of the world and captures the vast tracts of changing landscapes viewed through a railway carriage window. But where was the individual placed in this landscape and the narrative created in the albums that accompanied it?

Vernacular photographs

Two modalities, the oral and the visual, are employed to elucidate the narrative arc of this thesis. In addition, there is also a haptic element that comes into play when looking at photographs, holding them, turning the pages in an album and touching them to point out a feature or even to try and connect with the subject. Touch, sight and speech combine to tease out the hidden. Although memories are invoked in response to the photographs this is not a memory work project nor do I discuss the neuroscience of memory. I am interested in what people remember in and through ‘vernacular photographs’ (Batchen 2000, p. 57). Batchen, a photography curator and historian, describes these as ‘ordinary photographs: the ones bought or made by everyday folk’ (2000, p. 57), pointing out that everyday photographs are by far the most common form of images taken. There is a lacuna in the history of photography, Batchen argues, that lies not in the absence of a history of vernacular photography but in an explanation of this absence (2000, p. 28). The discovery of my own collection of vernacular photographs raised questions about what these photographs reflected about this time in India, and whether they captured some of the social changes that were occurring in the railway colonies, such as the challenges to colonial rule that were occurring in railway strikes or a shift in relations between people. Although reflecting the social conventions of the day through their composition, paradoxically the more informal photographs may include elements that suggest a less stable hierarchical, race-driven reality while simultaneously presenting a picture of a coherent community. This strain is sometimes visible in the arrangement of bodies in work group photographs taken by official photographers, and it is sometimes inverted and contradicted when Leslie talks about the images.

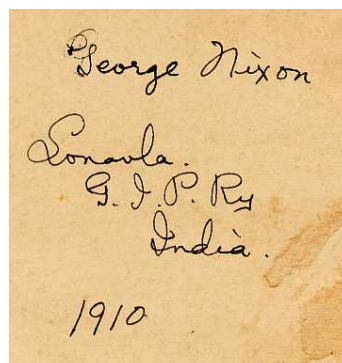
In the beginning: finding the photographs

The domains of private and public I do not take to be exclusive or a corrective of one for the other. Photographs from the particular subject of the family to the wider context of colonial India act like a lens that is able to zoom in and out of the lives captured within their frames. Photography and railways were both a part of and apart from the end of the colonial drama that reached its apotheosis in Partition when trains became evidence of the violent side of modernity and an ideological overinvestment in the hubris of colonialism and European civilisation. If the train represented a safe secular

space (Aguiar 2011, p. 87), a place of ‘liberation through mobility’, then during Partition this notion was completely inverted. Partition is an ‘end’ point to one part of this narrative but the visual beginning lay in the discovery of family photographs that I had never seen before. As a child growing up in Adelaide I listened to stories about India and my father’s experience of Partition, and rifled through loose photographs in biscuit tins looking at pictures of unknown relatives, railway communities and steam trains in what appeared, to me, to be exotic locations. I had seen Leslie’s album but had never spoken to him about it and I had never seen the cache of earlier photographs that took into its ambit trains, workers and relatives. Leslie said he knew nothing about many of the people in the photographs, that he’d never met his uncles, never met his grandfather, and was unaware of any extended family living in India. This was a mystery to me because I saw in the photographs evidence of extended family: a great uncle’s cabinet photograph of his wedding, christenings, studio shots taken in Bombay



of Arthur Nixon, an uncle, a cousin, Doris Hallam, photographed in a Lonavala studio, and an uncle, George Nixon, whose portrait was also taken in Lonavala.



These pictures of George, Leslie’s uncle indicated that there was an extended family in India but Leslie could not recall meeting them. He said that Bundy went to Burma ‘a fair bit’ but he did not know why. I subsequently located a family thread that ran to Moulmein in Burma for one generation but gaps in the birth records held at the India Office Records at the British Library in London, reflected the vagaries of the original archives. So why was there this apparent resistance to knowing or not admitting to knowing anything about these people? Was it resistance or disinterest? I could never tell at the time of the interviews but upon reflection there emerged in later interviews a straightforward unfamiliarity with these relatives and a reluctance to countenance a

stronger connection to India. An image I might attach an importance to could be tossed aside with 'I don't know', creating an invitation to speculate. The only evidence of connections are the scribbled date, place and name on most of the photos so for Leslie it seems, there is nothing he can remember about these relatives. However, for other participants (Anglo-Indians living India) in the project there was more gain than loss in the process of remembering specific scenes in the photographs because the subjects meant less to them in terms of who and where and when. The photographs acted as a catalyst for different memories of times when the community was more robust and life was more 'disciplined and the streets were cleaner' (Peggy Cantem Interview 2012; Olive Lennon Interview 2012). The notion that life was more orderly then than now was also invoked by the sisters Fay Wills and Maureen Robinson interviewed in Jabalpur.

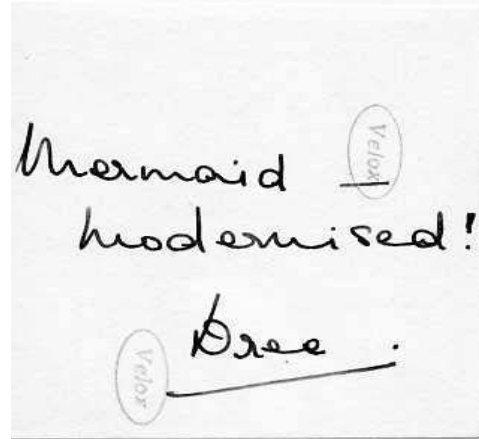


Doris Hallam Bundy's cousin Lonavla India 1910

In 2007 I travelled to my parents' home to interview Leslie Nixon about his experience of serving as a British Indian soldier with a Gurkha regiment during the Partition of India. At this stage he was aged 81 with a good memory for some events and a sharp eye for some details in the photographs. The research journey I have taken has allowed him to allay some more difficult memories associated with Partition and to re-involve him with his past in a way that frames it more objectively as 'helping' me and of talking about events in an historical rather than a personal manner. In addition, I

went to India to the places where he lived and served to interview remaining members of his generation of domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians. After observing his father's experiences before and after the Second World War, Buruma (2014) suggests those who have suffered trauma want the world to return to 'normal' and that was never to be.

Several Anglo-Indians I interviewed who revisited India from Australia or Britain were surprised, disappointed or even distressed at the changes that have taken place but for Leslie the return journey was always an unconscionable act. This will be further explained in Chapter 7. When first interviewing Leslie his answers to questions often frustratingly resulted in 'I don't know' or 'I don't remember that', so I had to find a way into his memories, when I realised that a valuable collection of photographs accompanied his narrative. The photographs were then enlisted as both illustrative of his story and also as an *aide memoir*, helping him to reconstruct his narrative. I was asking him to engage in a reconstructed past, one re-'created' and invoked through memory As Winter in her study of the history of memory (2012, p. 257) suggests, the past cannot be faithfully and 'authentically' reconstructed and memory lapses are not always evidence of deliberate elisions of difficult events. However, at times it was difficult to tell the difference between a lapse of memory and the elision of an unwanted or intrusive detail. An example of this was Leslie's reluctance to 'recognise' a rather beautiful young woman called 'Dree' who was obviously his girlfriend. I found a letter and two postcards from Dree addressed to Leslie after he left India; she enquired about his circumstances and told him of her life in India. It was obvious from her tone that he had not responded to her letters. When I asked if Leslie had taken out any Anglo-Indian girls or who Dree was, he denied knowing her. It was not a point I felt I could pursue.



There has been an enormous amount of research into memory and as Winter (2012) argues, neuroscience has cycled through several iterations of how ‘memory works’ and how memories of specific events are retained. What is relevant here is the way events are remembered and the manner in which the events are talked about and where the teller of the tales is situated in relation to whom he or she is referring to. This is not an attempt to write an alternative or counter history of colonialism but an attempt to add to the emerging work that employs visual methods such as photo elicitation using vernacular photographs to excavate a different level of knowledge of living at that time. I am not pitting ‘history against memory’, bearing in mind Klein’s (2000, pp. 128-9) caution that too often a writer may encounter the pitfall of using history and memory interchangeably or as synonyms rather than as ‘contrary rather than complement and replacement rather than supplement’.

The technology: photography in India

Photography emerged as a new technological phenomenon in Europe in the late 1830s, and a decade later it was being used in India and exhibiting the ‘indexicality ... which gave it such importance in the colonial imagination’ (Pinney 1997, p. 20). Its function

could have been reduced to that of part of a set of colonial ‘technologies of rule’ (Stoler 2002a, p. 100) or limited even further to that of surveillance. But it was valued for its reliability because of its perceived relationship to ‘truth, knowledge, observation, description, representation and record’ (Tagg 1998, p. 78). Indexicality is a concept first articulated by Peirce in a semiotic schema that referred to the irrefutable fact, in the case of photography, of the chemical connection between the image and its referent producing the ‘truth’ as contingent and contiguous with the photographic object (Batchen 1997; Pinney 1997; Sekula 1986; Strassler 2010). Chemical indexicality, Batchen (2000, p. 61) argues, is the first tactile engagement the image has with the surface of the object to be remembered; by extension, when viewed, photography operates on both haptic and visual levels. So tactility often becomes part of the sensual process of viewing as images invoke a desire to touch the image, hold it and feel its materiality.

The technology evolved from belonging to the realm of specialist practitioners, partly because of the cumbersome complex apparatus, to smaller less contingent pieces of technology that a layperson could operate outside the confines of a studio. Pinney (2008, p. 255) charts the implications of this transition in the context of colonial India, suggesting that what was once thought of as a ‘cure’ or a corrective to earlier visual and written representations ‘would soon manifest a poisonous dimension’ as it fell outside the control of colonial authorities. So in India early uses of photography were reflective of the limitations of the technology (size of the equipment, chemical complications, fragility of glass plates, humidity and other environmental considerations) and its purpose (official recordings of people and places, the scripting of a particular narrative about India). A specialist had to be in control of the process of photography and was usually acting at the behest of the government, as in the early photographs taken by Felice of the 1857 Uprising, and the production of *The People of India* catalogue, the result of a project that ran from 1868 to 1875, ‘prepared under the authority of the Government of India’ (cited in Pinney 2006, p. 107).

For this reason photography was deployed by colonial powers as a reliable method of representing the truth across a number of genres including police portraits. Pinney traces this investment in indexicality through photographic practices in India from medical and police evidence to anthropological albums and projects recording native ‘types’ to studio portraiture (1997, p. 21). This relationship between the image and

reality as index, Batchen (1997, p. 9) argues, is that the image is always ‘a tracing of something else’. As argued by Hughes and Noble, the photographs as material objects are ‘crucial to processes of memory work, as they work in and through photographs ... the indexical sign, as *relic* of past reality, takes us back to the scene of memory in ways that are not permitted by other modes of textuality’ (2003, p. 5). The significance of the indexical nature of photography is not to be confused with its ability to report the truth of something for as the researchers above argue, truth is only a trace, a relic located in the past and remembered in the present. For the purposes of this thesis photographs have been enlisted in interviews for their power to connect to and light up a memory that interview questions on their own do not. However, as Rau (2006, p. 36) cautions, photographs, so heavily dependent on context, are not necessarily recorders of reality, they merely frame the selective and partial view of the photographer. Leslie, who owns the family photographs used in the research, is related to many of the people and places captured in them, and he was the first person with whom I used the photographs. His initial responses to questions about some of the subjects in the photographs were denials of knowledge or recognition despite the captions identifying them. At other times his responses were specific and detailed, referencing the veracity of the photograph as evidence. This was often invoked during interviews with Leslie, in a kind of ‘well it must have happened that way because it is in photograph’. In his viewing some of the photographs he expresses a faith in the authority to represent the truth and, in others lapses of memory serve as an effective way to avoid being connected to the subjects.

When a photograph is taken the image remains faithful to the referent (Barthes 2000, p. 76), that is, whatever is directly within the lens range of the camera. From this point on, there remains an enduring belief in the accuracy of the images heavily informed as they are by context, time and place. It is the complex interplay between temporality and spatiality introduced by the camera that will be examined in this chapter. As Tagg (1998, p. 65) argues, photographs are ‘never evidence of history; but they are themselves ... historical’ and ‘the camera is never neutral’ (p. 63), often inadvertently recording evidence of other unexpected elements.

Another effect emerged as the photographic apparatus became more manageable and affordable – it quickly evolved to produce a ‘form of representation and memory practice characteristic of the bourgeoisie’ (Strassler 2003, p. 31). Situating family photographs or private photograph collections in a broader context, Strassler argues,

includes them in the same analytical discourse that looks at ‘broader social imaginaries’ (2003, p. 40). Bourdieu situates photography within a range of social functions, acknowledging that in Europe the technology was ‘introduced early and established itself very quickly’ (1990, p. 20). However, prior to the spread of privately owned cameras there was a change occurring in the nature of official photography that was enabled by its mobility. Pinney (2008, p. 82) argues that because the technology became ‘increasingly miniaturised and increasingly mobile’ this in turn affected the *habitus* or the context of the photograph, changing it from that of the ‘colonial habitus of the colonial bureaucracy, the army, the telegraph and the railroads’, moving it outside, to the street, capturing the increasing fragility of the ‘colonial hegemony’. This in turn exposed something of the febrile atmosphere of colonial India. Pinney argues that this is most apparent in a series of official photographs taken after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre (also known as the Amritsar massacre) in 1919. Photography was employed in this situation for its forensic abilities, displayed in a series of almost blank pictures taken by a young Indian photographer and nationalist named Narayan Vinayak Virkar (Pinney 2008, pp. 83-87). In an analysis of the set of photographs taken by Felice Beato in 1857 at Sikanderbagh, Khorakiwala (2013, p. 138) argues that, although the photographs were staged, inscribed in their composition and subsequent circulation were ‘shifting norms in image making’ that referenced the modern. The modern here refers to the changes in technology and also in the elevation of the image to a ‘quasi legal document’. Chaudhury (2012) in his study of the development of photographic practices in India after 1857, focuses on its entanglements with colonialism in relation to an analysis of the ‘Peoples of India’ (an early collection of images that was to create ethnographic record of various groups of people). In *The Coming of Photography in India* Pinney offers a very detailed history of the arrival, uptake and ‘disturbances’ caused by the technical practice of photography (2008a, p. 133). This ability to record beyond the studio to the unpredictable outside recasts the role of photography from ‘cure [to] poison and prophecy’ (Pinney 2008a, p. 145). It is these early stages of photographic practice that enabled people to represent themselves first in studio settings and then with the changes in technology in their homes and workplaces.

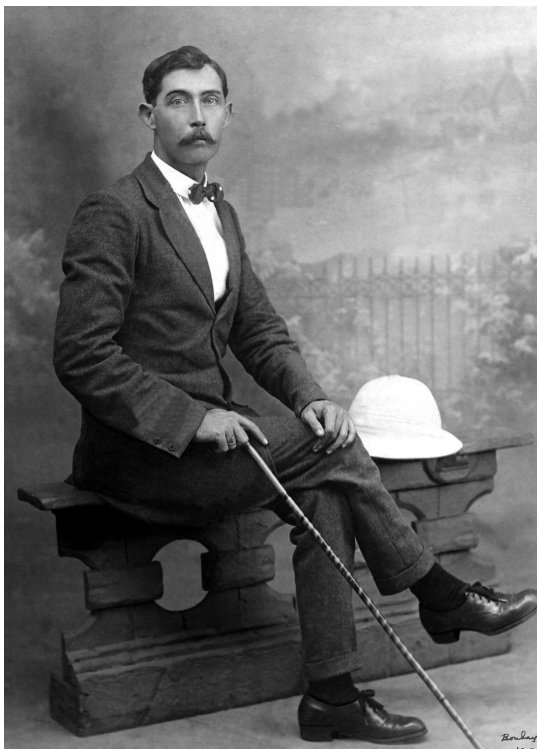
Photographic images posthumously followed the tragedy of violent clashes between colonial authorities and the Indian populace. Pinney argues that because photography had become a mobile technology capable of documenting ‘increasingly chaotic public

spaces in which colonial hegemony appeared increasingly fragile' (2008, p. 83), it was becoming a 'poison' to authorities. Through an analysis of the evidentiary images taken by Virkar, who framed the aftermath of the scenes of the Amritsar massacre as a crime, Pinney suggests that the military legitimacy Dyer (the British officer in command of the Amritsar massacre) had argued for in his actions was undermined by the evidentiary purpose of the images. The images are almost empty, possessing a forensic blankness, a doorway and an empty railway track suggesting that the evidence of the violence is hidden in the bullet holes like a fibre or a fingerprint visible with a microscope or a powerful zoom lens. Somehow this conjures the sense of a haunted space camouflaged in the everyday, an everydayness that belies the tragedy that took place. By contrast the photographs taken during Partition show thousands of people on the move, trains stuffed with living bodies, dark alleyways and rivers choked with corpses and vultures. The use of photography at these sites of the tragic enforcement of military control captures the unwanted presence of violence directly related to both the colonial presence and its absence.

Photography accommodates both private and public spheres of life. In the private sphere the photographs contain an archive constrained by a different set of social practices that reflect the contexts they are located in, for example, family, school, work and army. They can also be read on several levels. Strassler identifies this response in positioning of subjects in front of the camera, as a 'refracted vision' that also 'illuminates modes of interpretation and habits of practice' (2010, p. 26). Similarly in India photography of the self as subject first became public in studios, but it was also used to officially record workers in work places by the British government, and by anthropologists to provide evidence of the different peoples in India. In short, photography had a range of uses that did not immediately 'democratise' the portrait because initially it remained out of the financial ambit of local Indians and domiciled communities. As Pinney (1997) also points out, single portraits were more easily managed than groups but as the technology changed, large outdoor group portraits began to be taken in railway colonies, composed of large numbers of people. Significantly, for this research, Leslie's family were also drawn to this technology which is why an archive of their family photographs survives from India. The earliest torn black and white photograph of the wall of a building in Bhopal was taken in 1904 and the last photographs were taken in early 1947 as Partition began. In all they capture

the moments to which Strassler (2007), Bourdieu (1980) and Lalvani (1996) refer to as the private moment within the public context. Photographs are for the most part taken of an instant in time without interrupting it (unless the photograph is choreographed in a studio), to be viewed at a later date in a different location by a different audience. Photographs can do this because they are situated across temporalities. They also have a ripple effect on the narrative, travelling ‘in all directions as though the instantaneous image were an expanding circle’ (Berger cited in Pinney, 2008, p. 48) The family photographs, operated at both a narrative and an illustrative level as the focus of conversations that switched away from them and then back towards them.

Portraits : who did they think they were?



Bombay 1917

In Leslie’s collection the earliest photographs of people were portraits taken in studios where a representation of the bourgeois self (Lalvani 1996, p. 60) could be created through the use of backdrops, lighting, clothing, posture and gaze. Garden (2007, para. 4), relying on Soja’s demarcation of first (real) and second (imaginary representations) spaces, in an analysis of the Indian photographic studio argues that the photographic space produced in studio photographs falls into a third space that ‘is neither real nor imaginary’. Since it is the sitter who chooses the staging of the portrait,

his/her agency, Garden explains, adds to the overall effect of the photograph. This was brought to mind when I looked closely at Leslie's father's portrait, '*Bombay 1917*'. It is almost impossible not to draw on Barthes' canonical work and his unrestrained approach to affect, employed to understand himself through his own family photographs. Even so, Batchen (2000) and Smith (2013) are alert to the anomalies in Barthes' own applications of punctum to photographs that reveal 'deep seated anxieties about race and sexuality' (Smith 2013, p. 17) when commenting on details which are clearly at variance with the image. However, searching for a way to express my own understanding of the photographs I have employed Barthes' approach and vocabulary. Initially, 'studium' (purpose and context) and 'punctum' (emotional entry point) (1982, pp. 26-27) were useful tools. Then I found more nuanced readings were occurring outside these two fields. Rau describes this more intense engagement as, 'a subjective affect caused by something the image does not record' (2006, p. 295). The *punctum* that Barthes identifies as the wound or the affective key to the image, says Batchen (2000), is more about Barthes' response than it is about the image we are not privileged to view. Barthes allows himself an outpouring of musings over the Wintergarden photograph of his mother; these provide a sombre reflection on the past, on loss and memory, and as Batchen suggests, they presage Barthes' own death. The inclusion of affect transcends theory and opens up a space for simply looking at the photographs rather than constantly searching for their meaning. When viewing photographs, Barthes splits the reading of the photograph by ascribing denotation and connotation to images that dichotomises the way photographs have been viewed and understood by researchers. However, the problem with such divisions, like the one between meaning and truth, is that they cannot be sustained (as Barthes's own work demonstrates). Tagg (1988) and Sekula (1987) argue that the shift from meaning to truth is a political one. Those in power decide what is true and what is not, what is absolute and what is merely relative. Robustly proclaiming that 'photography is modernity run riot', Sekula argues also that the representational power of photography was enlisted as a 'deterrent' and a repressive' (1986, p. 7). Sekula locates portraits within a 'social and moral hierarchy' (1986, p. 10) that celebrates representation of the bourgeois self. That seems apparent in Bundy's portrait through posture, gaze, clothing and backdrop.

Who did he think he was? How did he want others to see him? What did the photographer think and what did 'he make use of to exhibit his art?' (Barthes 2000, p.

13). When I looked closely at this early portrait photograph of Leslie's father, Bundy in 'Bombay 1917', sitting in front of an elaborately painted background of a European garden, I was drawn into the photograph by the choice of background and imagery. The *punctum* – the point of interest, the entry into the photograph – is not always such an intimate portal into the image. In the above photograph of 'Bundy' there is a strange juxtaposition between the backdrop, the 'blunt frontality' (Lalvani 1996, p. 66) of the head-on stare, the direct piercing gaze of the subject against his sideways posture displaying the odd shortness of his legs, tweed suit, polka dot bow tie, cane and *sola topi*. I don't know how my grandfather saw himself in relation to the colonial construct in which he lived but he chose its outward symbol, clothing, to signify his status as a European, the not quite British Indian gentleman in India as opposed to the British gentleman stereotyped as a *pukka sahib*, part of the 'elites whom we tend to imagine as representing all whites of the Raj' (Mizutani 2005, p. 22). Rather than democratising portraiture Lalvani suggests that photographs became another way to indicate class, to project it onto the text of the body and that it was a 'representational system ... bound ... securely into a dominant discourse ...' (1996, p. 43), for example, 19th century European men and their families presented as models of colonial middle class normality. For Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans that was an aspiration. Lalvani (1996, p. 68) explores the use of the studio space 'to evoke ... the social order that comprises the bourgeois milieu' through the use of backdrops. In addition, Appadurai (1997) suggests that, together with the subject, a text is created from the body in the theatrical space of the photographic studio. That text embodies the dominant discourses of colonial respectability, family and European-ness. However, as photography evolved and moved out of the studio into the hands of ordinary people a different, more intimate aspect to life is captured at home or at leisure where the backdrop is not always contrived; rather as Metz (1985, p. 85) suggests, the image 'cuts off a piece of time and space'. I would suggest that the image also escapes the 'death' that Sontag (1977), Barthes (2000) and Metz (1985) associate with the past in photographic images. In the photographs selected for discussion below the scenes are no longer confined to the studio although there are occasions when studios were used for special portraits and occasions.



Jhansi



Bhusawal

What does the Grandmother holding her grandchildren against a background that attempts to erase India denote? The two portrait photographs above show contrasting backdrops. One is a studio shot taken in Jhansi and the other was taken some years later in the garden of a railway house in '40 Blocks' in Bhusawal, Maharashtra. 'Jhansi' is a *carte de visite* (Pinney & Peterson 2003), a rigid little photograph set on a cardboard backing produced in a studio, complete with a lush European garden as a backdrop. She was often photographed in studios as she cradled infants against backdrops that both displace and locate her. In this case the indexicality of the photograph exposes a wistful aspiration to a European imaginary seen through the studio background that is a signifier of European heritage. Attempts to displace the referent and idealise the context become transparent in Bhusawal where there is less displacement – but the posing and framing are clearly displacing strategies. They follow the conventions of the day, foregrounding the family and European heritage albeit of a person who had never lived in Europe. The two photographs also indicate the way photography had evolved beyond the controlled confines of the studio setting. Not that there is anything more spontaneous in this example but the background in Bhusawal does more closely reflect the reality of life, or at least of what it looked like in a railway town. The pot plants may refer to the itinerant lifestyle of the railway family.

Portraiture became as popular a genre for studio photography in India as it was in Europe. Cabinet photographs, mostly portraits mounted on cardboard, were in high demand when photography largely took place in studios. In Leslie's collection are several early (dated 1908, 1910 and 1919) cabinet photographs taken in well-known studios such as Gomes and de Lair, EOS and Clifton and Co in Kalbadevi Road in Bombay. Kalbadevi Road was known for the proliferation of photographic studios owned and managed by Parsis, Indians and Europeans. In these studios portraits, the subjects were mostly single men staring fixedly off centre or directly into the camera, usually using a chair or a book as props. As Pinney (1997, pp. 74-75) points out, in India there was little difference in the style of early portrait photographs, whether taken by Indian or European photographers, as 'key colonial aesthetic forms' informed their composition. Later, however, studio portraits of Indians did begin to connect to a stronger sense of visuality in popular practice that differentiated them from the early European style. This is evident through the lavish use of colour (over painting), religious symbols and fantasy backdrops. Parsis in particular were active in setting up the earliest photographic studios in India (Pinney 1997); they are considered to be early adopters of the technology and, as Arnold argues, Parsis 'occupied a crucial role in the dissemination and popularisation of everyday technology in India' that included cameras (2013, p. 21). Later it shall be seen that Parsis were also as strongly connected to the railways as domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians.

In India, cameras and photography were taken up with enthusiasm but as Arnold argues, 'the functions and meanings assigned to modernity are not everywhere the same' (2013, p. 5). In other words, their uses are mediated by the existing sociotechnical systems and cultural practices. Arnold (2013) challenges the notion that although from 'a single point of origin', technological modernity followed a single trajectory. However, when photography became more available, vernacular Indian photographs connected to a strong underlying sense of visuality that posited photographic practice, especially portraiture, with creating 'imaginative worlds' (Strassler 2010, p. 147). In India, as Pinney argues, 'much British colonial photographic imagery' sustains a link between visibility and power (1997, p. 113). What this illustrates is that the two different practices of photography can coexist within the same field. This is evident in the use of fantasy like backdrops and settings for singular portraits where, again, indexicality is being recruited to provide verisimilitude to the

referent. In the collection of photographs used in this thesis these backdrops suggest an invisible European referent, which remains imaginary. Barthes's analysis of image insists on the referent remaining 'glued' to the photograph and yet it does not take into account the lack of a tangible referent (Shurkus 2014, p. 71). This is present in some of these frames particularly when I look at those taken of Leslie's grandmother who I believe did not ever live in Europe despite the backdrop in her portrait attempting to position her there.

2.2 Memory

As Bhabha (2008) suggests, 'memory allows us to live with those things we can't resolve, with those things which are ambiguous, with the past which we cannot silence'. At the same time it is possible to revise the past at every telling and perhaps it is this that in turn contributes to the tension between memory and history. In addition, if that past is impacted by a traumatic event the retellings can emerge as 'crystallised narratives' or are presented as 'frozen slides' (Das 2000, p. 61) that are never revised for fear of what the revision may reveal. Retelling traumatic events also means a reconstruction of the event and with that a physical response to the trauma may be re-experienced (Winter 2012). Memory is not an intact linear resource to select from, it is reconstituted every time it is drawn upon and it is also likely to be influenced by audience and context. This does not render an event 'untrue' or memory 'unreliable' as the act of remembering is iterative so that at each telling a new detail may be added or forgotten. However, no matter how many times I went back to some events, Leslie never took up the opportunities for reflexion and change. His answers varied very little. What I first took to be deliberate elisions or obfuscatory forgettings I later thought of as recollections that are malleable and influenced by the person trying to remember from a vantage of their 'now' a 'now' which is never static. It was at these times, when there was an absence in Leslie's recollections, that I have had to glean information from the backs of photographs about who the people were and what the meaning of place might be. Like language, photographs elicit responses according to who the audience is and what information is being sought.

Memory may be unreliable as a source of 'truth' but every account of an event that becomes 'history' is witnessed, experienced, talked about or forgotten in a particular way by the people who were there. Memories are selected and acted upon, like the

viewing of photographs, to create a fluid narrative; not everything can be carried by the surface of the photograph – their layers await exposure and engagement. Remnants of memories are snared in images and other relics; photographs are memory places but as Derrida (1973, p. 156) argues, ‘the trace is not a presence [it] dislocates, displaces, and refers beyond itself’; it is the afterthought. So how does one traverse the territory of Derridean ‘traces’ and recollections and reconcile them with an acceptable rendering of the past? Batchen (2000, p. 68) argues that photographic albums embody ‘a will to narrative’; a sense-making that may be disembodied from its time. Because of their ability to record a ‘margin of excess’, photographs often capture the unforeseen as Pinney notes, ‘However hard the photographer tries to *exclude* the camera lens always *includes* ...’ (2008a, p. 4). This excess lies in the form of unintended details or even unwanted intruders into the frame such as in the inclusion of people unnoticed at the time whose identities may never have been made known otherwise. In the age of digital photography these unwanted elements can be erased or discarded or instantaneously observed and rephotographed. The manipulation of digital images is a feature of contemporary photographic practices that control compositions that may never reach the print stage. This does not mean to say that there was no level of contrivance, staging or mischief in earlier photography (such as those discussed previously by Beato).



Uncaptioned

Hussein Amir seated with the Nixon brothers (Deborah Nixon)

In a comment on a photograph of a boy I thought might have been another uncle, I asked, ‘What beach are they on?’ and Leslie told me the boy was called Hussein Amir (later Gordon Forbes). Hussein was adopted into the family ‘like a brother’ after being rejected by his Scottish mother and Indian father. As it turned out, after interviewing my uncle I learnt that Hussein’s Scottish mother had gone to Scotland for a holiday and returned to India to discover that her husband had taken another wife so she decided to leave India and her son behind. The abandonment of mixed blood children, especially in a situation like this, was not uncommon in India (Buettner 2004; Fischer-Tine 2009; Hawes 1996; Mizutani 2012). In Leslie’s words, ‘That’s Hussein Amir he grew up with us his father was a local man, his mother was Scottish. Then his father married again, he didn’t want this half-European, half-Indian boy in the house. My father was a softie so we took him in. He changed his name to Gordon Forbes’ (Leslie Nixon Interview 2007). Even if Gordon was ‘like a brother’ he was not mentioned until I saw him in the photographs. The photograph below is one of Leslie and his brothers, home from school in Mussoorie. Gordon Forbes is in the centre back row, flanked by Leslie on the right and Norman Nixon, on the left. Norman, Leslie and Gordon would have been the closest in age out of the seven brothers.



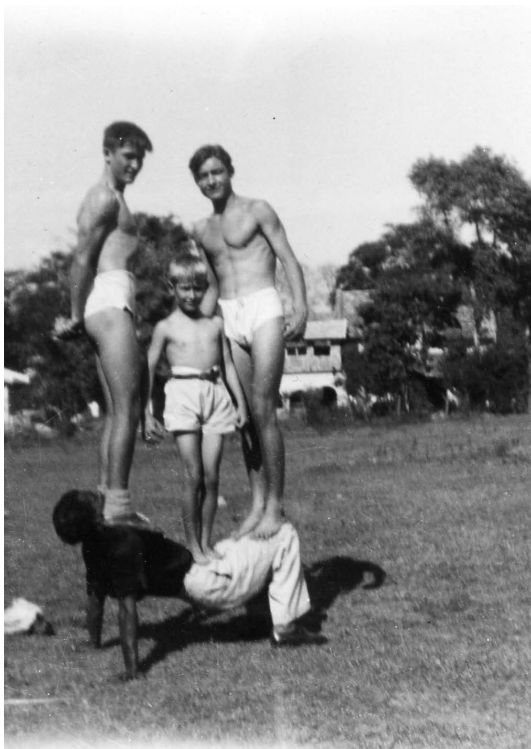
Uncaptioned

Back row: Norman, Gordon Forbes (nee Hussein Amir) Leslie; front row: Michael, Bundy Nixon (Deborah Nixon)

I wondered why only Leslie, his two younger brothers and Gordon Forbes (the seventh 'brother') appear in this photograph. It was obviously taken in a studio rather than taken by Bundy, as were other less formal shots in the album. This suggests that the photo may have been taken as some kind of special memorial. Re-examining the photographs it is possible to peel back layers of family history to reveal what may have been forgotten. Repeated dismissals and denials of knowledge about the people in the photographs and the inconsistencies in Leslie's recollections made me search deeper into the archive. I wanted to arrive at a Barthian 'truth of lineage' (2000, p. 103) derived from the images, the manner in which they were discussed, the information they were silently offering up and the omissions in the temporal space of the moment. As an ideal stasis, a 'still point of the turning world' (Eliot 1963, p. 191), they do not document the instabilities of the wider context they are disciplined within, but they hint at it. The controlled ideal of stability suggests that this world will last forever, at least in a photograph.

Servants at the 'edge of sight'

Smith (2013) draws on Benjamin and Kracauer to explore what she refers to as the 'edge of sight' in order to investigate both the notion of may have been unknowingly recorded in a photographic frame and the unseen elements outside the frame. These can be the figures of people, buildings or even telegraph lines, in fact, anything that arouses interest at a later time to an unintended audience. This unforeseen outcome produces different understandings of the image. Her work sensitised me to how what I was seeing



differed from Leslie's view. When I saw the image on the left I felt some sort of shock; the pyramid of bodies replicates a body builder aesthetic. Despite being in a natural setting the picture has been meticulously arranged. When I asked Leslie what was going on here he said, 'I can't remember but I think he was one of those strongmen' (Leslie Interview 2007). This photograph seems to invite a response to the message that is contained in its geography as Sekula observes, 'Every photographic image is a sign above all of someone's investment in the sending of a message' (1984, pp. 5-6).

But I cannot quite identify what it is about this photograph that invites a response. The three clothed figures standing on the fully clothed man who is straining to support them somehow embarrasses me. There is a kind of crude symmetry and symbolism in the composition of the photograph: the youngest and lightest boy is standing near the prone man's private parts, the others are being supported by his legs and chest. The startling image raises questions that cannot be answered about the man's complicity, his role, he doesn't look like a circus 'strongman' or even a servant – he looks too well dressed. He may be the chauffeur Joseph. He's definitely Indian, I can tell by looking at his dark skin. Even in the tiny photograph the figure on the ground supporting the boys looks well dressed. He is wearing European clothing, shiny shoes, trousers, a belt and shirt. I

could not get Leslie to expand on in his response, he was uninterested in the photograph and I could tease no further information from him.

The Nixons were not a wealthy family; typically railway families were middle class rather than wealthy but as with most people of their standing they had a retinue of servants. The servants Leslie identified included a *Mali* (gardener), a *kitmurgar* (cook), a *chokra* or a *chokri* (run-around boy or boy) *ayah* (nursemaids), *bearers*, a *chauffeur* and a *bungi* (night soil collector), and when hunting, a *shikari* (guide). So domestically there would have been contact with Indians through servants but servants rarely appear in photographs. However, in the photograph above the young girl (the *chokri*) seems to have been deliberately included. Leslie overshadows her as she stands behind him and in the background a telegraph pole signals that this is probably near a railway line. Judging by his age it might have been taken in Bhusawal, but he has no recollection of the location or circumstances.



Uncaptioned

Barefooted servants (Deborah Nixon)

This was a world in which adults kept a watchful eye on the development of their children but as noted by Stoler (2002), the presence of servants in the house and in close proximity, although living separately, meant that children for a while (up until they went to boarding school) crossed the lines in terms of interacting with ‘natives’. Leslie’s

mother died at an early age, leaving eight children behind, I was told that this was the reason they were wild, perhaps they were less supervised in terms of playing with servants' children than others. Such early contact could result in developing a distinctive accent sometimes referred to as 'Bombay Welsh', or as a *chi chi* accent; this was a particularly offensive label used to refer to Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans. The accent was a marker that one had grown up in India, perhaps indicating also that the family did not have enough money to send the children to Britain to be educated. Leslie's accent retains some of the cadences of his upbringing and he is often asked about its origins; he usually asks the enquirer to guess before telling them. Recently some older relatives from his mother's side of the family contacted Leslie and he asked them to send him a recording of their voices so that he could hear what his mother may have sounded like. Leslie was adamant that when he went to The Isle of Dogs for a short time in the 1930s he developed an English accent and then lost it when he returned to India.

Shikar and manly pursuits



Dad, Norman, Rob, self, shoffur and shikari shooting in central India (1946)

The empty elephant stable provides part of the backdrop for the group: left to right Bundy, the shoffur [sic], Joseph (slightly behind), my uncle, Leslie's new Australian friend Robert (Rob) May, and sitting in front, a local *shikari*. It is Christmas 1946 and they are about to go on *shikar*.

The images show an ideal (studium) of domiciled life, for example, father and brothers, servants and soldiers on leave and about to go on *shikar* (but dressed for war). The photograph asserts the temporal in a moment of stasis; its purpose is not to

document the instabilities of the time but it is hinted at through the army uniforms and *kukri* knives. The fact that my father is shirtless suggests to me that he may be under the influence of his new friend, Rob May, the Australian soldier standing next to him. As Pinney (1992, p. 4) points out, ‘However hard the photographer tries to *exclude* the camera lens always *includes*’. This attempt at exclusion cannot avoid capturing unanticipated or accidental details. This *shikar* photograph required a collaborative effort to pastiche together a full picture, its locality and the identity of the other people in the photograph. My uncle (Norman Nixon) recognised himself and the name of the *shoffur*, Joseph, the locality, *Bagra Tawa*, and he identified the structure in the background as an elephant stable. My father saw it as ‘home on leave going hunting’ and told an anecdote about the chauffeur and his father taking the car apart and putting it back together so that the only thing that worked was the windscreen wipers – ‘they often tinkered with the car’ (Leslie Interview 2010). This told me more about the relationship between the older man and the chauffeur than it did about the particulars of the photograph. However, what that also told me was that my grandfather often worked closely with Joseph (who may have been an Indian Christian) who appears in several other photographs, always neatly dressed, and who was with the family for several years. One of my uncles was also named Joseph but never went by this name, choosing Patrick instead.

Rob May standing second from right is the only person I have spoken to outside the family who met Bundy. According to Rob May (Interview 2007), Bundy ‘was not a dyed in the wool Pom and he had an “Anglo Banglo” accent ... you my dear have a touch of the tarbrush – but I’d never say that to Nic [Leslie]’. I wasn’t offended by that comment but perhaps Leslie would have been. In the photograph Leslie, Rob May, his friend, my uncle and grandfather all hold rifles and are ready for *shikar* [a hunt], there is certainty about the posture of the figures in the photo – the people know their ‘place’. Leslie and Rob May are also wearing part of their military uniforms. Both were to serve with Gurkha regiments: my father for the duration of the Partition migration in India and Rob until the mid-1970s. They met at officers training in Bangalore and Leslie invited him to Christmas. When I interviewed Rob May in Perth in 2007 he was bent over, almost doubled like a question mark, this shocked me as in the photographs I had seen a straight backed young man. I also learnt that he had led a life just as bent out of shape by the crippling effects of post-traumatic stress disorder. He slept with a *Gurkha*

khukri (knife) under his pillow in a constant state of hyper-vigilance. Rob May was proud of his Gurkha service but it had cost him a marriage and had had an impact on his relationship with his son. He tried to be cavalier about the effects but when he showed me a document that indicted he had suffered from depression, was aggressive at times, had powerful violent flashbacks and drank too much I knew that he was not as in control as he had said he was. However, on the day of the interview he was charming and forthcoming about his service and memories of India. We ate a curry lunch with his friend, Terry Dawe, another ex-serviceman.

Leslie too suffered from his involvement in the events of Partition; for nearly six months he helped to escort refugees between India and Pakistan. Even now he has nightmares about the sound of people being put to the sword; he says it sounds like jackals crying. Sometimes I feel responsible for waking these memories up, for taking him back to a place he has spent his life trying to forget. When I look at the *shikar* picture I feel the weight of the future in it, the foreknowledge that this is a fleeting moment of perceived control over a world misunderstood by those of the domiciled communities living in it. Barthes refers to this as the anteriority of the image, the strangeness of the time that is embedded in all photographs (2000, p. 96).

I always wondered what the large hangar-like structure in the background was until my uncle Norman (third from left) pointed out that it was an elephant stable. This group travelled by bullock cart, then set up camp and hunted on foot – they were not big game hunters. The nostalgic image that is often conjured up when people think of tiger hunting in India is of *sola topi* wearing Europeans in safari suits standing in front of elephants, redolent of a traditional English fox hunt (if you allow for elephants rather than horses and tigers instead of foxes). In the same way the orientalist view of India, as strange and exotic animals, people, and incomprehensible religions, is still resonant. Leslie said they rarely went after big game; there weren't any left in this area. Instead they shot pigs, spotted deer, wild fowls, peacocks and black buck. Not quite the portrait of great white hunters their uniforms remind me that in 1946 India was approaching Independence and with this the British Raj was an increasingly unstable construct.

Like most photographers Leslie often focussed on people as subjects in locations that were connected to the military or were of historical interest. Amongst Leslie's photographs are very few of outdoor scenes without familiar faces in them. There is one example, however, of a street and one of a funeral pyre in Mhow taken in 1946. The

street scene shows a wide view of the European style buildings, telegraph poles and people going about their daily business. There was a military training centre at Mhow; perhaps he wanted to remember the town for its ordinariness. Another photograph taken in Mhow reveals that the smiling young man standing next to a pyre was missing a hand. The photograph is 'busy, the three men clustered around the corpse of an older woman are engrossed in their task, oblivious to the photographer. The young man on the right leans down and cups the woman's head perhaps he is her son. It is an unusual subject, a very intimate scene and I wonder what authority was invoked in order to capture the image. Perhaps it is because Leslie was in an army uniform or because he spoke Hindi or Urdu and is male that he was permitted to take the photograph. I am responding to a desire to make sense of why they were taken when he dismisses them with an, 'I don't remember that photo or why I took them'. I try to supply a context because he cannot.



Indian bazar Mhow (1947)

The photographs offer a particularly intimate zoom into a life constructed within a British Indian context that was soon to collapse. The challenge is how to 'read' them; either as illustrative or as rich micro narratives on their own (or as both); the issue arises for Ramanathan (2007, p. 52) also as she notes that the 'photo as photo and photo as narrative' can be intertwined with those that own them into a wider historical narrative.

2.3 Gardens and ruins

The photographs not only represent ‘private lives engaged in social moments’ (Lalvani 1996, p. 65), they have a normative function that connects them ‘to the domestic ideal’ (p. 60), they reinforce who the subjects see themselves as being. For example, the use of a bucolic English backdrop in a photographer’s studio belies the reality of a dusty garden crowded with pots in a railway colony.

Although they may be limited, contingent and atomised, the photographs are powerful pieces of visual evidence about the transgressive and sometimes contradictory nature of social ordering in colonial India, particularly in smaller towns.

When I began archiving the photos I started to look more closely at them and found a new dimension to the context for this story. They conveyed images that blended a patina of conformity, in aesthetic terms, that appeared to present a colonial ideal of order and hierarchy but they also included minor disruptions to this system. What I have done is to order them into a kind of narrative that reflects this nexus. It is also imbricated with my retelling the experience and our combined reading of the photographs. The photographs connected to the research are not of exotic ethnographic subjects but of the quotidian of domiciled life in India in railway communities along the Great Indian Peninsular line and in the few months before Partition. Photographs allow a narrative to be constructed both within and around them as Pinney (1992, p. 27) points out; the viewer is an active participant in bringing life to the photograph uninhibited by the temporal, contextual and narrative constraints of film. It is a process that defies a fixed ‘meaning’ and offers almost ‘too many meanings’, particularly for the anthropologist.

Family photographs are more than just souvenirs of anniversaries and family gatherings as Lalvani (1996, p. 63) puts it, ‘they ... affirm and celebrate particular discursive and ideological formations. ... it is a metonymic performance of a discursive field...’ about caste, class, race and quotidian life and the body becomes a signifier of class ‘in a society increasingly mediated by visual interaction’ (p. 43). This is very apparent in the early photos that have a more rigid and theatrical feel to them but as photography left the studio and was adopted as a chronicler of more mundane life they become more candid and less formal. In addition the photographs, although having

European subjects and backdrops are undeniably not British or Indian, they are, as argued by Bear (2007), a heterotopic space occupied by the domiciled community.

The context – leading to the railways

Part of the wider context for this story is to look at the nature of the railway communities, which were the main employers of Europeans and Anglo-Indians up until 1947, through the lens of the camera. Employment opportunities at a higher level within these communities were predicated in part on how European/British one could claim to be. Within the European community there was a further distinction made between ‘the “heaven born” [and] the “country born” domiciled community [which] consisted of people of European descent who were permanent residents in India’ (Blunt 2000, p. 5). In *Domicile and Diaspora* Blunt uses the term ‘domiciled communities’ to refer to both groups because according to the Calcutta Domiciled Enquiry Committee of 1918-19 ‘no distinction was drawn between persons born in India of European parents and brought up in India and persons of mixed blood’ (2005, p. 33). Mizutani also argues that the two groups of people may have had different origins but the Europeans were only ‘British’ by descent ‘while’ un-British in other ways by virtue of the fact that they were permanent residents of India ‘the domiciled were there not as agents of colonialism’ but as part of the labour force, and because they could not keep up proper connections to Europe (2005, p. 71) their European-ness was somehow diluted.

In addition, it is widely recognised in the literature that racial distinctions were not necessarily drawn using biological criteria although there was a tendency to ‘... extreme biologising and essentialising of race’ (Arnold 2004, p. 262), and that this reached its zenith in the 1820s-1830s ‘in the exclusion or strict subordination of others’ (Arnold 2004, p. 262). Bear (1994), Buettner (2004) and Blunt (2005) argue that race was also defined through social factors such as accent, schooling, employment and the ability to fund trips to Britain. Bear argues that those with more ‘European blood’ were deemed more suitable for control of the perceived modernising force of the railways, as it was ‘an elaborate moral typography of racial fitness for command’ (Bear 1994, p. 535). Arnold (1980, p. 252) concurs with this description of the organisation within the railways, commenting that ‘these European and Eurasian subordinates enjoyed (and jealously preserved) a privileged position as a racially defined aristocracy of labour’. Anxiety around racial distinction was prevalent at every level of Raj society and class.

However, the number of Indians working on the railways (albeit in subordinate positions) always outnumbered those from the domiciled community of European and Anglo-Indian employees.

What emerged from my interviews with Leslie Nixon despite the temporal and geographical distance of nearly 70 years of living in Australia is still a desire to differentiate himself from the Anglo-Indian community. When talking about his early life in India he identifies strongly with his maternal British ancestry and had never heard the term domiciled European before I used it. However, domiciled Europeans according to Arnold were themselves looked upon as, 'Lowly in sight of the white elite ...' (1980, p. 252). It has been argued by McMenamin (2011) that railway colonies located in smaller towns may have had greater social contact across all racial lines. The inclusion of photographs in Leslie's collection of Joseph the shoffur [sic], the workers in the railway, Dr Alvarez and his family (to be discussed further in Chapter 4), and servants, hint at an inclusion that is mostly absent in other of the more formal photographs.

Curatorship of the story has been passed on through its retelling thus this is a kind of postmemory reading of the photographs and at the same time it situates them in a colonial landscape. Hirsch (1997, p. 22) sees postmemory as 'distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection'; in essence it is the narrative a family grows up with as stories are passed from one generation to the next. The photographs were initially used to try and trigger recollections of the past and in the process were discovered to be a very rich resource in themselves. I was relying to some degree on their indexicality; however, they did not always evoke a memory about the photo itself but a detail like the *khus* mat on the verandah or an elephant stable in the background or the kinds of animals that were caught on *shikar*.

I am mindful of universalising the significance of particular photographs; they are not *every* story of life in pre-Independence India, they are one family's record, and at the same time contained within the photos is the wider 'discourse'. They are not a complete narrative but like a series of photographs around a particular event they present images any one of which has the potential to signify the whole. So an individual photograph can be lifted out of sequence from a ceremony like the *Dussehra* (Dharamsala 1946) where the kukris were blooded and the 'dominant narrative

replicates the sequence of events' (Pinney 1997, p. 150). Photographs in an album may be disarranged through the vicissitudes of time and acquire a montage effect out of sequence but their disorder may be transcended in obedience to a stronger connected narrative.

Smaller towns: other places, other spaces

On a broader level, what may be reflected in some of these photographs is that a less segregationist society may have been actualised in the quotidian of the railway colony and that transgressions appear to some extent to be the norm. Bear asserts that those in the 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' (1994, p. 544). Certainly class, that is, being working class, of European background but born and living generationally in India put one beyond the boundary of what was truly British (as argued by Mizutani) in a more perplexing way than racism. The presence of poor whites was no anomaly, it was an affront to the veneer of social superiority assumed by the colonial administrators (Fischer-Tine 2004; Hawes 1996; Mizutani 2012). Bear (2007) argues that racism marked the boundary between different groups of people within the colonies; however, Sinha (2008), while acknowledging the limitations that race created, suggests that class was an even more remarkable differentiator. This is true anecdotally amongst the people I interviewed who felt 'the British' were 'snobs' and unfairly privileged. Perhaps everyday life was less transgressive than researchers suggest and was experienced differently in small town colonies such as Bhusawal, Katni and Damoh, some of the smaller colonies in central India. Although, talking about the city in a political context, Khilnani (2012, p. 125) comments that Gandhi viewed the major cities as 'creatures of the Raj' and that villages and towns were very often very far from their influence. Many of the studies of railway communities focus on the larger communities in Madras, Calcutta, Kharagpur, Bombay and Delhi. This is not to say that there was no racism, no ranking, no class boundaries at all in the smaller colonies because it was actioned in the census categories and was a source of anxiety amongst Anglo-Indians and Christian Indians for example, but at some levels it may have been experienced differently and although not the focus of this research it may be worthy of further investigation.

This chapter closes with a photograph taken in Jabalpur in 1946. This image is alive with detail. Bundy is still wearing a *topi* in 1946, even though they had become unfashionable, it was still a strong visual signifier of the coloniser.



Wybrants & Dad friends & self on day at Jub (1946)

This white bungalow was the only house Bundy owned in India. It is very typical of the houses still remaining in Jabalpur. Many, however, have fallen into ruin, too large and derelict to repair, they are crumbling away. This picture has an enticingly textured background: it is fronded with shadows and the blurred figure of my uncle flitting like a ghost between the two men on the right of the photo. To the left of the photo is a barefooted man I recognise as Joseph the '*shoffur*'. His body slashed with light and shadow he is looking directly at the camera, feet firmly planted on the ground, he is having his photo taken too. Perhaps the photographer did not see him in the shadows. His presence is an accidental detail that may not have been revealed until later when the image was developed. Bicycles have been left leaning against the wall of the house and there is a *khus* mat hanging on the edge of the verandah. Leslie (Interview 2006) said they 'were wonderful, they smelt cool', as if the cool could be captured in a smell. Several of the men including Leslie wear marigold garlands signifying the festive season (Christmas). Bundy is wearing a short-sleeved shirt with *topi* (asserting his European/work through this remnant of railway uniform), while his guests are wearing rather hot looking jackets and ties. They appear to be Anglo-Indian, possibly workmates. I find this an appealing picture – it is structured (by the group of men) and at the same time disrupted by the busy background. It is domestic but there are no

women in the frame; it is highly masculine. The exigencies cannot be controlled; the contingent nature of the photograph is evidenced by the figures in the background who would not have been revealed until the photographs were developed, unlike the digital photo which can be instantly checked, discarded or saved. It was the last Christmas the family would have in India, the relaxed composition belying the coming chaos when the centre of British India gave way.

Conclusions

Family photos are part of the historical repository of images that proliferated in the nineteenth century, producing what Sekula (1986) identifies as a 'shadow archive' that traces social hierarchies through representations of the body. By taking this approach to photographic images the family photograph is also included in the same analytical framework as official photographs but it is their purposes and intended audiences that differentiate them. The photographs I used in this chapter, although originally produced as souvenirs of past experiences and saved in the image repository of the album, were part of the selection I took to India in 2012. In this second life they were repurposed for use in interviews with elderly domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians to reconnect them with the India they experienced.

In his classic work on photography, *Camera Lucida*, Barthes (2000, p. 96) declares that all photographs are dead, that 'there is always a defeat of time in them; *that* is dead and *that* is going to die', but I find the photographs in this collection to be beguiling and surprisingly full of life. This investigation in a sense re-animates them and imbues them with a new role. Barthes laments the death-ness of photographs, 'whether or not the subject is dead every photograph is this catastrophe' (2000, p. 96), this conundrum that is expressed as both here and then through the grammar of tense invoking time past. They are alive on an affective level because of my connection with the subjects; they are relatives I only know through the photographs.

Sontag refers to the 'pathos' of photos, particularly those of the distant past: 'photographs are ... an interpretation of the world' (1977, pp. 6-7) and a 'freezing of time – the insolent, poignant stasis of each photograph' (pp. 111-112) rather like Keats' figures on the Grecian urn. But the earlier studio portraits are deliberately choreographed to transmit a message through the placement of bodies, they are not just randomly assembled figures. On one level there appears to be a compliance with the

dominant narratives of normative Raj domesticity, but below the surface a subtle thread of difference is exposed through the composition and subjectivities created in these representations. According to Sontag (1977), photographs have temporal and spatial qualities that atomise reality. However, in my experience they operate on both an indexical chemical surface (preserving the image) and a more vital subterranean level of meaning – rather than atomising a moment I find within them threads that have helped to re-animate the narrative. The other level is the information they transmit in what appears to be a very self-consciously ordered world predicated on race and ranking and how that is represented. They resonate through the story, they are not the ‘truth’, they are ‘contingencies’ offering the opportunity of multiple readings they can help stitch together the narrative and they offer an intimate portal into the past. Bear (2007) discusses the lack of documentation and the melting of memories that Anglo-Indians as a community have experienced through their geographical dispersal. She also notes the delicacy of ancestral threads that are sometimes difficult to access and only traceable through notes scribbled onto the backs of photographs. What I am seeking to understand is how my father’s narrative has been inflected by the experience of growing up in India at this time and how that singular experience fits into the domiciled European context. What are the elisions, forgetfulness and dissonances telling me and how can his story be retold without losing its original voice and preserving its integrity. Part of this I can take from the photographs and part of it I can take from documents and interviews but ‘the person who writes the story is ultimately the storyteller ... the final narrative is partial, the only non-partial narrative is the event itself’ (Mendelsohn, *The Lost*, 2007).

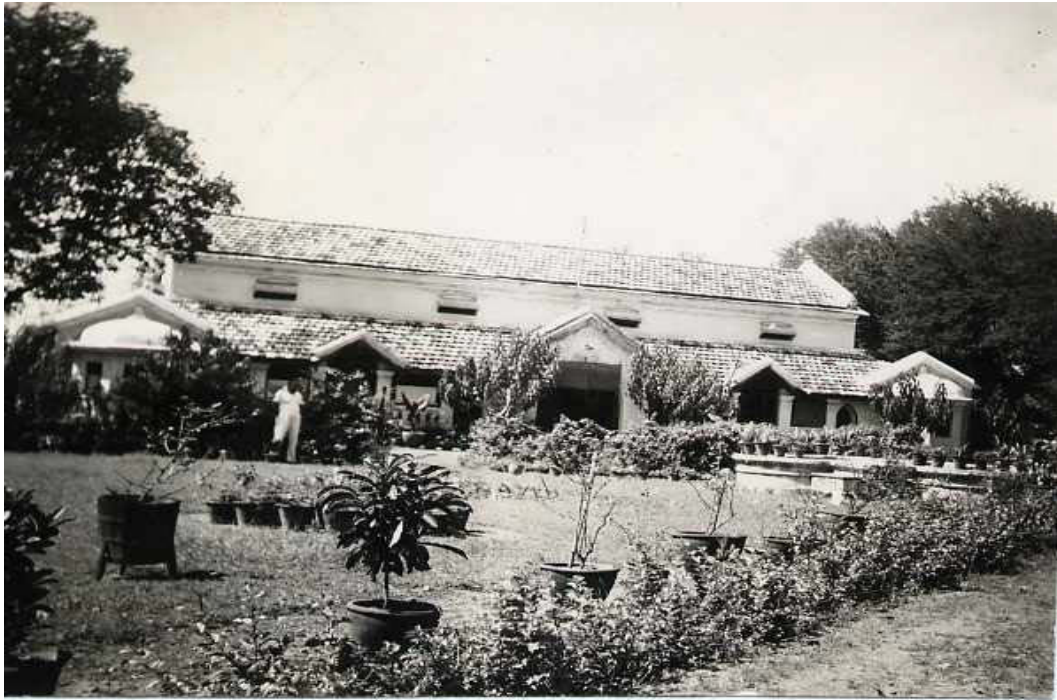
Rushdie eloquently articulates the relationship of time, family history and the world (cited in D’Cruz 1995, p. 109): ‘in order to understand one life you have to swallow the world’. In this research that world was located within the overarching dome of colonial India. It contained domiciled communities employed in the ‘modernising force’ of railway colonies peopled by Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans, hill station schools and army cantonments of late colonial India and the life is that of my father. There is a high level of affect in this research as I am so closely related to the teller of the main narrative, which presented the challenge of finding to navigate a way between my relationship to Leslie and locating his story within a wider context, without destroying its integrity. In the course of this research with the use of family photographs, what appeared to be dissonances appeared in his story sometimes

revealing a desire for social distance, or masking connections to family and community, even Leslie's own identity. The act of remembering and relating an experience involves revision, and memory is a prism through which an event is mediated into the present from the past; the image it is not fixed in either of these temporal zones. At the same time the overall narrative is a dialogical construction interrogated and interrupted, by my looking and questioning, and by my arriving at unexpected connections between the people, events and places in the photographs that could be different to Leslie's. Methodologically there are implications in my retelling of the narrative because it is to some degree compromised by the closeness of my relationship to Leslie, it is both a limitation and an advantage (I am an insider on the outside).

Creating a reflexive writing-based thesis derived from participant observation, the use of first person and my closeness to the central 'character' in this narrative history may mark this as an auto-ethnographic study to some degree. However, I eschew that term, as I am not a member of any of the groups of people I observed and interviewed and I am generationally and geographically removed from the railway community. I was not born in India. I have been privileged to have such access to the community, particularly the elderly, because of my ancestral ties. The photographs trigger some memories but not always the ones that are anticipated (expectations of interviewee). The first act of photo elicitation or using photographs was in interviews with my father, where the photographs revealed more than any interview I had conducted without them. So I took them with me to India and the next chapter will elucidate how that experience played out in photo elicitation interviews.

Chapter 3 – Photo elicitation using vernacular photographs

‘photography’s transformation from an intriguing novelty to a transparently comprehensible tool of mediated perception’ (Mahadevan 2013, part 1)



Uncaptioned

Bundy outside the family bungalow in Jabalpur (Deborah Nixon)

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will explain why I used photo elicitation, a qualitative methodology, in unstructured interviews with domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians and provide examples of how that use acted to yield a richer account of living under colonial rule. This will broaden the ambit of my argument beyond the particular example of Leslie’s experience as a domiciled European to take into account the responses invoked in others, of a similar demographic, but from an Anglo-Indian perspective. I argue that sometimes looking at the images uncovered obscured details, since they serve to foreground not only distant memories but also certain details in the photographs that in themselves can be overlooked by one viewer and picked up by another. In using the photographs in interviews I avoided voicing speculation or making suggestions beyond what I knew to be facts about location, date and identity of the people in the

photographs. Besides, for many of the photographs, beyond their materiality, there was simply no context in the form of captions or information from Leslie.

My original intention was to use the photographs to stimulate responses and memories of life in pre-Partition India and for younger interviewees to bring that past into the present. The photographs had the potential to become a vehicle through which elderly domiciled European and Anglo-Indian participants could express themselves in a reflective framework about their lives in late colonial India. In addition, for some younger Anglo-Indians it provided evidence of how that past still resonates. However, when in India I did not have sufficient contact with younger members of the communities to draw any conclusions from their responses to the images.

The use of the photographs in photo elicitation and unstructured interviews came together into a single research methodology that emerged from the research process. It was not an *a priori* investigation with an end in sight but nonetheless it had a direction. These two approaches allowed for a richer engagement with interviewees and for a more nuanced outcome in the narratives that were offered to me. Later when I reflected on the interview situations in which I was also responding to interviewees' queries about my own background the roles were often reversed. At times I was as much a participant as the people I had intended to interview. Alvesson (2003) discusses the problems and advantages of doing this 'close up' work and cautions against the use of interviews as 'data' because interviews are themselves the product of a broader social discourse. He suggests seeing the interview as a 'scene for social interaction' (2003, p. 169) and that rather than relying on a set of interviews, carrying out an ethnography can sometimes be more useful because more is gathered outside the framework of questions than within it. In my case the interviews were almost always unstructured and therefore more observational. Interviews as data sets also predicate an expectation that commonalities will appear in the narratives and there were some but I was interested in the unfamiliar 'plots' in contrast to the more scripted responses that arose around Partition (Stoler 2002a, p. 179). I was interested in how people positioned themselves when viewing the photographs and where they as Anglo-Indians or domiciled Europeans fitted into the picture.

I used the photographs in interviews to act as a 'meeting point between personal and professional identities' (Pink 2001, p. 26). My interview work includes elements of ethnographic methodology through my participation in the daily comings and goings of

the households where my interviews took place. Pink (2001, p. 20) advocates for the involvement of the researcher at ground level, suggesting that they too are under scrutiny and that subjectivity is an enriching part of engaging with participants. Questioning my identity as researcher and then as a person with links to the railways and assigning an unfixed persona demonstrates the fluidity apparent in identity construction in social interactions that take place in an interview (Mann 2011). The unintended overlap here in identities acted in my favour to create a mutually agreeable and trust based space.

A little more history

In the previous chapter I outlined some of the historical circumstances surrounding the arrival of photography in India and I analysed my first use of photographs in unstructured interviews with Leslie. It is my aim to further historicise this private collection by linking them to a broader history that is both technical and cultural. As Batchen (2000, p. 60) suggests, in order to analyse the history of a photograph, one must look beyond the image to see how vernacular photographs evidence the morphology of photography itself. What the image offers is an invitation to engage with the past but as Mahadevan (2013, part 111) instructs, one must ‘put aside the beautiful and evocative image ... and look around it’. Photography, Mahadevan (2013, part 1) argues, arrived in Calcutta as both a ‘mode of knowledge production and surveillance’ and as a novelty that connected to the ‘consumer cultures’ of the day. In particular it appealed to those residents who wanted to stay in touch with the fashions of modern technology from Europe.

For most people living in colonial India the photographic studio was the main site for portrait making but this was changing with the technology, particularly for those who could afford the new more portable versions of the camera (Chaudhury 2012; Mahadevan 2013; Pinney 1997, 2008b). As Mahadevan (2013) points out, the price of handheld cameras inhibited their wider uptake amongst poorer Indians and Europeans hence the long history of studios in India. What is missing in the research around this technology is what ordinary sights people were interested in recording. Mahadevan (2013, part 1) identifies this public as coming from the ‘variegated colonial society of elite Indians and Europeans, poor Europeans and Anglo-Indians’, who used studios and privately owned cameras. Pinney has done extensive and ground-breaking ethnographic

work (2012, 2008) on vernacular photographs taken by local Indian populations in studios, at weddings and funerals and brilliantly situates them in the photographic conventions of the day. However, Pinney does not consider the plethora of photographs taken by Europeans and Anglo-Indians who, once they owned cameras, operated outside studios. Including this take on the practice does not privilege one view over the other but it does provide a fuller account of how the technology was experienced at an everyday level. As Stoler (2002b) argues, photography evolved to become a useful tool for self-recording, producing an archive that paralleled that of the colonial authorities. In family albums and photographs accompanying many Anglo-Indian biographies is captured a picture of what appears to be a more coherent, solid culture and community that was often referred to disparagingly by the British as being not quite British enough and ‘suffering from a racial inferiority complex’ (Blackford 2000, p. 41). What the studio and the privately owned camera offered was the opportunity to control the representation of a ‘self’ beyond the purview of official photography but still obeying the practices of conventional portraiture or composition.



Uncaptioned

From garden studios to studio gardens (Deborah Nixon)



By the 1940s private ownership of cameras would not have been unique in European communities. It is obvious from Leslie's collection that the camera fascinated him; he would not have been unique in his interest in new 'everyday technologies' (Arnold 2013, p. 11). The private ownership of cameras offered an opportunity to explore more intimate representations of life that moved beyond the use of photography as an expression of the 'imperial mission' used primarily for its taxonomic characteristics (Hunt 1997, p. 21). By the 1930s cameras may not have been extensively privately owned but people were familiar with them and with their products through the existence of photographic studios and advertising (Arnold 2013). Interlopers, such as servants and passers-by, are visible in some photographs, inserting themselves, much like contemporary photo bombers, in several of the frames; they too express a desire to participate in an act that they would not be likely to see the outcome of. It is from 1904 to the 1940s that many of the railway photographs used in this research were taken. The images, taken by and of those in railway towns, puts both technologies into the same frame.

Photo elicitation



Peggy Cantem and Roy Abbott looking at the photographs–Jhansi 2012 (Deborah Nixon)

When I travelled to central India in 2012 in order to meet remaining domiciled Europeans or Anglo-Indians from Leslie's generation I took with me a selection of photographs I thought might assist in creating an entry point in interviews with older interviewees. The selection was deliberately aimed at arousing interest in older interviewees so it included images from the 1920s and 1930s from schools, railway colonies, steam trains, old railway institute buildings, railway housing and bungalows and of groups of workers. The photographs were of Bhusawal, Damoh, Katni, Jhansi and Jabalpur, towns that lay along the Great Indian Peninsula Railway line (GIPR). I also included some photographs of street scenes in Mhow and Dharamsala. Later when I wanted access to a Gurkha training centre in Subathu and my official military clearance had not come through I was allowed a restricted walk around the grounds. This was granted on the strength of some photographs taken in 1946, of Leslie in his Gurkha uniform. The photographs elicited not only oral responses, they literally opened doors.

Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians

In this chapter I will look at how Anglo-Indians referred to themselves and the way seemingly contradictory identities allow Anglo-Indians to inhabit more than one identity. These contradictions arose in the context of social visits by me and in

interviews stimulated by the use of photographs. This chapter will introduce the participants and the effects of the photographs and cover two issues that concerned the older generation of domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians that were often associated with identity and ancestry. The first is an anxiety that resulted from living at a time when identifying as European was predicated on 'somatic indicators': accent, education and class status (Bear 1994; Buettner 2004; Caplan 2001; Mizutani 2011). As Mizutani (2011, pp. 1-2) points out in his study of the domiciled community up until 1930, 'whiteness' was an ambiguous and fractured racial category and being domiciled contradicted the notion of temporary residence in India. So in order to validate this identity one had to display behaviours, dress and an accent that aligned one to a particular community. However, since Independence some Anglo-Indians have emerged with a desire to preserve their identity as 'absolute Anglo-Indians' (Sen 2001), as a people with a unique culture, food and lifestyle. However, amongst older Anglo-Indians earlier racist epithets still seem to resonate. The second anxiety, that of belonging, was experienced by many members of the long-term Anglo-Indian residents of India born under colonial rule. Politics also influenced a 'colonial rhetoric of identification with Europeans' that played into a paradox of belonging (Caplan 2001, p. 90). Where one belonged is still a concern expressed by the older participants I interviewed. The following part of this chapter deals first more directly with photo elicitation and then with a discussion of two levels of narratives that were drawn from the process.

Photo elicitation as a qualitative methodology involves the 'simple idea of inserting a photograph into the research interview' (Harper 2002, p. 13). It was John Collier, an anthropologist, who coined the term 'photo elicitation' in 1957. Collier was an early practitioner and researcher into the efficacy of the use of photographs in interviews. He argued that photographs could initiate reflections and yield data that were often hard to extract through structured interviews. He identified the value of this methodology as lying in the return of unique insights that might be impossible to obtain through other techniques (1967, p. 46). Collier analysed the affective quality of the responses he recorded, both with and without photographs, and concluded that the former was the most fruitful method. One of the factors he identified was that the 'informant' felt less like the subject of the research, allowing for a discussion to flow between the researcher and the 'informant' about the object (the photograph) (1967, p. 47). I felt this to be relevant to my own situation when questions arose around sensitive issues such as the

harsh treatment of students in one of the hill station schools. Collier (1967, p. 47) refers to 'memory trauma' or the process of going around in circles attempting to recall details and dates; without this pressure the images do not replace memories, they help to connect them. Photographs evoke an affective response; they can help to stimulate memory, feelings and knowledge of an experience (Berger cited in Harper 2002, p. 13) that more abstract questions cannot generate.

The participants

Participants for this project were selected using a 'snowballing technique' (Appleby 2015), drawn initially from Leslie's old school contacts in Australia who came from the Anglo-Indian community. In 2007 I travelled to North India and visited his old school, St Georges, and met some of the few remaining Anglo-Indians in Mussoorie. Then in 2012 when I arrived in Kolkata I emailed Dunstan Gamble, a contributor to an Anglo-Indian publication, 'Anglos In the Wind'. I had seen the magazine and knew it was published in Chennai. Dunstan worked on the railways and lived in Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh). I also wanted to visit Jabalpur because it was a large railway town where Leslie's family had lived and I wanted to try and locate the family home. Dunstan was very active in the community and he became a lynchpin for contacting other Anglo-Indians in Jhansi. One elderly woman in Jabalpur referred to him as 'the cricket-he's everywhere'! Once I arrived in Jabalpur, Dunstan introduced me to people who were willing to be interviewed. All of the participants permitted me to use their names and no requests to be interviewed were refused. It was, however, difficult to interview people outside social situations and at times Dunstan steered me towards interviewees that were not really relevant for the research. For example, with much excitement I was introduced to a revered member of the community, Mrs Watkins, aged 98 at the time of my visit. I was keen to talk to her because she had lived through colonial rule, post-Independence and served in the army. However, she was blind so she could not see the photographs and she was hard of hearing. For the most part she did not answer any questions as she followed her own trajectory, her shambolic narrative alighting on ad hoc incidents and irrelevant minutiae, in short, it was extremely difficult to follow. Through this introduction I observed what high regard this elderly member of the community was held in and it was a sign of confidence that I was permitted to meet her.

Subject position

In this section I consider my own positioning in relation to my research site, and to the participants in the study. Amongst Anglo-Indians and the only domiciled European I met and interviewed in Jhansi and Jabalpur I did not feel that my identity (Australian with a family connection to the railways) quite lost both its insider or outsider status. In fact, I felt somewhere in between. Kikumura expresses the possibility that there is no absolute sense of boundaries around these labels, and that she felt herself to be 'simultaneously an outsider as well as an insider' (cited in Rabe 2003, p. 150). Rabe asserts too that it is possible for the researcher's identity to be chameleon-like, at times an outsider, at others an insider, to have 'a fluid status' (2003, p. 150). My first encounter with an elderly Anglo-Indian, Peggy Cantem, in Jhansi is illustrative of this fluidity.

As it happened, after I had been safely delivered to Jhansi from Jabalpur, I overheard Peggy Cantem remark over the telephone to Dunstan Gamble, 'Yes, she's here and she's one of us'. This may have been because of my connection to the railway community and also to an assumption that I actually was Anglo-Indian. Although I tried to disabuse Peggy of this notion, rightly or wrongly a part of me wanted to belong and to appease Peggy's desire for me to be 'one of us'. However, my identity could also have been viewed in a number of different ways, for example, as researcher, outsider, European or Australian. Despite being an Australian, I did share some cultural similarities with my participants such as a family background in India and also that many participants had familial links to Australia. This familiarity was further confirmed through the photographs, which provided evidence of my authenticity, and less tangibly, to the times and places that elderly participants remembered through the photographs. For this researcher the connections I had and those that I made placed me in a situation where a dichotomous perspective (Dwyer 2009, p. 54) of my self in relation to the people I was interviewing would have been difficult to maintain and ultimately unhelpful. In terms of what I already knew of the railways under colonialism and what I had learnt through previous interviews when interviewing new people, I wanted to reserve my opinions on the matters we were discussing. As Spradley puts it, 'The more you know of a situation as an ordinary participant the more difficult it is to study it as an ethnographer' (1980, pp. 61-62). Rabe states that there are three contexts for understanding the insider / outsider, through power, knowledge and the role of the

anthropologist (2003, p. 151). But as a qualitative researcher I felt that I fell into the ill-defined space in between, never fully inhabiting either of the roles and within which I felt uncomfortable occupying. Casting the roles of researcher and participant in a binary relationship does no justice to the complexities of the in-between state the researcher can be found in. Peggy Cantem saw me as an insider when clearly on so many levels I was not, but her desire for this to be true and the conclusions she came to from the images and seeing the name of the studio in Jhansi where a photograph had been taken convinced her otherwise.

Sites for interviews – pitfalls and perils

Over the time I spent working on this project, as mentioned above, I made several trips to India but it was during the last visit I made to Madhya Pradesh in 2012 when I was able to stay for longer that I experienced a deeper connection with the participants. I felt that a relaxed and open rapport had been established with the people I met, partly because they heard about me from Dunstan Gamble in Jabalpur before I arrived. Participants were willing to let me into their homes, to talk, to socialise and to eat with them and in one case to share a bed (Peggy Cantem) during the ‘wedding season’ when there was no accommodation in Jhansi. I played ‘housie’, went to afternoon teas, attended birthday parties and church (not my usual practice) and visited the cemetery looked after principally by Peggy Cantem. I also travelled out to a farm near Sagar and stayed there for a week as a guest of retired Colonel (Retd.) Roy Abbott, a domiciled European. This invitation was extended to me after Roy identified one of his relatives sitting next to Leslie’s mother in a picture taken of the Jhansi railway staff. Social activities put me into closer contact with people and lead to more interviews. The value to individual participants, some of whom were elderly women living on their own in dire financial circumstances, may have been in the companionship and contact with someone new who wanted to hear their stories and recollections.



Uncaptioned

Roy Abbott's relative sitting next to Margaret Nixon – Jhansi 1923. (Deborah Nixon)

Substantively I asked about family origins, connections to the railways, memories of life under the British and how that differed from post-Independence. However, attempts to carry out structured interviews were mostly unsuccessful because of the age of the participants, the sites for the interviews and the exigencies of daily life. Initial attempts to conduct and even record semi-structured interviews were largely scuttled by the daily comings and goings of carers, relatives and servants. Using a recording device was less successful (technological problems) and often caused interviewees to change to a more formal tone. For example people who were relaxed telling anecdotes and recalling incidents from long ago would formalise their language and attempt to structure their responses in a less natural manner when the recorder appeared. I was also not dealing with a generation that I would be able to contact through email after I left India. So after spending an evening with people I would make notes and try to capture in written form the most salient moments of the evening. Ultimately, note taking was not as intrusive as a recorder and I could show or read my notes back to participants in order to clarify their fidelity to the facts I was presented with. This combination of positioning and co-construction worked well in the informal and sometimes chaotic circumstances I found myself in. In India, I learnt not to have too much hope for privacy and quiet in interview settings and with that understanding, the interview encounters worked well for all. I use the words interviewee and participant interchangeably since

the situations I was in often began as an attempt at a more structured interview but often (through interruptions and the flow of life) became less structured. More often than not the interviews or conversations would take place in the most public part of the house such as the kitchen and then I would often be invited to eat. Hence interviews became observational encounters.

3.2 Interviews



Uncaptioned

When looking at the scene above, Maureen Robinson (Interview 2011), an elderly Anglo-Indian pensioner in Jabalpur, immediately noted the variation in skin tones of the children, lightly touching the surface of the photograph to indicate the range. This small haptic gesture somehow enriched her connection to the subject, enabling a deeper transmission of meaning. Maureen commented on the appearance of the Anglo-Indian ‘teacher’ (many Anglo-Indian women became teachers), the arrangement of the children linked to the central figure dressed in white, the pairs of matching jumpers, socks and shoes. (I recognise the middle two boys as my uncles.) Three children in the back row to the right of the woman also look to be related, as their haircuts and cardigans are similar. Tactility between the figures (Batchen 2000, p. 61) connotes a sense of connectedness and reassurance. This is expressed through the outspread arms and hands of the central figure of the boy and the dark crouching *ayah*, her hands and arms protectively placed around the figure of the little girl. By hovering over the surface

features I imagine these are Anglo-Indian railway school children. Because they are children there is movement in the frame, the figure on the left is blurred, and as a group there is no entirely uniform pose. There is a sense of occasion in their clothing. All eyes are averted to the right perhaps the children have been directed to look away from the camera. It might have been taken in the early 1930s. I found this to be a very beautiful photograph; the composition and the subject matter seem to find a balance. There is no accompanying caption so like Maureen I can linger unfettered at the surface and speculate about its provenance.

The influence of captions

The photographs fixed in Leslie's album are accompanied by captions but those that were loose had only spare information scrawled on the back or no comment at all. Some of the older photographs, I suspect, may have been lifted from an album since they bear the scars of having been torn off a surface they were previously glued to and the writing is unclear. The captions both help and hinder our responses to the photographs because they can be misleading. The use of captions famously explored by Barthes (1964) as an 'anchor' for photographs, also restricts responses to images. The photographic caption acts something like a meme guiding the viewer to a particular interpretation of the image through its decisive brevity. Hall (1973) too suggests that the process of selecting a caption amplifies and assigns a particular meaning to the photograph. Or as Barthes (1964) may argue, the caption connotes a meaning whilst the photograph denotes something else. Viewers are drawn to captions, just as a reader might look to a photograph as an illustration in a story, to determine the intended meaning of its placement. Both Hall and Barthes are referring to the use of captions in the public contexts of advertising and news captions. However, this narrowing effect can also be seen in family photographs or photographs taken by individuals in public places. Only the photographs in Leslie's album were captioned in such precise phrases perhaps because they were intended for a more public audience. The uncaptioned pictures provoked intense speculation and yielded more information from participants during interviews. Participants were free to associate whatever meaning arose from the stimulation of viewing familiar scenarios, albeit inhabited by unfamiliar people, to their own lives. The limitation of the captioned album both supports memories and creates them in a way because the images and captions are ordered to shape 'social meanings' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 31). On a purely practical level I could not travel in India with the

albums anyway so they came with me untethered, uncaptioned and compelling, bristling with details that may have remained unnoticed by me.

The anteriority of photographs

The peculiar feeling of looking back on faces of people I am so intimately related to, but have never met, and of also knowing their futures is part of the re-locating the photograph in the present. Time is warped through the image. Barthes (1974) refers to this effect as the anteriority of the photograph; in a way that seems to render the photograph as 'dead', a fragment of something that the observer knows no longer exists. It is true that the moment is always past in all photographs, there is no escaping that, but the meanings remain more alive than dead. As Berger argues (Berger cited in Harper 2002, p. 13), because black and white photographs are uncoupled from the familiarity of colours this monochrome quality allows for more intense memories to arise and because of that the use of black and white photography is perversely 'more evocative than colour photography'. The only colour photographs in Leslie's collection were colourised positives and there were no prints in his collection taken from the positives. The prints I processed from the positives took on an ethereal texture, the images of the mess against the eternal snows emerging like coloured sketches or badly colourised prints. I found the black and white photos to be a more potent conduit to the past for the participants.

As I have already mentioned, this is not a work on memory but a work that is interested in what is remembered (Klein 2000). Rather than taking a photograph as an end in itself, as a snapshot record of an instant and asking 'what was going on there and then?', I used the photographs to open up a much more temporally and spatially fluid, and affectively rich, set of responses. I was employing their 'spatial immediacy and temporal anteriority' to enter the riches of the zone that creates the 'conjunction between the here and now and the there and then' (Barthes 1977, p. 44). The stimulus of the photo and the question 'what do you think is going on here?' provoked responses by participants that drew on memories and sentiments, to times and places far from those depicted in the image. For many elderly Anglo-Indian women whose lives had been difficult and for some who now lived in impoverished circumstances, often alone, the images took them back to a time, misted over with nostalgia, when they were younger, stronger and still dancing at the Railway Institutes. More mundane elements in the

photographs also attracted attention and allowed participants the opportunity to raise issues of their own for discussion. An example of this occurred when I used a picture of Leslie as an extremely handsome young man in his uniform in an interview with Fay Wills (Interview 2012). Fay asked to see more and more photos of him, but more than the image of the handsome young soldier, I think she saw an entry into the past that allowed her to invest some pleasure in remembering ‘those days’ which for her were troubled and difficult. Financial problems were apparent in the living conditions of Fay Wills, Peggy Cantem and Olive Lennon. Each woman expressed concerns over rental costs and in Fay’s and Olive’s cases, the difficulty of being alone and feeling somewhat marooned because of the reduction in the number of Anglo-Indians in their areas. Peggy Cantem, on the other hand, was remarkably active for a person of her seniority (92), coupled with her physical problems, she was the most optimistic and the most community engaged of the participants. She attended church, restored and tended the European cemetery and held a ‘salon’ every evening in her tiny house. Her memory was fresh and she recognised names and places in the photographs of Jhansi and also one of an unknown relative of mine taken in Lonavala in the early 1900s. I was astonished and pleased when she made the connections.



For Mr & Mrs Nixon
From.
Denis & Anida
Jhansi
India
1932.

It is true that the moment is always past in all photographs, but their variable meanings remain more alive than dead. Pinney (2008a) positions himself on the side of 'truth' when it is invoked in debates regarding photography. I am inclined to join him there. Viewing enlivens the photographs and viewing becomes a reflexive process involving the objects, the image and the viewer.

3.3 Memory and narrative

A sense of narrative order tends to dominate the way a life story is related and that narrative order is itself inflected by older, deeper cultural tropes (Carr 2001). The telling of stories and the ability to glide over the more difficult challenging or traumatic events allows for a smoother overall narrative and also renders remembering a more agreeable activity. Domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians living in India in the last 30 years of colonial rule were living in a racialised and invidious social climate where 'whiteness' was highly valued and becoming an increasingly unstable construction (Caplan 2001; Mizutani 2002) not always predicated on ancestry. In the case of some elderly Anglo-Indians still living in India this more troubling past has included regret about not leaving India at an earlier age and limited opportunities at the treatment they were afforded under the British. Andrews remarks in her research on Anglo-Indian migration patterns that once Anglo-Indians leave India sadly they are unlikely to return 'even for a holiday' (2007, p. 48). Olive Lennon (Interview 2012) said as the years passed she experienced a sense of growing isolation from her family as the younger generation dispersed and migrated in search of greater opportunities. But recollections also include the happiness that people experienced in remembering earlier times when Railway Institutes were active sites for social activities such as dancing and the community was stronger in size. Nostalgia is often invoked to cover a set of emotions connected to a longing for a more romantic stable past and at the same time it there is sadness attached to it. I hesitate to conveniently reduce this to nostalgia or a longing for an irretrievable past since the past included so many conflicted feelings.

In Leslie's case there was in his remembering a total lack of nostalgia for anything connected to his life in India. I inferred from his responses that it was the advent of Partition that coloured most of his memories. His narrative is challenged by the reality of the outcome of Partition: a failure to control, fear and death. His photographs of training camps and activities, such as going on *shikar* whilst on leave, dominate his

album. His most enjoyable memories are connected to the time before Partition in training with the Gurkhas. On my return from India in 2012 the only photographs of India he was interested in seeing were of the Gurkha training centre at Subathu. He did not ask to see photographs of Jhansi or Jabalpur, places where his family had lived for longer periods of time. The elderly Anglo-Indians in Jhansi and Jabalpur were interested in all the photographs I had, whether of the army, the railways or the towns they lived in. The photographs opened up a textual space that included remembering the past in a pleasurable way; they were “formats of significance initiated by (temporal) distance and by (emotional) contiguity” (Steiner cited in Ramanathan 2007, p. 48). Thus Nostalgia sits uneasily in this space, along with a less complex binary of pleasure and pain.

Interviews: trust



Jhansi G.I.P.Ry hockey team 1926

Several times I heard interviewees express a lack of trust in the research about them, as Anglo-Indians, and that writers and researchers had misrepresented them. Lillian Singh (2007), a descendent of the famous Skinner family, commented on the way her sister had been depicted in an article and the off-hand manner with which the author referred to her father’s suicide and some minor inaccuracies regarding her aunt’s forced conversion to Islam: ‘she was already a Muslim’ (Lillian Singh Interview 2007). In a fortuitous coincidence my own grandparents’ marriage entry appeared in the same

church register as Hercules Skinner's (one of Lillian's forebears) and this may have led to Lillian feeling she could express these concerns to me. This expression of concern by older members of the community reflects a still present sensitivity about the misrepresentation of Anglo-Indians by those of the younger generation. D'Cruz (2006) explores this theme in his study of the depiction of Anglo-Indian stereotypes through the identification of 'seven deadly stereotypes' derived from characters in literature. Bill Barlow expressed his sensitivity about the depiction of Anglo-Indians in his comments to McMenamin (2010, p. 34) regarding Laura Roychowdhury's description of the community in *Jadu House: An intimate history of Anglo India* and in Master's novel *Bhowani Junction*. Barlow felt that Masters depicted Anglo-Indians as '*chee chee*' (derogatory expression) and that Roychowdhury's treatment was 'even worse' (McMenamin 2010, p. 34). I did not experience any aversion to my presence but I felt there was evident caution in the wariness Olive Lennon (Interview 2012) displayed in my first meeting with her in Kharagpur. My time in Kharagpur was short and Olive was my only interviewee, but as the President of the Anglo-Indian Association, she painted a picture of a community that was disappearing as younger generations moved to other parts of India or migrated abroad.

Kharagpur was once home to a large Anglo-Indian community members of which were almost exclusively employed in the railways. The presence of old colonial style bungalows is testament to the size the community once was and an indication of how it must have been in its hay day. Bear's ethnographic study of the community concurs with my observations of remaining Anglo-Indians attempting 'to negotiate their place as Indian citizens' (Bear 2007, p. 12). To some Anglo-Indians of the older generation (those in their 80s) the colonial past in India represented a more ordered world. Even though the community was placed on a lower social scale there was ambivalence, even contradiction, in opinions expressed about the British. Olive said, 'It (*Kharagpur*) was organized like an English town, houses had gardens and flower shows ... it was beautiful, now it's gone. The Railway Institute did everything'. Indeed, the Railway Institute was the centre for social activities in most railway towns and colonies.

Left behind



As mentioned I sensed a caution in Olive when I first contacted her, she told me she had been interviewed several times and did not seem very enthusiastic about meeting me, but she granted me a very small part of her day, explaining that she was very busy. Olive was 88, youthful looking, spritely and conversational, and a key member of the older generation from the community. When I met her with Sister Veronique, an Anglo-Indian nun, at St Agnes Convent, I sensed Olive's wariness about being interviewed. At first we sat in a small dark room and I briefly explained my project to her and showed her some of the photos of the railways taken in Jabalpur and Jhansi in the 1920s and 1930s. The photograph she was most taken with was of the Jhansi hockey team taken in 1926 as her late husband had been a keen hockey player and she said that he would have liked the photo. He had passed away at the age of 93. Olive then changed her mind and instead of a quick chat at the convent she invited me to her house for lunch. The photographs and my connection to the community may have influenced her decision. Her house was small, tidy and simple; she rented it and had done so for years. She lived on a pension from the railways that left her very short of money. In a display cabinet I saw a souvenir boomerang, key chain, postcards from Australia and photographs of relatives. She wistfully described how she and her husband had left it too late to leave India for Australia. Olive (Interview 2012) poignantly referred to herself as one of 'the left behinds', meaning a member of the older generation who missed the opportunity to migrate earlier in life. In her story I detected no sense of longing for an imagined British homeland. Olive and her husband had decided to stay for economic reasons (the railway pension) but as it turned out they felt they had made the wrong decision. Now with arthritis and a heart complaint Olive was resigned to her situation. Unfortunately she had no children so she lacked a larger network of family around her. So saying a well dressed young man appeared with our lunch; he was her 'nephew, a foundling left on a railway carriage and taken in by a relative', explained Olive.

Olive recounted an anecdote from a trip to Canada where she said her nieces and nephews 'didn't want to talk about India, they were watching the Miss World

competition on television and they laughed when Miss India came on'. She commented that in Canada, 'people think Indians are liars and cheats ... but I'm Indian'. And yet she also identified as an Anglo-Indian. She did not mix socially with her neighbours, she wore western clothes and was Christian. She told me she was lonely and that 'there is no one from the community here'. Of course, there are people from the community – according to Olive 200 members of the Anglo-Indian community and 65 families remain – but perhaps not many from her generation. She also related how there was not enough money left to give out Easter eggs and organise big social events around Christmas and Easter. In an apparent contradiction/tension, many Anglo-Indians positioned themselves as physically in India but socially removed from the surrounding Indian community. Similarly Blunt (2005) observed that there was a feeling amongst the older generation that these feelings were felt more strongly in the older generation. The Anglo-Indian community was atrophying over time as the current generation emigrated or moved away from the railways and the railway towns into other employment. Any nostalgia Olive had was for the past glory days of dances and social events. Sadly, as I was about to leave Olive told me that she was so lonely she had prayed for a companion and God had sent her a stray kitten to look after. Despite her circumstances I left Olive impressed with her independence, resilience, humour and faith.

Had I not revealed my connection to the community I doubt Olive would have been as forthcoming in our conversation. In both the above situations my identity as being intimately connected to a railway family and to a Gurkha officer, and providing the evidence in the photographs (in Lillian's case the registry extract), facilitated my being taken into the confidences of the interviewees. This was not a deliberate act – it occurred to me after the initial interviews that they were having this effect. It was revealing, as Alvesson puts it, an example of the advantage of an 'emergent-spontaneous response' (2003, p. 181). An unforeseen and fortuitous outcome of using the photographs was the conduit they created between my once removed background and where I was in the 'now' of the interviews.

Clothing and context

This photograph of Katni Junction, below, stimulated much comment by elderly interviewees about the way the staff were dressed, the orderliness represented in the composition of figures and the presence of the steam engine behind the podium.



Katni 1924

Katni Junction, was a main line station for the GIPR line located in the Jabalpur district. This is quite a conventional posed group with Bundy Nixon, the loco foreman, dressed in dark clothing, seated in the middle, his shiny shoes resting on the platform. After returning several times to this image I found the conventionality being eroded through a closer scrutiny of some of the finer details of the dress exhibited here. Bundy's posture, dark clothing and distinctive 'Cawnpore topi' (Allen 1977, p. 55; Tolly 1996, p. 30) set him apart from the 'twins' dressed in white, holding their regulation 'Wollesley topis' (Allen 1977, p. 55). He is clearly the highest-ranking employee in the group. The display of different headwear signals the position of the workers in this group, in fact the composition of the whole is an excellent example of the material expression of the 'demarcation of authority' (Bear 2007, p. 44) from the loco foreman to the Indian firemen wearing the *pagris* (turbans). As Bear (2007, p. 45) points out, uniforms were part of the Indian railways staff regulations, from topis, caps and *pagris* to jackets and trousers indicating the level of authority the wearer represented. The *sola topi* was

strongly associated with the Empire and had become ‘ubiquitous’ by the mid-nineteenth century (Cohn 1996, p. 127), constituting part of the uniform worn by railway workers. Even outside the railways, European men of a certain generation were rarely seen without *topis*. Leslie said that he did not wear a *topi* past childhood, just as Orwell observes in *The Tribune* in 1944, this ‘emblem of Imperialism’ was going out of fashion by 1943. As seen in later photographs, Bundy wore a *topi* until he left India in 1948.

To fill in the other forensic gaps in the photograph I emailed Peter Moore who trained in this area as part of his policing and detective work and career in India, the United Kingdom and Australia. His observations have been particularly insightful and have aided me in looking quite differently at features I would otherwise have passed over. The following is part of his commentary on the other figures in the group:

There are no Muslims in this photograph and, with the exception of the Rajput turbaned Booking or Goods Clerk seated front row right (wearing a company-issue jacket and Jodhpur *churidar* trousers) the remainder appear to be Hindus of the region. Most of them wear the round, flat caps peculiar to the inhabitants of the Bombay Presidency (today’s Maharashtrians). A worker (back row 3rd from the left) wears a turban in the Merwara style. The employee sitting (middle row) behind the Station Master and the European Constable sports a fob-watch chain indicative of a supervisory position. (Moore 2013, pers. comm.)

The Indian staff and the train provide the backdrop, the moveable elements have been arranged to accommodate the train.

Expressing difference in identity through clothing was a very obvious feature in colonial India at both a sartorial level and around the belief that Asiatic bodies ‘differed’ from European ones (Orwell 1944). Orwell writes in a rather exasperated tone about the ‘the endless emphasis on the differences between the native and yourself [as] one of the necessary props of imperialism’ (1944). The *topi* signified this belief more visibly than almost any other piece of clothing. In earlier photographs Bundy’s *topi* is included as more of a prop but towards the later photographs, and at a time when it was out of fashion to do so, he wears it in every outdoor setting. Because of their, supposed, biological sensitivities, it was believed that Europeans needed special protection against the sun, disease and even the wearing of native dress (Bayly 1998; Cohn 1996; Procida 2002; Tolly 1996). Tolly (1996, p. 37) argues that losing one’s standards in dress could

not only affect those living in India but it could harm those who returned to English society. Losing 'standards' had the potential effect of destabilising British identity. As mentioned previously, this sensitivity around dress was expressed in comments made by Fay and Maureen in Jabalpur. 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 were dressed in saris or salwar kameez.

If Barthes supplies a kind of meta-language for reading the 'textual' surface of photography I began to feel its limits in *studium* (purpose and context) and *punctum* (emotional entry point). As Cronin (1998, p. 72) argues, the use of these terms restrains the photograph to a dichotomy of 'public' and private domains. Interviewees of course would not use Barthes' vocabulary when remarking on the *punctum* but they might remark on the emotional entry point of the photograph by connecting it to a memory of something familiar or meaningful like a *sola topi*, the formal dress of railway staff or the background setting of the pristine white arches of the Jhansi Railway Institute hall, now dilapidated. Dunstan Gamble was very interested in the steam train and said he had been to Katni many times. He requested a copy of the photograph. Sometimes the photographs stimulated an olfactory response, particularly in a photograph of *khus* mats hung on the front of a veranda. They provided relief in the summer by allowing air to pass through a veil of wet grass, producing a 'cool smell' (Leslie Nixon Interview 2006). Photographs are evocative and as Ramanathan (2007, p. 40) suggests, they 'live, pulsating throbs, ever present ... and they can undo some of our forgetting taking us to recessed histories and lives once lived'. Ramanathan (2007 p. 41) uses a combination of photographs and interviews to understand how they 'extend the postcolonial canvas' but in her 'extension' she frequently confuses the terms Anglo-Indian, British and English, referring at one point to the 'lives of the English in India' when she may be referring to domiciled Europeans. The term 'Anglo-Indian', as its official definition up to a certain time declares, is reserved for a person from both a mixed ancestry and one that is European. Although I agreed with Ramanathan's stated intention, the lack of clarity around terms created an unnecessary distraction. This confusion bothered me because I had just been amongst Anglo-Indians to whom the definition was very important and who were all aware of the legal definition of being Anglo-Indian. Clarity of these terms is key in any discussion of identity in colonial India, and ancestry was referred to again

and again throughout any discussion with Anglo-Indians about their European and Indian heritage.

Photographs are personal and our responses can be very subjective as mentioned above. When reading Pinney's illuminating Panizzi lectures on the history of photography in India, I found that he made remarks on some of the subjects in the images that I could not see, for example, he suggests that a group of workers in a studio portrait (2008a, pp. 12-13) look uneasy, wary, vulnerable, not emotions or adjectives I would have applied. To me they simply look awkward because of the discordance in the photo; sitting in their field work attire holding their tools in a studio. I found myself scanning the tiny black and white photographs for these traits Pinney (2008a, p. 12) assumes 'we' see. The use of 'we' is highly inclusive and makes assumptions about the reader that do not always follow. In a sense, even though the text was not sitting as a caption under the photograph they behaved like caption fixing a reading of the photographs, and because Pinney made these suggestions my eyes flicked from the text to the image and tried to knit them together. In interviews I did not want to direct the elicitation beyond supplying the photographs (which had already undergone a subjective process of selection) and saying that they were of my relatives in what was referred to as Central India. In the pre-selection of images I chose those that represented a cross-section from domestic life, school, army and railways.

The photographs in themselves are situated as objects that particularise a way of seeing through the contexts they were created in: for what purpose and by whom, and what was invested in the taking of the photograph. Just looking at the photographs is not a linear process as within the images are the cultural restraints of the aesthetic and cultural practices of the day (Lalvani 1996). When looking at the photographs it was often the backdrop or background that my participants noticed. In addition, participants commented on clothing and associated more formal dressing as a sign of a 'time when people dressed properly and they knew how to behave' (Maureen Robinson Interview 2012). Maureen made this comment in a discussion of how disorderly and chaotic she felt life had become in Jabalpur and how hard it was to just walk along the street in the confusing traffic. As she made the comment she was looking at the photograph below, of a group of railway workers from the 1920s seated in a tiered arrangement of bodies fanning out from the figures in the middle. This was not an official photograph but it was also the smaller less formal even private family photographs that surprisingly

attracted the attention of the viewers. Most of the interviewees had just a few photographs of weddings and social events but none had formal photographs of the railways and the trains. I gave away the photographs I had of the trains to individuals who were particularly interested in them because they had worked in the railways.



Uncaptioned

Bundy is sitting cross-legged on the ground to the front right. This could be because of the informality of the photograph or because at that time he was occupying a lower rank in the railways. (Deborah Nixon)

Domiciled European and Anglo-Indians in some ways were positioned at the forefront of a dynamic changing world, working as they did mostly in railways and telegraph services. Strassler (2010) in a study of photographic practices in Indonesia suggests that the use of photography in private hands recasts the national iconography into an intimate register. In other words, the framing of family portraits to some degree reflects the ‘widely circulating iconographies [that are] drawn into the intimate frame of self presentation’, it is ‘world creating’ not ‘world duplicating’ (Pinney 1997, p. 149). These intimate photographs are often reproduced in self-published biographies but the

images have not surfaced in more public histories. I am not arguing that they constitute an antithetical history of colonialism but that they represent a site parallel to the main discourse (Klein 2000). The following photograph displays a fairly typical arrangement of bodies, ranks and hierarchy. Because of Bundy's position in the railways he is seated in the centre of the photograph.



Jhansi 1923

Jhansi 1929-1923

In contrast to the picnic informality of some of the photographs taken in Jhansi are more formal in appearance than those in Damoh. The first photograph, taken in 1923, was probably taken not long after the family's arrival at this posting, while a later shot taken in 1929 was presented to Bundy Nixon after he left Jhansi and had already transferred to become loco foreman at Igatpuri. What is interesting to note here is that a formal farewell note from the 'Anglo-Indian and Parsee staff', although effusive in its appreciation of Mr Nixon's 'sterling qualities', indicates in the following lines that all may not have been well amongst the staff: '... in the execution of one's onerous duties it is hard and for a positive fact an impossible matter to please everybody. Nixon however has earned our highest esteem in attempting to do his best.' Damning with faint praise? The photo with its almost blank formality gives nothing away apart from

observable differences: fewer staff, my grandmother has put on weight and there is another uncle. My father remembers nothing of Jhansi besides falling into a large well and having to have painful punctures like inoculations against infection; these marks still scar his upper arms.

3.4 Weaving narrative and history

With every retelling of events by Leslie his story has become more central to this investigation because his family history so neatly and at the same time so messily connects with the larger story of what was happening in India to people born there of both European (domiciled European) and mixed ancestry (Anglo-Indian). So this central narrative voice sits within the context of others and part of my intention is to locate it there. I prefer, like Blunt (2005, p. 8), to use the term ‘mixed descent’ or ‘mixed ancestry’ rather than mixed race. The Anglo-Indian struggle with identity and bureaucratic definitions of who they were in documentation of the ‘community’ has created an ongoing struggle to arrest and re-own a sense of who people are in post-Independent India. The word community itself suggests a totalising of disparate groups of people settled in towns across India. This has led to the emergence over the last twenty years of a plethora of self-published biographies and family histories with titles that suggest the plight of a disappearing ‘race’ of people. This outpouring of family histories is driven by the desire to preserve the experience of those born in the 1920s and 1930s by those who remembered the Raj. Overall these histories show a determined and articulate effort to re-script an experience of living in India that has been underwritten in the larger histories of British colonial rule in India. Although anthropologists, ethnographers and geographers have not overlooked this history, it is from the people themselves that the story emerges as subjective, passionate and partisan. Race implies a level of purity that introduces an unwanted taxonomy into the text when the lives of people who grew up in India are products of families there for generations with unclear lines and ancestry.

Narrative

In conducting interviews with domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians in Australia and India the conversations covered a narrative arc from beginnings, first defining background, where one was born, then schooling and work, and decisions about immigration. In many cases people I spoke to could not identify exactly who their

ancestors were and referred to their history in a general way saying, ‘Mummy was British she came from the Bombay side’ (Mrs Jones, Bhusawal, 2005) or ‘They were Irish but I cannot find the papers’ (Dunstan Gamble, 2012), explaining that, ‘They were dark because they were black Irish’. In accordance with Stoler (2002a, p. 179) I found that the narrative arc may cover the same frame, ‘a common assumption is that a good listener can discern a shared (if contested) narrative frame’, but it does not produce the same homogenised history. Here Stoler is referring to interviews with servants who worked under the Dutch and she contrasts their description of their roles with those made by the Dutch who were their infants’ charges. In the same way Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans in India may superficially share fond memories of an earlier (pre-Independence), more ordered society under the British but as interviews progressed and people relaxed, nostalgia gave way to well founded grievances and comments on the inequities of working for the British. In particular Lois expressed frustration about the favouritism shown towards ‘covenanted wallahs’ (Interview 2006) who came to India to work for short periods of time with less experience and for better pay. Similarly descriptions of school days invariably referred to the harshness of conditions and strict discipline although one dissenting voice that countered the ‘best years of my life’ experience did emerge in the St Georges Manorite magazine. The letter to the editor gave a version of events surrounding the murder of a schoolboy at St Fidelis (amalgamated in 1948 with St Georges) in the 1930s. A Parsi student had gone to the defence of a young boy who had complained about the inappropriate behaviour of a lay Master. The Master had then been fired. This event disrupted the usual narrative about school life being ‘harsh but fair’ (Blackford Interview 2006; Tellis Interview 2006; Davidson Manorite letter 2004). I will more fully discuss this incident in the next chapter.

Ancestors



Uncaptioned: Bundy and relative on bullock cart possibly by the Tapti River in Bhusawal (Deborah Nixon)

The telling of life stories and the narratives that interviewees (both Anglo-Indian and domiciled European) constructed about their heritage nearly always began with references to racial background. Anglo-Indians usually did not refer to a concrete identification with a European or Indian ancestor; often people referred rather indirectly to Irish ancestors or to an Anglo-Indian ancestor, and without exception not a single person referred directly to an Indian ancestor. I do not think that people were being avoidant in their answers but I do think that it was and is difficult to identify ancestors as being Indian or Anglo-Indian as names were changed in records when marriages occurred. As was the case early in British contact with India, British men were more likely to take Indian mistresses from lower castes or to marry low caste Hindus or Muslim women (Caplan 1997, pp. 1-4; Blunt 2003, p. 9). In these cases the women's names were Christianised.

Restoration

In a collection of structured interviews conducted with elderly Anglo-Indians domiciled Europeans and Parsis in New Zealand, McMenamin (an Anglo-Indian oral historian) in the introduction to her collection states that her aim is to capture the everyday experiences and observations of life in British India (2010). The chapters are organised into sections that narrativise the stories she was told. McMenamin (2010) observes that

the lifestyles of the people she interviewed may have differed between the metropole and the more far-flung colonies of the north-west frontier. My own participants were also from smaller colonies where interactions with local populations and between social divisions (labour divisions) may have been 'less rigorous'. The photographs may also provide some evidence of this in terms of closer social mixing between people.

Inevitably questions about skin colour appear throughout the interviews in McMenamin's (2010) collection, reflecting a boundary that was often complex and very unclear. The term Eurasian was considered to be less desirable than Anglo-Indian. This was also true amongst the Anglo-Indians I met in Jhansi and Jabalpur one of whom reflected that the term Anglo-Indian referenced the Anglo in his background (Krisna Lal 2012). A homily that appears twice in McMenamin's book refers to the difference between being Indian and domiciled European: 'If a cow is born in a horse's stable, it is not going to call itself a horse is it?' (Grindall cited in McMenamin 2010, p. 192). This is a reference to differentiating between being born in India as a domiciled European or an Anglo-Indian. It is problematic for the Anglo-Indian or domiciled European identity to be fixed against a British or Indian identity or even as a combination of the two. What emerges from talking to people is a more fluid definition of what being Anglo-Indian is, which confirmed a diversity of backgrounds that went beyond having Indian or British ancestors. For example, several interviewees cited French, German and Spanish ancestors and sometimes all three. My aunt, also born in India, told her children she was 'black Irish' (a term used to denote those Irish with a Spanish background), and that this accounted for her darker complexion. My father had never heard the term and did not know that there was 'black Irish' in his family but he had also never heard the term domiciled European for a person born in India of a male parent identified as European. In contrast to other interviewees (who said their European identity came through their fathers) Leslie said he took his (British) identity from his mother and that, 'England always felt like home to me. If your parents were Anglo-Indian or Indian you related more to Indians.' This comment was made despite the fact that his mother died when he was 12, that he had visited England only once as a small boy for a short period of time and that his father was born in India. However, this comment also contradicts what most Anglo-Indians said about their own contact with local Indian populations who would have had as much contact as he did through servants or school friends. The term Goan was used to identify those with a Portuguese Indian background, viewed by

most Anglo-Indians as being closer to being Indian than Anglo-Indians ‘because a lot of Goans are just Christian converts they say they are mixed but they aren’t’ (Fay Wills Interview 2012).

Indian by birth, Anglo-Indian by culture

I am Indian because that’s where I was born and it’s where I live but I am Anglo-Indian by culture. (Olive Lennon, Kharagpur Interview 2012)

Olive effectively identifies herself as Indian by nationality and ‘Anglo-Indian by community, reflecting a loyalty and attachment to India whilst maintaining a distinctive community identity’ (Blunt 2005, p. 180). Blunt’s younger interviewees ‘identified generational differences’ (2005, p. 181) between pre- and post-Independence Anglo-Indians and their relationship to India and their Indian neighbours. One of Blunt’s interviewees explained the difference in relationships with Indians when describing his friendships with Indians and the fact that his parents’ generation would only have known Indians as servants (2005, p. 183). Bill Barlow expressed a similar feeling of adaptability about his identity: ‘when I was living in India I was an Indian. I left India with an Indian passport but I suppose I am a kiwi now’ (cited in McMenamin 2010, p. 35). Both Bill and Olive positioned themselves differently according to where they lived as Indian, Anglo-Indian or Kiwi, qualifying who they are in relation to India.

Domiciled European and Anglo-Indian identities were/are partially constructed through material embodiment, references to dress styles (Indian or European), food, manners and even toilet habits (Cohn 1996; Collingham 2001; Tarlo 1996). It is also connected to family history and inescapable references to skin colour, for example, describing someone (a husband) as ‘swarthy’, ‘dark’ or having ‘a touch of the tar brush’; ‘He was an Anglo-Indian with a swarthy complexion’ (McMenamin 2012, p. 117). These markers were extremely important in the last few decades of colonial rule in India because of the stratifications in European society at a time that had become increasingly more race conscious. These differentiations also served to create anxieties about skin colour that have not quite left the community. In my interviews skin colour was often referred to as a marker of mixed heritage, encompassing persons with dark skin up to those whose skin looked European. ‘The question of skin colour was a touchy subject with a lot of people’ (Cox cited in McMenamin 2012, p. 159). In her study of the Kharagpur Anglo-Indians and the nationality files of the East Indian Railway, Bear

(2007) notes the residual tension experienced by Anglo-Indians about their racial identity. Ironically the 'files on the nationality of its Anglo-Indian, domiciled European, and Indian Christian employees' were created in response to both the Anglo-Indian community and as a result of the Lee Commission 'on the Indianisation of the Public services' (Bear 2007, p. 135). This information in turn affected where domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians would fit into the employment hierarchy of colonial railways and the accompanying wage scales. But as Bear points out, 'it created acute indecision among Anglo-Indian workers and bureaucrats about the nature of nationality and identity' (2007, pp. 136-137), no matter where the proof lay, whether in documents or physical markers. Bear argues that the demands for documentary evidence or genealogical records transformed private histories into public bureaucratic property and that during her research questions about family histories still elicited responses that referred to the existence of documents about births and marriages. She partly attributed this effect in interviewees (desire to produce documentary evidence) as a response to her own identity as being British.

However, it is noticeable that Anglo-Indians did conform to some degree to a cultural identity that was predicated on being Christian, having a European ancestor, speaking English and (only in some members of the older generations) on the wearing of western style clothing and eating certain foods. Andrews in her work on Anglo-Indians of Calcutta also remarks on how these commonalities helped to create a sense of identity that was unique (2005, p. 3). This identification as culturally European was perceived to assist in making an easier pathway to life outside India in Britain or Australia. McMenamin (2007) argues that insularity in the Anglo-Indian community also sprang from a set of 'normative codes of Hindu and Muslim behaviour and practices' that would not have allowed for easy social mixing amongst men and women and that this separation was based more on cultural practices than on 'racial prejudice'.

Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans began to arrive in Australia in the first wave of migrants from independent India in 1947. At this point they came under the scrutiny of a set of racist rules and assumptions that assessed their European-ness such that if an Anglo-Indian was judged to be 50% European but looked dark then the person was further assessed in interviews according to the degree of their European appearance and 'way of living' (Blunt 2005, p. 144). The problem with identification through the way people looked was that Anglo-Indian skin colour varied even within a single



family. There were instances of families being divided because one member was lighter than his darker brother (Nicholl Interview 2007). Nonetheless, all the migrants who arrived in Fremantle on the Manoora in 1947 were allowed to land. The government then sought to create other exclusionary categories of racial origin and a form was drafted to identify the degree to which one had Indian 'blood' (Blunt 2005, p. 146). This was at a time when the White Australia Policy was enacted to act as a filter against unwanted immigrants.

When Leslie first arrived in Perth in 1948 he was still wearing the clothing made by his Gurkha subalterns or he dressed in his army uniform. He travelled to Perth, Western Australia, on the troop ship *Asturius* from Bombay in 1948. The *Asturius* was a ship originally destined to carry only those deemed European but eventually it carried Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans. He said as an ex-army officer he travelled well and was waited on by stewards. However, his first sight of Fremantle in Western Australia was a dispiriting experience: 'The boat pulled up. Fremantle was flat and dry with no houses. I thought Jesus what have I done?'. Leslie did not have to worry about any interrogation regarding his identity because his passport identified him as British. Curiously and in slight contradiction to other statements he made about his choices to emigrate he said that if he had not migrated to Australia he could have gone to the UK or Canada because his mother had relatives in Canada. He then corrected himself and said that he would not have chosen the UK and said he did not want to go to the UK.

Bringing the railways into the picture

Photo elicitation is a powerful tool that directly engages with the polysemic nature of the photographic image (Prosser 1998) and allows interviewees to express their connection to pictures, releasing a biographical narrative that can potentially disrupt and re-order their own memories. This can occur particularly in the situation where interviewees may not have seen photographs of the 'old days' or if photographs of

institutions like the Railway Institute have been destroyed. The photo of the Jhansi Institute did this, stimulating recollections both nostalgic, a place for dances and social events (Josey D'Costa 2012), and sadness that the Institute has now fallen into disrepair.

Through an examination of the history of photography in India, Pinney (2008) identifies the corresponding emergence of photography and the telegraphic networks that ran throughout India, and that from the development of a collective view of society through to an individuated picture was enabled as the technology of photography became portable with refinements in the technology. Lalvani (1996, p. 177) argues that the arrival of photography and the railways in India allowed for an expanded vision of the world 'which erupt[ed] in a multiplicity of views and engendered an abstracted vision too'.

The history of the railways and of photography travelled a similar timeline in India; people living in India under colonial rule took up both technologies with enthusiasm and their use was not necessarily restricted to those in authority. It is often commented that a very small number of British officials governed such a large geographical space inhabited by a very large number of people (Maddison 1971). The British did this by deploying the technologies of the day in the business of their bureaucratic and economic practices, through record keeping and under the guise of progress, development and social betterment (Fischer-Tine 2004).

The development and confluence of three key technologies were all part of the 'colonial project' (Kerr 2006, p. 18) and its desire to control native populations. Railways (mobility and economics), photography (recording and surveillance) and telegraphy (communication and networking) had an impact on the way people viewed the world they travelled through, saw themselves and others in the landscape and communicated with each other across the vastness of India. As Headrick argues (1988, p. 7), that these technologies were not imposed upon passive colonised peoples and that technology transfers that took place involved local populations but did not trigger an industrial revolution. The combination of these technologies 'of rule' (Stoler 2002a, p. 87) produced a governable, ordered and comprehensible grid over huge populations in what had looked like intractable landscapes of colonial places like India (Lalvani 1999). Pinney (1997, p. 107) suggests that a network was created 'to discipline and control Indians as colonial subjects' by extension or proximity and Europeans and Anglo-Indian railway workers could also be included in this network. Formal photographs of workers

clearly indicate an order predicated on rank and colour. (One interviewee actually ran her finger across one photograph and commented on the range of skin colours becoming lighter towards the centre where my grandfather sat.) What the state could not control was the way people were able to record their private lives and the way the technologies would be appropriated in public use. For example the use of the railways by the public for pilgrimages, and photography, by those who could afford it, to record more intimate events in private lives that lay beyond the purview of the colonial government. The places where long-term country-born domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians were employed were within these three areas but the focus here is on just two technologies, railways and photography, and this focus is partly driven by my family intersection with both.

As Pinney (2008a, p. 3) explains in his discussion of the evolution of photography in India, photographic apparatus became smaller and cheaper and this allowed more people to participate in self-recording. However, public social practices of the day were reflected in studio photographs so the arrangement of bodies, clothing and the choice of a backdrop (Appadurai 1997) mirrored earlier arrangements in formal portraiture. Pinney (2008a, p.5) dismisses as ‘unhelpful the dichotomy of truth and falsity’ that is supposedly contained in photography and argues for a more inclusive and nuanced approach in viewing photographs as ‘data ratios’ which acknowledges the different kinds of ‘effects’ photographs can have without ‘valorising the truth’. For ordinary people the ability to control the way they were being photographed and to be able to depict themselves in a way that they felt more truly reflected their lives was truly ‘democratising’ and liberated photography from being merely an agent for the colonial administration. These images create a different archive, containing some of the elements preserved in the colonial archives (Stoler 2002b).

Conclusions

Ironically it was sometimes I who used the photographs to position my own identity as being genuinely related to the community, to validate my presence there on a personal and a research level. At times over the last six years researching and writing this thesis when I have been blighted by attacks of dreaded ‘writers block’, unable to synthesise readings and interviews and feeling an unworthy investigator, I would go to the photographs and they would restore in me the confidence to return to writing. The

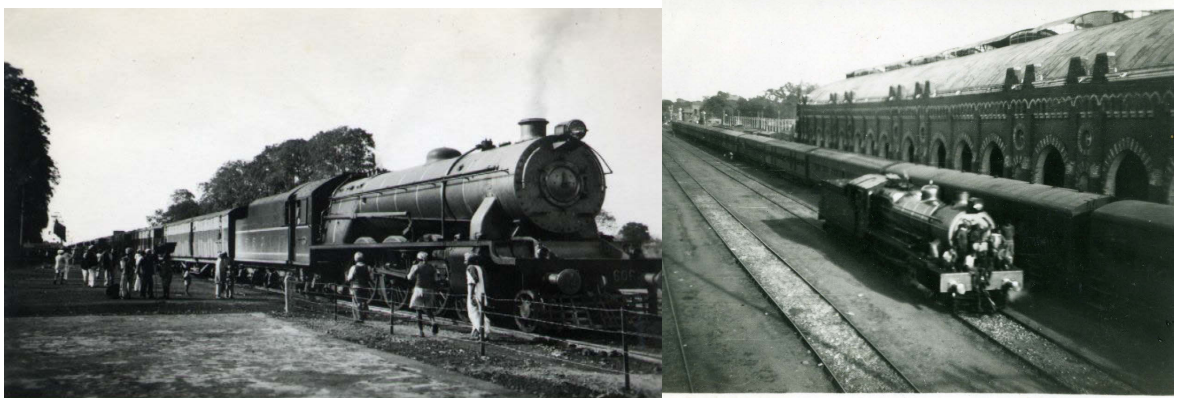
photographs enriched and informed the research and several times inserted themselves too often into the text. I refer to them as objects possessed of volition and indeed there is something in their static aliveness that contradicts the dead and gone suggested by some theorists (Barthes 2000; Sontag 1977). They provided a material stimulus, a way to traverse the unknown and coax complexities out of stories of blurry family histories (including my own) and offered a spatial and temporal conduit back to a community various in its members and relationships. Their affective power was undeniable and I used the photographs quite shamelessly for their ability to open doors and investigate my own connections to people of my father's generation who stayed in India after Independence, remaining in the towns they have lived for decades. This validated the effort of scanning and selecting photographs, of sitting with them, enlarging them, returning to them, scrutinising the backgrounds, searching for familiar faces and of inhabiting those moments depicted in the photographs through my imagination. The affective qualities of photographic images are known to anybody who has ever looked at a photograph and felt a frisson of familiarity with the individuals or the scenes depicted therein.

Sometimes the best I could do when Leslie could not respond to a photograph at all was return to the photograph and wait: for their interplay, their still subordination to my scrutiny, their passive yielding of information, emotion and memory triggers. When I say memory I also refer to the memory I have of looking at them as a child, sneaking a peak at images that were both beguiling and scary, that introduced me to a world that was alien and paradoxically familiar. Imbricated with this is the way in which I used these photographs (photo elicitation) with interviewees including my family; they acted as a passport when travelling to railway colonies in central India (Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh), they stimulated conversations and opened doors that would otherwise have remained shut.

Photography converged with the railways to impact on perceptions of time and distance as the railway carriage became a new space through which to view the world. Giddens (1980, p. 19) succinctly draws together the two elements of time and space, both key to the success of the railways and the demands this technology made on coordinating time as it worked to control space. The following chapter will go inside the railway colonies of the GIPR via photographs.

Chapter 4 – Inside the Railways and the Colonies

‘the colonial context was a stage as well as the impetus for the development of technologies that came to be markers of modernity for much of the European world’ (Dewan 2011, para. 1)



4.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a discussion of the context of late the Raj that allowed for the development of the railways and the colonies where domiciled communities lived and worked. This involves an examination of the way life was lived in small towns far from the bustling centres of colonial command. The railways as part of the colonial project in India have been the focus for an enormous amount of research. Ian Kerr is an historian who has carried out research in this area that transcends previous discussions of the railways redirecting the research away from a narrower focus on economic terms and its role in the political economy of colonial India. Kerr investigates the social implications of railway development in colonial India and the sheer physicality of its presence, for example, in station architecture. One such case is Lahore station then in the Punjab it was (and still is) ‘an eye catching expression of the connection between railways and the colonial state’, it also ‘represented an imperative of colonial rule: security’ (Hurd & Kerr 2003, p. 99). The station was purposely built in 1862 to accommodate troops, not long after the Indian Mutiny (also referred to as The First War of Independence) in 1857, as a result its fortress like form signifies a reassertion of military control (Kerr 2003, p.291). The railway workshops at Lahore became the largest employers of Parsis and Eurasians in the Punjab and had a significant impact on the economy of the region (Kerr 2001). As in the case of photography, Kerr (2003, p. 311) has argued that an

understanding of different representations of the railways varied ‘according to the targeted audience and desired outcomes’. The historiography of the railways can be roughly separated into three areas of research interest: technology transfer and the building of the railways (Arnold 2000; Derbyshire 1987; Kerr 2007), its economic and military role as a ‘tool of empire’ (Headrick 1981) and the social and cultural milieu that developed around the railway colonies along the various railway lines (Aguilar 2011; Arnold 1979; Bear 1994, 2007; Blunt 2005; Buettner 2004; Mizutani 2012). Assigning a concordance between modernity and technology raises the issue of whose modernity is being discussed, where it played out and how it was experienced. As Bear points out, railway colonies that were set up to house Anglo-Indians and domiciled European workers constructed ‘the modernity of the railways as European (but) the majority of employees ... were Indian’ (1994, p. 539). The photographs that accompany this chapter offer a portal through which to see how this life was lived.



Lahore station 1946

New technologies that developed in Europe in the early 18th century did not take long to be found useful in documenting the colonial project and administering and connecting the vastness of India. Photography and the railways, with these particular colonial interests at heart, were not far from one another in terms of their uptake. From 1845 the introduction of railway technology was being discussed between the East India



Company of Court directors in London and the Governor General in Calcutta. Ironically 'the Court considered' that there would be enough freight but not many passengers (Westwood 1974, p. 10) to make the railways economically viable. This consideration later proved to be an underestimation of the popularity of the railways. Railways were almost immediately taken up by Indians who used them for a variety of purposes including traveling to pilgrim sites (Kerr 2007). As Prasad (2009, p. 8) points out, by the 1920s about 520 million people were travelling by train and 90 per cent of passengers were third class travellers, this being closely associated with Indian travellers. Third

class suffered the worst conditions of travel and travellers at this level were most likely to be under colonial 'surveillance and control' (Kerr 2007, p. 95). The Indian passengers who suffered most at this end of the class spectrum were active in expressing their grievances through petitions for changes to the conditions in third class (Khan 2007). The problems the British anticipated with Indian take-up of train travel included the separation of men and women, the mixing of castes in railway carriages and the cost of travel. However, these considerations were not as great an impediment as it was first thought they would be (Westwood 1974, p. 23). Although they were being constructed and managed in a colonial context, collaboration and negotiation within the existing social conditions was essential to the success of the railways. In addition, Kerr (2007) argues that this process was not a one-way operation, and that a considerable amount of technology transfer occurred as a result of the unavoidable interactions between workers and the drive to improve efficiencies in building the train lines.

Like photography, the railways, so strongly associated with modernist concepts of progress, organisation and control, soon broke out of the confines of its original

purposes. Railways more than any other form of transportation encapsulated the aspirational nature of colonial development in a striving towards modernity, mobility and progress (Aguilar 2011). Early motivations for building the railways tapped into three major colonial interests: commercial, military and famine alleviation (Arnold 2000, p. 108). However, the railways had little impact on ameliorating the effects of famine (Kenitson 2007, p. 20). Cooper and Stoler (1997, p. 5) point out that different approaches have been taken to colonialism, producing analyses that attempt to understand the colonies as ‘laboratories of modernity’ against ‘shifting social boundaries’ and as a ‘civilising mission’. It is true that the spaces created by the railways were experimental in as much as they conformed to British notions of travelling spaces organised according to gender, class and caste, and efficiency indexed against time.

The first Great Indian Peninsula Railway (GIPR) train left Bombay for Thane on 16 April 1853 and by 1910 India had the fourth largest railway in the world running across 30,627 miles of track (Prakash para 1, 2012). The GIPR line was where William Nixon and his son and (my grandfather) Bernard or Bundy Nixon found employment. The railways were represented in photographs that showed something of the social and cultural spaces of the colonies and the complex technological and social relationship that people were entwined in. The railways were built by Indian labour, administered by colonial elites and run at ground level by domiciled European and Anglo-Indians, Parsis and Indians. It was a heterogeneous working and living milieu that adhered to an intensely hierarchical structure marked by its adherence to a racial order descending from European to Indian (Arnold 1983; Bear 1994). As Mizutani points out, in its early stages, ‘Indians were seen as unfit for the skilled work involved in the construction and management of the railways’ (2001, p. 52). The railways in India developed through several iterations that ranged from roles as disparate as a technological solution to the problem of famines to the transport of coal and the military and the desire of ordinary people to access areas of their own country that otherwise would have taken weeks to travel to (for example pilgrim sites). Arnold (2013) charts the chameleon like evolution of the railway system in India as it adapted to serve the needs of the colonisers. In particular as it responded to the intention of intermeshing the economies of Britain and India in 1855 when it was thought of in terms of its ability to transport coal (Arnold 2013). Arnold (2013, p. 22) argues that ‘poverty persistently framed the problem of

Indian technology’ and that India was viewed paternalistically as a nation unable to look after itself. Beyond the political and economic impact of the railways, the cultural effects the technology had on those involved in every level of building and running them has become the focus for newer research into the lives of the workers who made it possible.

Railway technology reached into everyday life in colonial India through the imposition of schedules and time keeping. Hurd and Kerr (2012, p. 51) note in their overview of the literature concerning the social and cultural history of the Indian railways that, ‘representational aspects of the railways ... the lived-life of railway workers and the sociology of travel’ deserve attention. Prasad (2013, p. 1252) has analysed the impact of the imposition of standardised time on ‘the colonised’ and the imperial state’s desire to ‘literally transport temporally backward societies into the modern’. Prasad (2013) concludes that despite being assigned by the colonisers to a backward or ‘time-lag’ position everybody was adjusting to standardised time and that in fact it was a global experience brought about by the technology. Aguiar (2011) has also made a significant contribution to this area through her analysis of the cultural representation of the railways and modernity through the discourses that appeared in literature and the cinema. Bear in her ethnographic study of the ‘enclaved lives’ (cited in Kerr 2007, p. 52) of railway workers in Kharagpur does investigate the social aspects of Anglo-Indians living in a particular site. Bear’s main focus, though, is on the colonial bureaucracy of the railways. Kharagpur was one of the largest railway junctions in India with a spectacularly long railway platform and clustered around it housing for the railway workers. It was also home to a large and well-established Anglo-Indian community that is now somewhat diminished in number. The current diminution of many railway colonies is evident across sites of what were large and relatively coherent communities that housed generations of workers and their families. This has come about partly as a response to the perceived lack of opportunities that accompanied Partition and the real loss of jobs to the community, and partly through increased Indianisation (implemented in 1870) of the railway workforce at the upper subordinate levels (Kerr 2007, p. 119).

Railways

Initially trains were constructed not for public transport but for commercial purposes by an enormous labour force recruited by the British from the Indian population. This Indian labour force made up 90% of railway workers, yet, over half of all positions designated as 'superior' were filled by Europeans including 'senior foremen, engineers, contractors, and bureaucrats ... who were usually British' (Kerr 1995, p. 2). In addition, Kerr points out that trains were administered through at least ten different categories of state and privately funded projects. In short, it was an enormous colonial enterprise, part of Governor General Dalhousie's dream to unite India from west to east when the GIPR eventually connected with the East India Railway (EIR) (Kerr 2007). The railways had collateral benefits and disadvantages for the wider population not directly related to their needs and some that were unwanted such as the environmental impact the railways had on local wood supplies. As Arnold (2000) points out, the idea of the arrival of steam technology, although heralded by Europeans as an age of advancement, was not a notion necessarily shared by local populations for whom modern technology and its suitability for India may have had a different meaning altogether. However, for Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans, because they were almost exclusively employed in the railways and telegraph services, and often moving between stations, the railways became entangled with their identity in India. Examining this relationship was part of the focus of Bear's (2007, p. 11) study of the railway colony at Kharagpur in Bengal from which she concluded that railway colonies and towns represented a *desh* or a home place. The railway colonies were designated areas in towns and cities where the Anglo-Indian and domiciled European labour force made their homes.

Traversing landscapes

In the early 19th century in rural India, for towns and villages between railway stations, the sight of trains passing across the landscape must have been as wondrous and remote as a jet trail in the sky (captured so powerfully in Satyajit Ray's film *Pather Panchali*). The railways may have been viewed more narrowly, as 'interstitial corridors of power that facilitated the control of places' (Kerr 2001, p. 31). However, Kerr asserts that 'spaces between places were as important as the places themselves', concluding that railways were a 'contested presence' that attracted a variety of complex inter-relationships (2001, p. 31). The question is then, what constituted the 'spaces between

places', these spaces that included villages and towns where labour was recruited and raw materials such as wood were collected and used for building the tracks (Kerr 2007; Rivell 2012). It may also have included the railway colonies set up to maintain and control the railway lines at major junctions in very small towns such as Damoh and Katni. Some of the colonies were located in these smaller towns along the Great Indian Peninsula Line, which were not necessarily of any great political or economic importance except for their strategic location in relation to the railways which, as Kerr argues, existed entirely to serve the colonial project (2007, p. 18). Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh, for example, has a surprisingly large railway junction famous for the spirited resistance put up by the Rani of Jhansi against the British in 1858. It is also well known for its proximity to the famous erotic art of the Khajarahho caves. Bhusawal in Maharashtra was a small town before the arrival of the railways and the building of the locomotive sheds, and today it is still a sleepy place with a massive junction sitting at its heart. Schivelbusch (1979, p. 66) describes the phenomenon of railway lines passing through a landscape, as having 'no use whatsoever for the intervening spaces which they traverse with disdain and provide only with a useless spectacle'. Trains did not necessarily bring modernity, prosperity and progress to the small towns and villages that dotted the landscapes they traversed, in fact, their economic impact was minimal in many places because they moved across rather than through these geographies. Having said that, the railways did intrude onto the landscape, 'radically altering it with bridges and raised embankments' (Lewellen-Jones 2007, p. 50). It is the spaces in small towns occupied by domiciled European, Anglo-Indian and Parsi communities that aroused my interest. Lying out of the sight of officialdom perhaps they did not so much defy colonial boundaries as navigate their way through them in a manner that was not as racially binary as larger colonies closer to the bigger cities of Bombay Calcutta and Delhi. Indian workers were employed in the railways to do manual labour in lower level positions and they were also employed as domestic servants in the houses of European railway staff. Although, remaining separated socially, there may have been opportunities for a closer connection between these groups of people in remoter locations which escaped the scrutiny of the colonial administrators.



Uncaptioned

The central feature of this photograph is the model of 'Stephenson's link motion-forward gear – backward gear'. (Deborah Nixon)

Photographic images converged with different technologies of modernity, particularly that of the railways, to impact on perceptions of the world. As the foreground view from the carriage window of the train became virtually obliterated, it was the distance that passengers were obliged to focus on (Smith 2011). Shivelbusch in his seminal study on train travel points out that it was the velocity and undeviating nature of the railroad across the landscape that vitiated 'the relationship between the traveller and the travelled space (1977, p. 53). The spatial (speed and distancing) and temporal (timetabling and shrinkage of time) effects of train travel offered the traveller a fresh view of an at once slower, more detailed, even static view of the world. Just as the camera distorts time and sometimes displaces the referent, railway technology repositioned the viewer in relation to the world and offered an illusion of control over the view (Batchen 2012; Lalvani 1996; Schivelbusch 1977; Smith 2014). The speed, direction and timetables that accompanied train travel also introduced it as a disciplined practice (Mukhopadhyay 2013). To be punctual and mobile was the mark of a modern person. Schivelbusch (1970) argued that train travel impacted on perceptions of the collapse of time and space and that railways had cultural effects that transformed the

way speed, space and time were experienced. Certainly an association with the railways, afforded a proximity to 'the modern', to new ways of seeing and traversing territories beyond the reach of traditional means of transport.

Despite being the biggest employer of Indian labour during the colonial period, in 1915 when the population of India reached 324 million, 'Indian railways employed 600,000 workers comprised of Europeans and Anglo-Indians but the majority of workers were Indians' (Westwood 1974, p. 31) however, Indians were relegated to lower level positions most often providing the physical labour. As Bear (2006 p. 352) argues, railway colonies constituted sites that counteracted the inclusion of Indians into upper subordinate positions that were occupied by European workers. The British by contrast, according to Kerr (1995, p. 4), provided the 'mental labour' in the construction of the railways. This involved the adoption and adaptation of 'the existing technologies of India and the transplanted technologies of British contractors' (Kerr 2007, p. 52); the point was to get the railways built as quickly and as economically as possible. During the building of the railways Indian labourers were never passive and recognised that a key bargaining chip in industrial disputes and resistance to the uptake of certain technological innovations such as the use of wheelbarrows (Kerr 2007, p. 53) was the withdrawal of their labour. It was apparent that everything connected to the railways was predicated on race and that early attempts to right the balance across the labour hierarchy, through Indianisation of the workforce, was a slow process.

Railway colonies



Uncaptioned

This photograph seems to have all the members of the railway community represented in it. It might have been taken in Jhansi judging by the age of my grandparents. The few women in the picture are sitting across the middle row and they appear to be either European or Anglo-Indian. The original print is tiny and frayed but scanning has allowed me to zoom into the group so that I can make out its composition. The figures on the perimeter of the picture seem to lean in as if the photographer had asked them to look sideways towards the camera in order to be included.

Railway colonies were areas of towns populated by Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans who worked in upper subordinate positions on the railways such as permanent way inspectors, loco foremen, engineers and engine drivers. Europeans and Anglo-Indians dominated the 'higher level and better paid jobs', demonstrating that 'India's railroads were colonial railroads serving colonial purposes' (Kerr 2007, pp. 81-82). Arnold (1983, p. 155) points out that although India was never destined to be a settler colony, significantly it was through the railway communities in their

‘distinctively regimented form that British India had its only real experience of white colonization’. This population was derived partly from the presence of the early armed forces in India and the many resulting families that remained in India, generationally, until Independence. Mizutani (2001) explains that a large number of retired European seamen were recruited to fill positions in burgeoning colonial engineering projects. This workforce also became the foundation for the domiciled European communities. Leslie’s family followed a similar pattern in India, of arriving with the armed forces then over two generations segueing into the railways. These ‘country born’, domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indian families were employed in the railways, telegraph and civil services. The railway communities were not homogenous – they included people from a variety of European and Indian backgrounds. Caplan (2001) explains in his study of the railway colony in Madras that it was comprised of people described as Anglo-Indian who could have been the progeny of Portuguese, French or Dutch forebears. In addition, the use of the word community conjures up an idea of a whole but as Carton points out, just the name Anglo-Indian ‘has been an area of contestation that reflected the diversity and multiplicity of the Eurasian condition’ (2000, p. 1). Despite the lack of precise figures even the so-called British community was diverse, dominated by the number of Scots and Irish rather than English (Marshall 1997, p. 91).



Uncaptioned

Carriage reserved for railway senior staff. (Deborah Nixon)

The railway workplace was unequivocally predicated on a racial construct of management and operated as an invidious tool for preserving the upper level positions

for Europeans and keeping others in subordinate jobs. Railway officials went to some lengths to verify the origins of its European workforce so that if a family worked on the railways it was taken as further proof of British lineage (Kerr 2007, p. 83). Bear argues that those with more 'European blood' were deemed more suitable for control of the perceived modernising force of the railways, that it was 'an elaborate moral typography of racial fitness for command' (Bear 1994, p. 535). Arnold (1980, p. 252) concurs with this description of the organisation within the railways, commenting that 'these European and Eurasian subordinates enjoyed (and jealously preserved) a privileged position as a racially defined aristocracy of labour'. However, the number of Indians working on the railways (albeit in subordinate positions) always outnumbered those from the domiciled communities. According to Arnold (1980, p. 236), 'out of four million industrial workers in India in the 1920s, 900,000 worked for the railroads', making the railroads one of the biggest employers of 'industrial labour'. Arnold comments further that within that workforce there was racial tension that often erupted into violence. The railways were also hotbeds of industrial unrest because of the inequitable treatment of employees. Arnold (1980) reports that racial conflict was a feature of colonial industrial labour management. From 1861 the ('pure') European population working in the railways was replaced with domiciled Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Parsis and Indians. Between 1908 and 1928 numerous strikes by Indian workers took place to protest against the racial employment hierarchy (Bear 1984, p. 543). However, the number of domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians employed by the railways began to decline in the 1920s as a result of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and Government of India Act passed in 1919, Indianisation of the workforce and the 'influx of superior European staff from outside India' (Arnold 1980, p. 252).



Uncaptioned

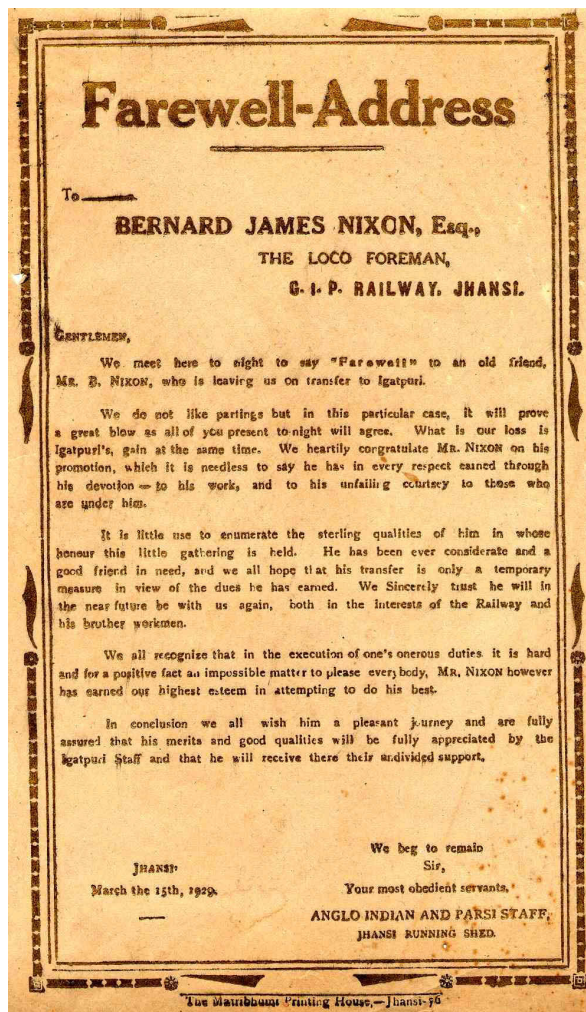
Jhansi staff in front of the Railway Institute and a GIPR steam train. (Deborah Nixon)

Despite the fact that the railways were a major employer of the European populations there was a certain negativity attached to working in the railways, since they were probably tainted by the indeterminate status of the workers. Caplan (2001) notes that ‘hierarchies, based on distinctions of European descent arose within the Eurasian population’ and that the ‘railways and the telegraph were reserved for the employment of Eurasians and non-elite Europeans who were deemed more trustworthy than the natives’ (2001, pp. 746-747). An Anglo-Indian interviewee in South Australia, Lois Harding, commented that she was surprised to find out about the prevailing attitude to railway people and she had no idea that, ‘railway people were considered to be the lowest of the low on the social scale, I thought we did a really good job’. In addition, she thought it unfair that those who came from England, who may have had a lower level of literacy and education, were entitled to better positions and pay – ‘because they were English they were given the higher jobs’. The attitude towards people employed in the railways, as inferior, is again expressed on a biographical website of growing up in India. Alton-Price writes on his website about his experience in Delhi and from outside the colony whereas Lois was from a small railway town:

... when the subject of Railways was mentioned there seemed to be an antipathy towards ‘those Railway people’. I found this somewhat mysterious and puzzling: however, not being in contact with any of the Railway Colony; they lived in the

extreme north of Delhi and we were housed in the south or 'Posh' area as some saw it. I also remember being told to stay clear of the area where they lived. Railway people were considered a bit 'Racy' and not quite up to the mark or shall we say a bit common. In much later days I was to discover for myself that these opinions were positively unfair and rather, or downright ignorant. (Alton-Price n.d.)

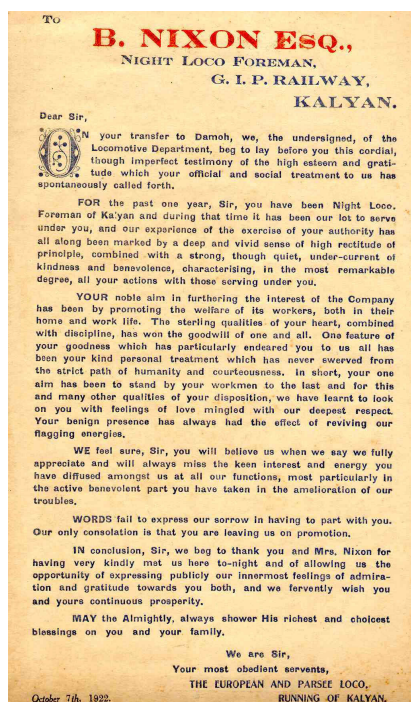
What both Alton-Price and Lois Harding are referring to is the ambiguity of the status of the people living in the railway colonies and their indeterminate social credentials. Added to this, areas where railway workers lived had a certain stigma attached to them as sites that crossed racial boundaries (Bear 2007, pp. 78-79) and many of the employees housed there had mobile lives. McMenamin (2001) argues that because of the number of 'poor whites' in colonial India, domiciled Europeans were placed at the same lower social level as Anglo-Indians. Mizutani, when discussing themes of inclusion and exclusion in colonial historiography, argues that what separated 'domicile from non domicile' were the 'social and economic hierarchies that structured British society' (2002, p. 17). The middle class separated themselves through a form of snobbishness and to 'remain white meant to remain connected to the imperial metropole' which was for many railway families economically impossible (Mizutani 2002, p. 17). As researchers point out (Arnold 1980 p.252; Bear 1994 p.535 ; Mizutani 2001 p.52; Kerr 2007 p.119 ; Caplan 2001p.759) messy and blurry divisions based on ancestry were often at odds with official lines of division between communities. 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 ' (Blunt 2005, p.5) and as Mizutani (2006, p.7) suggests, 'Domiciled Europeans were purely white but were seen to be far too indigent and uncivilized to be genuine members of the ruling race'. The two communities were to some degree coupled and as Mizutani argues 'the rationale for this curious was that, in spite of their having British blood, neither of them regarded as presenting the right kind of whiteness to Indians'(2006 p.7).Caplan (2001, p. 749) also points out that Anglo Indians and domiciled Europeans were relegated to the same level of low regard by the ruling elites, 'In the eyes of British officials they were only a cut above the Anglo-Indians, sharing many of the latter's 'disagreeable' qualities'. These comments point to the complexities created by attempting to assign people to different groups based on



ancestry when in reality social status and class also had a significant impact on how different groups were placed in the colonial hierarchy.

This formal farewell note from the 'Anglo-Indian and Parsee staff', although effusive in its appreciation of Mr Nixon's 'sterling qualities', indicates in the following lines that all may not have been well amongst the staff, '... in the execution of one's onerous duties it is hard and for a positive fact an impossible matter to please everybody. Mr. Nixon however has earned our highest esteem in attempting to do his best.' This ambiguous comment is either damning with faint praise or genuinely congratulating Mr Nixon

on his handling of his 'onerous duties'. This letter contains an element of ambivalence so that the reader cannot be quite sure of the real sentiment buried beneath the 'formulaic' expressions (Pennycook 2012, p. 107). As Pennycook goes on to suggest, when reading his own grandfather's farewell letters, they carry traces within them of 'colonial working relations, both pleasures and uncertainties' (2012, p. 107). The formal photographs do something similar: the status of the loco foreman is established and with it the privileges, and the central figures sit in comfort while the other staff provide the backdrop. There is an earlier farewell letter addressed to Bundy from the staff at Kalyan 1922 and it is also written in an ornate



and archaic style although there is no mention of any 'onerous duties'. There are effusive comments about 'Mr Nixon's rectitude' and that he was prepared to 'stand by your [his] workmen to the last'. It is difficult to tell whether the letter is merely obeying the rules of its genre or whether it is hinting at real admiration. The railway colonies strung along the Great Indian Peninsula line were a far cry from the larger colonies found in and around major cities like Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, but in the early twenties they were just as prone to industrial unrest. Certainly at this time railway colonies were beginning to experience strikes and unrest as Indian railway workers made demands for better pay and conditions.

The smaller railway colonies may not have had the social cachet of larger or more desirable postings but they were lively enclaves of a particular kind of society. From family photos it is apparent that efforts were made in order to present an impassive face to the world which masked the ripples underneath the surface, as evidenced in the history of strikes and violence between 1890 and 1929 that openly challenged the racial and economic inequalities in the hierarchy of command (Bear 1984). The letter I found merely hinted at the discord but just a few words are enough to punctuate the text and suggest that all was not quite well. Huge steam engines and large group photos of orderly workers belied the discontent and inequities in the Indian labour force and the possibility of insurrection. According to Mizutani, figures from the beginning of the twentieth century indicate that there were 93,000 non-domiciled Europeans, 47,000 domiciled Europeans and 160,000 Anglo-Indians in India (2011, p. 72). Looking at the number of European workers in official photographs I wonder at the ability of the domiciled communities to maintain a face built on the belief in the authority of Empire and the rightness of what they were doing. Perhaps to bolster this presence with more disciplinary powers the auxiliary forces were formed, comprised of railway men enlisted by authorities to 'crack down on railway strikes' (Mizutani 2011, p. 183). Bundy would most probably have been a member of the auxiliary forces.

Younger (1984) credits the railways and the telegraph services as two sources of employment that saved the community from financial ruin. In addition, from 1857 onwards railway colonies were built to accommodate employees and their families and by the 1930s, according to Bear (1994), virtually all upper subordinate positions were occupied by Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans. Bear (1994) argues that the railway colonies acted as sites to stem the miscegenation of European culture through

remaining closed; having their own institutes for dances and socialising, their own schools and their own domestic arrangements as far as housing and servants quarters were concerned. Bear sees the railway colonies as sites that ‘constructed and contested European identity’ (1994, p. 531); they were a heterotopia characterised by being intrinsically connected to the wider community and yet separated by an active form of gate keeping and organised into a hierarchy predicated on racial fitness for command. Foucault (1984) argues that heterotopias ‘presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable’. According to Foucault, a heterotopia reflects the structure of the wider space it is situated in – in this case not the wider Indian community but space created by the ‘pure’ British in India. Bear (1994, p. 532) argues that the heterotopic space of the railways was not ‘other’ but ‘othering’ in that it generated the differences between ‘Indian tradition and European modernity’. So the railways may have provided an alternative heterotopic space constructed to enact a hyperbolic of the dominant British culture but within the colonies that was skewed again through the prism of race and hierarchy.

The domiciled European community and in particular the Anglo-Indian communities are often described as being liminal, interstitial or marginal. As Stoler (1989, p. 137) argues, colonies presented ‘new constructions of European-ness and colonial boundaries were never clear’, rather colonisers lived in ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson cited in Stoler 1989, p. 137). This suggests that there was a porous boundary of some kind drawn between these communities through which people could slip according to the lightness of their skin colour and their paternity. As Stoler (1989, p. 138) goes on to point out, ‘colonial racism’ was predicated on a more complex set of social and cultural behaviours than a colour binary. Carton (1989, p. 6) suggests that despite there being a ‘fundamental racial boundary between the two communities’, in reality this was often subverted by people moving across the boundary. McMenamin (2001, p. 119) has conducted extensive interviews with Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans now living in New Zealand. Two of her participants were from railway families and commented that they ‘mixed exclusively with other domiciled Europeans only occasionally with Anglo-Indians’ and rarely if at all with the local Indian families. Leslie also said he never knowingly played with Anglo-Indians and never really knew any Indian children as his stepmother tried to keep the family away from the children of their servants. He said that as a child he was unaware of the differences between himself

and other children. Other interviewees such as Fay Wills and Maureen Robinson commented that they did not play with the children of servants but they did play with other local children. These invisible protocols about who could interact with whom were played out, from an early age, at local levels in many different ways.

4.2 Foregrounding the background



Damoh 1924

In the Damoh photograph, rapport between the figures seems to be evident in the physical connectedness of the people in the central row, smiling in an unseen, even intimate complicity – the group is relaxed as if the public mask has slipped and allowed the viewer to see in. There is emotion on display, happiness, boredom, a restless child blurring the front row adds an unintended pulse of life to the scene. The physical linking between the central figures suggests ‘reassurance, solidarity, even control’ (Batchen 2000, p. 64) for despite the informality the central figure of Bundy signifies that he is the most important person in the group. This is a beautiful group composition that paradoxically allows for individuals to express themselves through their posture and personal clothing styles. The family photographs, from India, connect private and public representations life in the railways, from the earliest taken in 1910 up to Independence in 1947. Although they may be limited, contingent and atomised, the photographs are powerful pieces of visual evidence about the possibility of a more transgressive level of

interaction between people in the more remote railway colonies than is typified in some of the research. What I found in some of these photos was a suggestion that a less segregationist society may have been actualised in the quotidian of everyday life. Perhaps this is reflected in the 'still' sense of interaction between the subjects in the less formal photographs.

Servants and the blocks

Servants were an intrinsic part of the domestic scene in Anglo-Indian and domiciled European homes. For Leslie's mother, a young woman from a working class family in London, who could not speak Hindi or Urdu, and who had eight children in rapid succession, servants would have been a necessity rather than a luxury. Very occasionally servants appear in the background of photographs and they are always alluded to in interviews according to their roles and rarely by their names. Usually servants lived at a short distance behind the house in their own quarters with cooking facilities and their own rooms, and they looked after the children when their parents were out socialising. Blunt (2005) argues by extension that this distance between the house and the servants' quarters represents the 'racial distancing of British cantonments and the civil lines from the native city'. Ironically dwellings for railway staff were arranged in 'blocks', placing railway colonies at a 'social distance' from other less 'racy' European areas as in Delhi. As argued by Stoler (2002a, p. 139), the presence of servants inside homes also meant that children would have been in closer contact with servants' children and the relative freedom that children had to come and go, unchaperoned, around the neighbourhoods where they lived, meant more contact with native populations than their parents may have desired. Leslie reported that he and his six brothers were free to roam around their area and that because his mother could not speak Urdu or Hindi, which they resorted to when they did not want her to know what they were up to.

Travelling to where the family had lived in Bhusuwal in Maharashtra, I visited the area still known as '40 Blocks' where the railway colony housing would have been. The blocks were residential areas within railway towns or colonies. The blocks are still evident, tucked away in a part of town on the side of the railway tracks furthest from the main bazaar. I was taken to the area Leslie would have lived where there are still large European bungalows surrounded by gardens. As pointed out to me by a local Anglo-

Indian, who was also an ex-railwayman, these large houses have now been subdivided to accommodate families. Through the notes scribbled onto the backs of photos I was able to identify what may have been the family home and locate the cemetery where my grandmother and great-grandmother were buried. It was also through contacting one of the last Anglo-Indian families still living in Bhusawal that I was able to gain access to the railway offices and see the names of the loco foremen listed on a wooden noticeboard. I recognised, with a sense of excitement, Bundy's name. I was taken to the Limpus social club, now empty but once a hub of activity as the Anglo-Indian and European Social club. Bundy was the vice president for several years in the 1930s, and his name also appeared here on an old honour board in gold letters.



Jabalpur



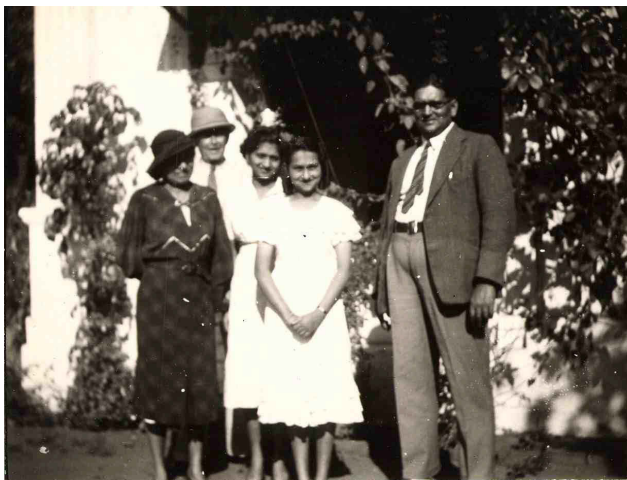
Bhusawal

Uncaptioned:

Railway colony housing in Jabalpur and '40 blocks' Bhusawal. (Deborah Nixon)

Bear asserts that domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians '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' (1994, p. 544). She also argues that for Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans, who lived in smaller colonies (such as those along the GIP line like Bhusawal, Igatpuri, Kalyan, Itarsi, Jhansi, Damoh or Jabalpur), perhaps everyday life was experienced differently from life in Madras, Calcutta, Bombay or Delhi and occupied less of a bounded space. This aspect of the railway colonies does not seem to have attracted much scholarship yet, but it stands to reason that distance from the larger colonies may have allowed more relaxed relations (McMenamin, 2010) and a closer interface between people both inside and outside the

railway colony. Kerr (2001, p. 36) notes that there has not been enough research into regional differences about the impact of the railways on 'the political economy of colonial India'. Although not a focus for my work, similarly there has been little research about the possibility of differences between railway colonies situated in big cities and those strung along the various lines that crossed the continent.



Uncaptioned

Bundy with Dr Costanzio Alvarez and family (Deborah Nixon)

Networks

Railway workers and their families were regularly transferred between railway colonies when positions were opened or promotions occurred so a network of relationships between towns began and is still visible amongst the railwaymen I interviewed in Jhansi and Jabalpur in 2012. Within and around the railway colonies, whether isolated or connected to larger cities and towns, was a complex contact zone linking British bureaucrats, domiciled communities living in railway colonies and the huge Indian labour force that built the railways and subsequently worked in its administration. Bear suggests that because of the mobility of railway workers the confines of the colony (2007, p. 78) were often traversed and that this in itself challenged the 'boundaries' between cultures. There are at least two instances in Leslie's family that suggest that a more nuanced relationship existed between different groups of people and that they helped each other out. Several photographs exposed the presence of people I did not recognise as belonging to the immediate family but who were obviously familiars. One person was the previously mentioned Gordon Forbes and the other was with Bundy's doctor. Leslie dismissed the relationship between his father and his doctor, Dr

Costanzio Alvarez, as being the result of Bundy's hypochondria, saying 'he was always going to see him'. However, Leslie's brother told me that his middle name 'Constanzio' was named after Dr Alvarez (Norman Nixon Interview 2007) and that Bundy and Alvarez were friends. Moreover, the presence of other photographs of the Costanzio family shows that a level of friendship and trust must have existed between the two men for the exchange of photographs to take place.



The small fragile photograph below is crumbling around the edges but when scanned at a high resolution it maintained its integrity and tempted me to zoom in, in an attempt to release its secrets.

The photograph as artefact oscillates between the wider theoretical context of social practices it is

embedded in and the more particular private object that it is. Trying to locate the photograph in its time also locates it within a set of social conditions and constraints. This photograph may be of a group of railway workers in a locomotive shed but the special resonance for me lies in the figure of the man in the back row because he is George, my great-uncle. The details tempted me to move in more closely to the faces and clothing of the young men and the longer view situated them in a workshop, possibly as a team of factory workers. There is evidence in the photo of colonial dress codes: again the presence of the *sola topi* (identifying the location as India), the fob chain (perhaps an indication of higher status), cloth caps, *dasootie* (cotton waste for cleaning grease off machinery) and of the outsider on the left physically inserting himself into the picture. The marks on the photo do not help to differentiate 'George' from the others. The pen marks are at variance with the writing on the back of the photo 'George back left'. I once again called on the forensic talents of Peter Moore (2010, pers. comm.) who offered this summation: 'As a personal guess, they are probably apprentice steam-fitters in a railway workshop or trainee mechanical engineers in a

factory.’ Peter, bearing in mind that the sepia colour of the photograph has also influenced the different shades of skin colour, posits that the range of complexions suggests that the workers are Anglo-Indian.

What this photograph shows the viewer is what it actually looked like to be a worker in either a locomotive workshop, a locomotive shed or a running shed, each of these workshops servicing trains and varying in size according to their functions (Kerr 2007, p. 84). This photograph may have been taken in a larger city such as Bombay. Unlike smaller stations, the towns where these large sheds were located generated employment and did have an impact on the local economy. Kerr describes them as ‘crucibles of technology transfer’ (2007, p. 84). Significantly, as earlier mentioned, the transfer of technological skills also involved an active participation in understanding other uses for the technology in a local context.

According to the photographs Leslie’s family lived in Jhansi, which had a large railway junction, at different periods of time, and according to Allen it was not a desirable posting. Allen (1975, p. 65) rather disparagingly refers to Jhansi in the following manner:

Jhansi was a third class station ... any station that was on the railway line had a “colony” composed for the most part of Eurasians officially termed Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans ... this twilight community ... saw itself as the “backbone of the British Administration”. (Allen 1975, p. 54)

Allen’s comment refers to Jhansi as being inferior in relation to more appealing stations such as Meerut which was viewed as ‘first class’. What made it more appealing was its more clement weather and proximity to Delhi.



Jhansi 1923

What also triggered a closer scrutiny of the railway colony at Jhansi was the chance discovery of the farewell letters written to Mr Nixon from his posting in Jhansi and a number of photographs taken in the early 1920s. I was helping Leslie to clean out his office and lifted up an old folder and from it fluttered the two delicate rice paper documents. The letters referred to both places the family lived in along the GIPR line and both were, according to Allen, less than prestigious locations in the class-conscious world of India under British rule.

Parsis

It was the signing off of the farewell letters from ‘The Anglo-Indian and Parsee [sic] community in Jhansi’ and in another letter written in Kalyan that interested me. Under colonial rule the Parsi community (originally from Iran), like domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians, found employment in the railways. So when I arrived in Jhansi I was keen to meet members of the Parsi community and it was Peggy Cantem who put me in touch with Farokh Pestonji, a supervisor in the central railway workshop, just the right person to show me around both the workshops and the fort in Jhansi. Farokh worked in the railways in a management position so he was able to take me through the railway workshops in Jhansi and up to the fortress of the Rani of Jhansi. But

first we went to meet Farokh's 83-year-old uncle, Percy Pestonji. Percy had worked in the railways his entire life as a steam engine driver. He spoke of how hot and hard the work was and that he was glad when electrification spread across the railways. He was nearly blind and living in a small dark house. I think he was glad of the interruption to his day. Sadly Parsi numbers are now in decline in Jhansi because so many young people have left to find work in other parts of India or migrated overseas. Farokh then took me to the railway work sheds and showed me a small office building that would have existed in the 1920s and quite possibly would have been where Bundy worked. I then went up to the fortress of the Rani of Jhansi and most intriguingly to Murli Manohar Mandir, which is located in the middle of a bustling market in the oldest part of the town. Farokh knew the family who acted as custodians of the temple so we settled in for tea and I was shown around the shadowy labyrinthine building. A mysterious wooden door hidden behind a curtain was revealed to me as a secret passageway back up the Rani's fortress.

Both Peggy Cantem and Roy Abbott commented that the Parsis were 'like us', not so much in a cultural sense as in the sense that they felt the British saw them as 'more trustworthy'. Percy, echoed this opinion, stating emphatically that, 'We were attracted to the railways, conditions were good and there was housing and it [the railways] was enjoyable. Parsis were seen as reliable, you can't rely on Indian people.' Percy also suggested that the relationship between the British and Parsis had been strengthened during the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny because the Parsis had supported the British by remaining 'aloof'; he added, 'You could say we were on the same footage' (Percy 2012). In addition, Parsis along with domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians were employed in the railways in upper subordinate positions. Roy Abbott (2012), commented on this, explaining that he believed that a special compatibility existed between the British and the Parsis and that the Parsis were 'smart' and not 'like Indians, they were from Iran'. In other words, some viewed the Parsis as more able to work with the British because they were outsiders. Parsis were keen participants in the new technologies both as early adopters and as businessmen. Arnold argues in his study of everyday technologies that Parsis acted as 'technological intermediaries between Europeans and the mass of the population...in the dissemination and popularization of everyday technology in India' (2013, p. 71). Leslie talks of members of the Tata family

(prominent Parsis and wealthy industrialists) who attended his school in the Mussoorie, as if to legitimate the reputation of the school as being of a high quality.

Despite the small size of the Parsi population Parsis were and are a strong economic presence in India, have gained political eminence and are regarded as being highly intelligent and well educated (Ray 1986). However, the number of Parsis is shrinking all over India because the population never was very large and it has been further eroded by migration and as it was endogamous, the need to go outside the community in order to marry. Being Parsi depends on having a Parsi father. According to Farokh Pestonji, only 15 to 16 individuals are left in Jhansi because so many have left Jhansi for work opportunities in other parts of India or have gone overseas.



Jhansi 1929

This family and work photograph is very formal but other photographs evidence more intimate glimpses of the family and their community as photography moved out of the studio and into their hands. In 1929 the family was close to their departure for Igatpuri. In contrast to the picnic informality of the earlier Damoh photograph, the photographs from Jhansi are more formal in appearance. The first formal photograph from Jhansi was taken in 1923, probably not long after the family's arrival at this

posting. The above shot, taken in 1929, was presented to Bundy Nixon after he left Jhansi and had already transferred to become loco foreman at Igatpuri. The farewell photo with its almost blank formality and studio setting at first glance gives nothing away, like the photograph, the formality masks any undercurrents of discord, referencing an ordered and choreographed 'face'. There are a few observable differences from previous photographs: fewer staff, my grandmother has put on weight and there is another uncle. Photographs taken at this time required subjects to remain still and so there is a wooden-ness in the postures and a kind of fixedness in the eyes of the adults' 'stern fidelity'. Sometimes, as in the Jhansi photograph, a restive child blurs the picture and disturbs the formality. A loco foreman was 'a big shot' according to an ex railway man in Bhusawal and a position not open to Indians. In these photographs my grandfather and his family are positioned in the centre and the staff are arranged around them, indicating their rank. Lesley remembers nothing of Jhansi apart from falling into a large well and having to have painful puncture-like inoculations against infection; these marks still scar his upper arms.

Within the European community there was a further distinction made between 'the "heaven born" [and] the "country born" domiciled community [which] consisted of people of European descent who were permanent residents in India' (Blunt 2000, p. 5). Blunt uses the term 'domiciled communities' to refer to both groups because according to the Calcutta Domiciled Enquiry Committee of 1918-19 no distinction was drawn between persons born in India of European parents and brought up in India and persons of 'mixed blood' (2005, p. 33). In addition, it is widely recognised in the literature that racial distinctions were not necessarily drawn using biological criteria although there was a tendency towards 'extreme biologizing and essentialising of race' (Arnold 2004, p. 262) and that this reached its zenith in the 1820s-1830s 'in the exclusion or strict subordination of others' (Arnold 2004, p. 262). As hinted at in the farewell letter industrial unrest was to become a feature of railway relations and the colonies 'active foci of discontent and disruption', according to the 1931 Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India cited in Bear (1994, p. 534). This arose primarily because of inequities in wages and access to higher subordinate positions based on colour; as Arnold (1980, p. 253) puts it, 'racial discrimination permeated every level of life and work on the railways'. What accentuated the conflicts and sustained violence in Indian industry at the time was its peculiar colonial and racial context. Racial divisions

between Indian workers and European managers and supervisors exacerbated class conflict and was replicated at a lower level in railroads employing large numbers of European and Eurasian sub-ordinates (Arnold 1980, p. 254). Bear (2007) argues that the general air of 'political agitation' created by the frequency of strikes during the 1920s served to intensify relations between the Indian force and the domiciled communities. Unions did not protect workers; even though by the 1930s they had been unionised, arbitration was unlikely to be used to settle disputes. In addition, the railways actively recruited from European and Anglo-Indian populations because they provided a more mobile work force not bound to a particular *desh* (Bear 2007, p. 96). Indeed, Leslie, when asked which place he most strongly identified with as home, said, 'We didn't have one home, we lived in Bombay, Nagpur, Bhusawal, Itarsi, Damoh, Poona, Bhopal, Jhansi, Sagar – there may be more. And then we went to boarding school for nine months of the year.' Overall the people who worked in the railways had to be mobile adaptable and resourceful to survive in such a system.

Race and class in the railway colonies

The conflation at the lower end of the European social scale of domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians was not without tensions as class and racial origins influenced employment within the railways. There was a great deal invested in aligning oneself with the European community in the racialised atmosphere of the 1920s. Although the communities were far from homogeneous, the history of domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians was inextricably intertwined. The railways were both a source of employment and evolved into a social crucible for preserving a particular kind of culture predicated on notions of class, race and hierarchy. As Bear (2007, pp. 111-12) argues for Anglo-Indians the railway colonies provided a 'home territory' roughly equivalent to a *desh*. And for those who left the railways it was remembered as an 'industrial *desh*' (Bear 2007 p12). Yet within the colonies, as I have already demonstrated, were anxieties around social contact across both class and race.

Within domiciled communities it was not just race that separated people from other more transient British 'covenanted wallahs' (workers on short-term contracts who could return to Britain) or the local Indian populations, class also played a major role in the relationship both between and within communities. It was, as Stoler (1989), Mizutani (2005) and Hubel suggest (2004, p. 231) the 'combined politics of class and racial

difference' that dominated the relationship between domiciled communities and the agents of colonialism. The presence of 'poor whites' in India has attracted some scholarly attention (Arnold 1980; Fischer-Tine 2009; Hawes 1996; Mizutani 2005), notably because they both embarrassed and challenged the notion of white superiority that colonials wished to project and because whiteness was an unstable and not necessarily biological construction. As Stoler points out, the population of poor whites in India constituted 'nearly half the European population' (Arnold cited in Stoler 1989, p. 150). This is at variance with the nostalgic stereotype of the British in India. The problem for those in the colony was that domiciled communities did not 'fit' into what was considered acceptably British in terms of accent, habit and place of birth so being born in India already acted as a mark against being essentially British, particularly if the family was generationally in India and unable to afford trips back to the UK (Buettner 2004; Fischer-Tine 2009; Mizutani 2012). Mizutani also argues that many Europeans were only 'British' by descent 'while' un-British in other ways by virtue of the fact that they were permanent residents of India, 'not as agents of colonialism', and because they could not keep up proper connections to Europe (2005, p. 71).

As mentioned earlier Leslie had never heard the term domiciled European before I used it but most of the Anglo-Indian interviewees were familiar with the term. Blackford (Interview 2007) referred to the term domiciled European rather disparagingly as a way of big-noting oneself, of 'showing superiority and it means I'm fairer than you'. In a biographical account of growing up in India, McCready-Buffardi comments that British born residents looked down on Indian born British residents (domiciled Europeans) who considered themselves a 'cut above mixed breed Anglo-Indians' (2004, p. 56). Remarks such as these indicate that there was an element of tension between the communities and that there were in reality economic as well as social reasons that underlay this complicated relationship. Domiciled Europeans according to Arnold were themselves looked upon as 'lowly in sight of the white elite' (1980, p. 252) but Leslie identified himself as British and did not see himself as being on a lower or inferior social rung. However, as Mizutani (2012, pp. 222-223) points out, the label 'domicile' implied that living in India was a choice, but for many of those descended from generations with working class roots living in India there was no choice in the matter. Mizutani (2012) argues that race and class were central factors in defining colonial whiteness that could only be preserved by maintaining social distance, partially

through schooling, and partially through where one lived and worked. In the following section I will provide an example of the conditions in the school that Leslie and his brothers received in the hill station school St Georges in Mussoorie.



This school photo shows Leslie sitting amongst Anglo-Indians classmates, sitting next to Curtis. At first he said that he was ‘not him’ in the photograph, despite his name being under his picture, because he had blonde hair! However in order to stress the quality of education he received he qualified that St Georges was the best in India. He says there was a separate building, referred to as ‘the castle’, where the wealthier students stayed. He recalled being in constant competition with ‘Jimmy Moore a little but very smart bloke’. This photograph shows that the population of his class was almost entirely Anglo-Indian; for those born in colonial India, and with the means to do so, schooling would occur in Britain thus preserving the distance between coloniser and colonised. However, for domiciled Europeans this was often not affordable. All the Nixon boys attended St Georges and their two sisters were educated at home and in schools closer to where their family lived.

Hill station schools were modelled on English public schools and according to Buettner acted as ‘stepping-stones to careers in lower level public service jobs’ (2000,

p. 285). Mizutani (2011) and Buettner (2000) argue, that amongst other things going to mixed race schools in India posed the threat of social degeneration through mixing with children from Anglo Indian and domiciled European backgrounds and developing a *chi chi* accent. Leslie says that he thinks that his family were middle class, certainly they had all the trappings in terms of servants, large houses and private schools, but the difference was that this all happened in India. They were not educated in England nor did they make frequent trips back to preserve their Britishness. Indeed, my grandmother was from a working class background whose family lived on the Isle of Dogs in public housing. Sending children away from the railway colony for schooling, being vigilant about not acquiring a *chi chi* accent, and not having too much contact with local children were also factors in sequestering children in mountain schools. This experience was often terrifying, punishing and lonely. Several interviewees, after nostalgically revisiting the experience of schooling, lapsed into censuring the extreme physical punishments that were meted out to students. Leslie commented that ‘punishment was the norm’ and that some of the Brothers were ‘sadists’. To illustrate how tough it was even to play sport, he recalled the way he was taught to swim by being secured to a rope and dangled into a *jhil* (tank) full of freezing mountain water. Miraculously he developed a love of swimming and became a competent swimmer and a very good boxer.



play at school 1937/1938 Mussoorie

[Norman Costanzio Nixon rabbit on all fours front right, (Deborah Nixon)]

Overall school in the Himalayan foothills was an at times unpleasant experience; students were isolated from their families, usually at a very young age. Leslie and his brothers were sent up to St Georges in Mussoorie (the closest hill station to Delhi) from the age of five until they finished their schooling at 18; they were allowed to visit their parents for three months of the year. Students were in danger of abuse and severely punished for minor offences. Ruefully Norman commented that going back up to school near Mussoorie ‘was like being sent to Alcatraz’ (Norman Nixon Interview 2007) and that a sense of foreboding enveloped him when he saw the mountains loom in the distance as he and his brothers approached Dehra Dhun, where they disembarked from the train. The Anglo-Indians I interviewed in Adelaide in 2006, who had been to hill station schools in Mussoorie like Leslie, described different experiences but all agreed it was very gruelling for such young children. Lois Harding (Interview 2006) told me she attended Oak Grove near Mussoorie, which she described as ‘a school for children whose parents were on the railways and needed to get away from the heat of the plains’. All interviewees remarked on the trauma of being separated from their families. Lois commented that on the way up to Mussoorie on seeing ‘the thin dark line of these huge mountains I’d feel sick in my stomach straight away’. Lois also confided that her brother had been bullied and severely punished for minor offences and once she discovered that he had been burnt with a cigarette on his legs. Lois was distressed about this treatment but was powerless to help him, saying that her brother was small and an easy target. Similarly Leslie recalled feeling at the age of seven, ‘bloody terrified all the time going up there’. Robert Nicholl and Des Tellis said they loved being at school and that although discipline was very strict, ‘they needed it [the discipline]’ and ‘probably deserved the punishments’ (Tellis Interview 2006) they received. Stan Blackford went to a variety of schools and suffered from being bullied and felt like a ‘misfit’ until he arrived through a series of expulsions from various schools at St Joseph’s College (North Point) in Darjeeling where he found a happier time. I met two Anglo-Indians in Adelaide who were active in the Anglo-Indian community and who were also members of old school clubs who contributed news-letters to the St Georges magazine. Leslie on the other hand has never actively sought out any other people from his school or participated in any reunions with those who knew of him from school.

The incident

Abuse and unfair punishment were often inflicted on boys in boarding schools where the victims of this treatment would have been especially vulnerable because of their age and distance from their families. Leslie told me of an extreme case in which a murder had occurred as part of a complicated drama of abuse and cover up, which happened before St Georges had amalgamated with another Catholic school, St Fidelis. Both schools were run by Irish Patrician Brothers Leslie was careful to separate the schools in the retelling. I heard about this incident in passing before I read a disturbing letter from an ex-student, Davidson, to the editor of *The Manorite*, an old boys school magazine, who described the school as “‘Dickensian’”, a place of dark dismal classrooms, poor food and beatings whenever my name was called it conjured up the most frightening demons’ (Manorite 2005, p. 3). He recounts the ‘Bankswallah incident’ (the murder of a student at St Fidelis), and did not feel anything nostalgic or redeeming about his own experience there. This letter had a yellow post-it note stuck to it (by the person who sent the magazine to me), with a comment that not all experiences were as dark as this one. When I visited Mussoorie in 2007 I walked towards Landau and interviewed an Anglo-Indian woman whose father had been working with the police at the time of the murder. She remembered the night the murder was discovered. ‘Daddy got a call, Bankswallah had been done to death’ (Creena Aurora Interview 2007). Her father went to the school, there was a search for the murder weapon and the body, which was later recovered from a river. According to Creena Aurora, the murderers’ parents ‘bought their way out of it’ and ‘disappeared’ (Interview 2007). The lay Master at the centre of the scandal was fired and also disappeared possibly back to Ireland. Perhaps contemporary scandals in Catholic institutions had emboldened Davidson to speak out. It remains an incident that stirs different accounts and discomfiting memories. Note too that Bankswallah is also spelt as Bankwalla.

The detachment that resulted from having an itinerant home, I think, had an impact on a sense of belonging to any place in India despite being the product of generations domiciled there. Although Leslie says he was British he never lived in the UK for any significant length of time. Still, Britain remained to many a mythologised place, an imagined community (Anderson 1991), not a physical home to identify with but in the

sense of it being a cultural home. Indeed many Anglo-Indians were disappointed by the climate, living conditions and racism that greeted them in the UK. A participant who had gone to school with Leslie was living in a dark little terrace house in Southampton. When I interviewed him in October 2007 his bag was poignantly packed and ready for his December trip back to India where he longed to be. Regrets about migration seem to work both ways in either ‘staying on’ or leaving India. The aura of dislocation that accompanies Anglo-Indians is insightfully expressed by Blunt as akin to living in a colonial diaspora within India and a post-colonial diaspora after Independence (2003).

4.3 ‘I was there’

Over the last two decades there has been a burgeoning of biographies by Anglo-Indians who have taken control of the telling of their own history, and in the last few decades they have produced a large number of restitutive biographies and histories that revolve around family memoirs of life under colonial rule. Several biographies (Deefolts 2003; Gantzer 2013; Hearne 2009; Staines 1986) refer to the presence of Anglo-Indians as a mainstay in the railways. Railway workers I interviewed all commented on the intense demands of the job, the heat, and the strength one needed in order to drive the trains and shovel coal into the furnace of the temperamental train engine (Pestonji Interview 2011; Stevens Interview 2011). Gantzer (2013, p. 33) describes the role of the loco foreman as ‘the steel of the community’ and characterises the colonies as a ‘unique civilisation’. The term ‘backbone’ is invoked in the other works mentioned as well as a metaphor for the physicality; it is a word associated with hard work. This is very true of the work demanded by the running of the trains. Each of these writers stresses the singular nature of the culture and the social life in the colonies. Many are nostalgic recounts recalling the ‘Inster’ or Railway Institutes that were the social heart of the railway workers. Sir Henry Gidney and his successor Frank Anthony, both champions for Anglo-Indians, were instrumental in creating some level of security of employment on the railways and in securing Anglo-Indian representation in constitutional rights (D’Cruz 2006, p. 141). However, as D’Cruz (2006) goes on to point out, both these men were suspicious of those attempting to pass as Anglo-Indian in order to benefit from the various ‘constitutional guarantees’. I noted this distinction surface in several interviews in Jabalpur around the heterogeneity of the community there, particularly those of ‘Goan’ background.

Migration



Uncaptioned: A postcard of the Asturias found in Leslie's album. (Deborah Nixon)

Migration has been an ongoing feature of the Anglo-Indian community since it became a desirable option for most of the domiciled European community after Independence. Andrews (2007, p. 37) identifies three waves of migration from the literature that took place first in 1947, then in the early 1960s and finally an ongoing one since the 1970s. In April 1947, 1400 people migrated from India to Australia to resettle, and at this time one needed to be 'clearly 50% European and from appearance and conversation ... could reasonably be regarded as predominantly European' (Blunt 2005, p. 144). Prospective migrants came up against the racist White Australia Policy even before they left India when seeking passage on ships leaving Bombay. Leslie was able to secure passage on the 'Asturias' in 1948, a ship that was initially going to be reserved for those of European or British descent. Leslie's British Indian passport identified him as European and thus protected him from this discrimination. For others the struggle against the White Australia Policy lasted until it reached a peak in the 1950s. Migration across the Indian Ocean to Australia lasted over three decades at the same time the number of Anglo-Indian immigrants fluctuated according to extrinsic factors such as the discriminatory nature of Australian immigration the policies (Blunt 2005, pp. 139-174).

Many Anglo-Indian and European people left India in the first main migrations after Partition, scattering and settling in the UK or the USA, Australia and Canada (Blunt 2003, p. 283). This migration was not necessarily triggered by a fear response related to Partition but rather to the perceived lack of opportunity that would arise particularly in areas of employment where Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans had

been protected. Based on a study of Anglo-Indians in Madras, Caplan (1995a, p. 141) argues that Anglo-Indians differ from other groups of migrants because they were identified as being more 'culturally qualified' on account of their European ancestry to live in European countries. Likewise Andrews concludes that she has observed the same propensity for aligning culturally to the 'British' amongst the Anglo-Indians she has studied in Calcutta. Andrews, like Caplan, concludes that since Independence for Calcuttan Anglo-Indians 'a culture of migration' has gained traction and that this may have resulted in a higher number of Anglo-Indians living outside India than in India (2007, p. 49). In addition, Andrews concludes that many Anglo-Indians feel an alienation from their place of birth and identification with their desired destination countries.

Leslie chose to migrate to Australia alone, whereas his seven brothers, two sisters and parents scattered across North America, the United Kingdom and South Africa. There was simply nothing left for him in India – he saw no opportunity for himself there.

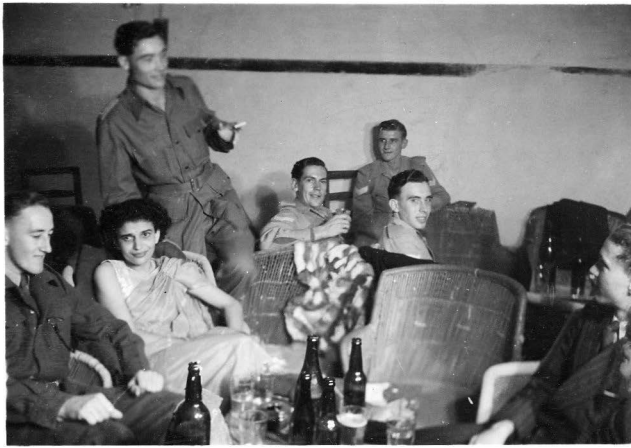
Conclusions

This chapter has explored the context of this family background in the railways in order to locate Leslie's account of Partition in relation to the time, culture, social relations and politics it has emerged from – its *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977). The importance of place, class and ethnicity/ancestry was central to domiciled Europeans and to Anglo-Indians in late colonial India up to the Partition of 1947 was often a cause of anxiety. Partition represented a point at which many people in India were forced to make a decision about where they would live; for domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians it was a time when they had to decide whether to stay or to migrate. Reasons for migration were varied and for Anglo-Indians the process was staggered over several decades. For many families, either Europeans domiciled in India with familial ties stretching back for generations or Anglo-Indians in a similar situation, the decision must have been difficult but, with the violence and chaos that accompanied Partition in various parts of India the decision for some was unequivocal. It also meant that despite identifying as European or British and having never lived or even visited Europe, people from both communities had to confront the question of where home was going to be. Sometimes home was not what was expected; one of my interviewees commented that part of his family went to the

UK but returned to India because they were considered 'too swarthy'. Anglo-Indians constitute a group for whom 'locating a sense of identity and a place to call home have been key concerns' (Blunt 2003, p. 282). Blunt (2003, p. 285) suggests that Anglo-Indians deferred to the West culturally in terms of food, dress and language but were often ridiculed for making this alignment. The tension that existed between those identified as Anglo-Indian and those identified as domiciled European may have resulted from 'maintaining social distinctions amongst themselves' (Anderson cited in Stoler 1989, p. 137) The racialised nature of employment within the railways may also have played a large part in creating this unease and inevitably in destabilising coveted positions in the railways in post-Independence India with the Indianisation of civil services.

Photographs taken of Bundy and his family in the railway colonies and in private life subtly challenge the strict boundaries that are said to have existed between people in the railways. There is a persistent sense of ambiguity about the sites despite what is articulated in the research literature, official reports and interviews. Photographs give a glimpse of quotidian life that shows the way people may have negotiated their way through this complex, racially stratified world. I found incongruities in Leslie's narrative that indicated there might have been more contact between servants, other Anglo-Indian railway workers and Indians than he suggests.

When confronted by the contradictions in the photos and his own descriptions of no social contact with Anglo-Indians Leslie tends to dismiss these photos as one-offs, as outside what usually went on. He says the Alvarez family were only friends because 'Alvarez was a doctor and my father was a hypochondriac'. However, I believe there was a real friendship there and that my grandfather had much more to do with Anglo-Indians than my father will admit to. Never making contact with the Anglo-Indian community in Adelaide and vehemently defending his Britishness helps to maintain the social distance he practised in India. In contrast to this Leslie's father looks from the photos to be a man at ease in his world with Anglo-Indian friends and the compassion to adopt Hussein Amir. According to an Australian Gurkha (Rob May) I interviewed, my grandfather was not a 'dyed in the wool Pom and he had an Anglo Banglo accent ... you've got a touch of the tarbrush but don't tell Nick I said that'. And I didn't. The picture below shows Leslie with the Australian Gurkha Rob May at an officer's dance in 1946.



Rob, Self (standing) and Parsee girl

What I also see in all these pictures is a tenuous link with a space between memory and experience, a life peeping out of a colonial past. They cannot be taken as the ‘truth’ about the way people lived thought and behaved but neither can the spoken word. Combined however, it is possible to add texture to the narrative about the way people lived.

In the next three chapters the narrative engages with the impact of Partition from the vantage point of the soldiers that stayed in India and escorted refugees travelling mostly on trains between India and Pakistan. There are no photos of the Partition slaughters Leslie commented that he would not have wanted to photograph the things he saw, ‘the Indians doing to one another’. Instead he has photographs of training camps and the rituals he participated in as a British Indian Gurkha officer. Although he says he loved the mountains in India he has never wanted return to them. Part of the explanation for this I believe is to found in the trauma he experienced through the Partition and even to the experience of the dark days as a young boarder in the isolation of the mountains. The following three chapters follow this family story through to the Partition through Leslie’s voice and that of other British officers. The focus moves away from the railway colonies to the repurposing of the railways and the disruption of the entire country. The narrative also broadens again to include the experiences of British officers.



Uncaptioned

1946 train travel in India, Leslie, sits in the shadow on the right, in uniform with a friend-Wybrants. Leslie was 20 years old at the time. (Deborah Nixon)



5.1 Introduction

The focus shifts in these final three chapters to the cartographic consequences of Partition, and in particular to the mass migration that ensued after parts of India were excised off along Muslim and non-Muslim lines to create East and West Pakistan. Maps are about relationships, they position landscapes and people in connection to one another, in the case of India and Pakistan an entirely new relationship between people in the Punjab resulted from the boundary drawn by the retreating power. The manner in which the changes to the Punjab were announced and executed created uncertainty and panic on the ground as millions of people were forced into new national identities and separated from their homelands. Anderson (2006) argues that cartography was used by colonial powers to create dominions that were essentially ‘imaginary’ as they did not correlate to the spaces inhabited by the people who lived there. These chapters foreground the experience of young British officers during Partition and by doing so they expand on research into the involvement of the armed forces in the Punjab that mostly excludes the voices of lower ranking British officers who worked with refugees in this area in 1947. My concern is with the first hand experience of lower ranking officers who were present during the population transfer, riding on the trains or escorting refugees on foot to collection points on their journey east or west. This will provide a fresh set of narratives about Partition from a variety of viewpoints. Talbot and Singh (2009, p. 24) in an overview of the historiography of Partition comment that there has been a ‘shift in the writing from an all India perspective to regions and localities’

and to the ‘human dimension’ of the cleaving of India. In this chapter the thematics of ritualised positioning, identity reversal (rank and gender), masculinity and violence are explored through an examination of the ritual of *Dussehra* as seen through the lens of the camera in 1946. It was an extremely significant religious event so the British astutely integrated the *Dussehra*, into the calendar of the Gurkha regiments’ year’. The celebration involved ten days of animal sacrifices ending with a huge ‘*tamasha*’ (party), *maruni* dancers (male dancers dressed as females) and lots of drinking.

I wanted to know what it was like for British officers to participate in this Hindu ritual. I have interviewed a retired Sikh Brigadier who served with the First Gurkhas Rifles in India who was very insightful (as a non-Hindu) about the function *Dussehra* played in bonding officers and their men and also in creating loyalty to the regiment and identity of the Gurkhas. However, despite believing in the effect the ritual had on the luck of the regiment, Leslie has not shared many insights on this event, even if it did have an effect on the relationship he had with his men. An analysis of this ritual provides a starting point for this part of the thesis. It was the last *Dussehra* before Independence and Leslie recorded every stage of the ten-day festival. After his officers training in 1946 Leslie went to Dharamsala and in November 1946 participated in the *Dussehra* with his regiment. He also took scores of photographs of the stages in the ritual.

Partition and the creation of two new nation states out of a political cauldron of competing interests has been well rehearsed in the plethora of literature about this time. It is not my intention to recapitulate in detail the complicated politics of the day beyond what is necessary to situate these accounts in their time. I also do not intend to write a revised history of the experience, but to broaden the field to include what it meant to be domiciled European or British, and serving in a subaltern officer’s role in a British Indian army regiment during Partition. Geographically I limit my focus to the Punjab. I acknowledge that other areas in India were also experiencing similar levels of upheaval and violence but this area was where Gurkhas were most active and where several of my participants served, so that acted as a natural limitation. In addition, because the First Gurkhas Rifles were ‘homed’ in North India, security in the Punjab was part of their remit.

At the time of interviewing other British officers I had not seen all the *Dussehra* pictures and I did not realise how important the ritual was. Thus I did not use the

photographs in interviews with the British officers I met at the Gurkha Museum in Winchester, UK (to be discussed in the next chapter) because I was not using them outside my early exchanges with Leslie. In addition they did not mention it because my questions focused more closely on their active service than their training. In Leslie's case memory is unavoidably mediated through a personal relationship to the photographs but the photographs are no substitute for memory. Also in viewing oneself (as Leslie does) in the photographs, the pictures provide a Russian doll-like terrain for the complex layering of self as the subject in the object (and in the viewer's viewing).

Memory is selective like the choices of which photographs to arrange in an album. The photographs are also 'reflexive in as much as they refer back to the photographer at the moment of their creation' (MacDougall 2006, p. 3); they locate the photographer and the event in a particular way. In Leslie's album, I discovered an eclectic set of images as if Leslie was seeing India for the first time as a very young man and recording and ordering his view into mini-narratives: the soldier training, in Capetown, anthropological images of 'Gombi Boys', a 'fakir in Mhow', home on leave in 1946, on *shikar*. Most strikingly the collection of photographs arranged in a linear narrative around the Hindu ceremony of *Dussehra* warrant a discussion in this chapter. Thus in this chapter I chose to isolate this series of images of the ritualised space of the ceremony.

Later in this chapter I will explain the significance of this ritual in the Hindu and the Gurkha calendar to all the men serving with the Gurkhas. Leslie took all the photos of his *kukri* (large curved knife) being blooded, in the ceremony, except for one in which he is captured by another photographer. The photographs locate Leslie as both an observer and a participant in the ceremony. In an unintended moment he appears as an intruder in the corner of a picture photographing the ceremony, he is crouched with his back to the camera. Had he taken photographs of the movement of refugees what would he have recorded? The photographs would have reflected a loss of control, of death, of things one does not want to remember; he said he had no time to take photographs, it was too chaotic and terrible. He took no photographs of *kafilas* (columns of refugees), overcrowded trains, *jhils* (wells) or refugee camps. Leslie's answer to the question about an overall reflection of Partition always elicited the same response 'I can only remember tragedy' (Leslie Nixon 2011, pers. comm.).

Gurkha deployment in unrest: 1857-1947

Although these final three chapters are concerned with the central events of 1947 I begin with a mention of two incidents in which the British deployed the Gurkhas. The first was at the time of the 'Indian Mutiny as it is known in British history' (Wood 2007) in 1857. It was here, according to a pamphlet from the Gurkha Museum in Winchester, UK, on the 1857 Mutiny, that Gurkhas proved their loyalty to their British officers by pitching their tents close to the British soldiers rather than near the 'disaffected Bengal soldiery' (Wood 2007, p. 2). This alignment also illustrated to the British that the Gurkhas were naturally 'drawn to mix socially with Europeans rather than native Infantrymen' (Petre 1925, p. 47) because of similarities in their character. This display of loyalty and 'brave, conduct, toughness and fortitude' was in a sense rewarded by the later creation of the ten rifle regiments of the Gurkhas (Wood 2007, p. 21). However, the massacre in 1919 of innocent civilians at Jallianawalla Bagh under the orders of general Dyer, using Indian and Gurkha soldiers, is rarely referred to in Gurkha literature. Dyer reported that his 'party fired 1650 rounds', killing 200-300 'of the crowd' (cited in O'Dwyer 1925, p. 284). Locals contested this number. Writing about the massacre in 1925 O'Dwyer shows no sympathy for the victims of the tragedy and commends Dyer for his frank report and writing that he had carried out an 'imperative duty', 'using only Indian troops' (1925, p. 285), thereby crushing the possibility of a rebellion that may or may not have been brewing across the Punjab. What these early engagements did was to prove that the Gurkhas could be trusted implicitly to remain loyal even in the most onerous of situations.

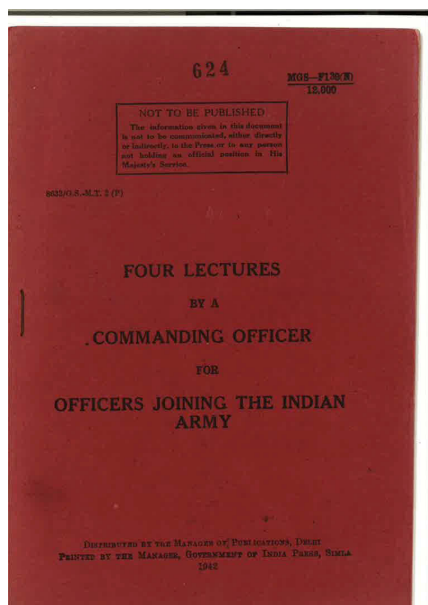
Sources and participants

It was more difficult to locate interviewees for the next three chapters because of the age of those involved and the fact that the First Gurkhas were transferred to the Indian Army after 1947, as a result of which British officers were dispersed. Nevertheless, I did find two retired British officers through the Gurkha Museum in Winchester, UK, who were extraordinarily generous with their time, memories and reflections. Peter Reeve served with the 4th Gurkhas in Alwar and Palwal south of Delhi, and Ralph Reynolds with the 9th Gurkhas in Jullundur and Amritsar in North Punjab. I interviewed Leslie at length over several periods of time in 2007 and 2008 and have been lucky to be able to call him in the interim to clarify information, and at times he has rung me to

add a detail or to repeat an anecdote. For the history and background of the Gurkhas I talked to ex-Gurkha officers including British Colonel John Cross (2007) in Pokhara Nepal, retired Indian Brigadier Panesar (2012) in Chandigarh, who was of a younger generation but was invaluable in his knowledge of *Dussehra*. I also interviewed one ex-Nepali Gurkha in Dharamsala (Thaman Gurung Interview 2007), Rob May, an ex-Australian serviceman (Rob May Interview, 2006), and Terry Dawe (Terry Dawe Interview 2006), a domiciled European. Both had trained in India with the First Gurkhas; however, neither of them served in the North-West. So in summary I conducted unstructured interviews with three British, two Australians, one Nepali Gurkha and one Indian officer. For other first hand accounts I looked to a small journal given to me by Rob May, *The Bugle and Kukri*, a special edition published in 2006 on behalf of Princess Mary's 10th Own Gurkha Rifles. The 10th Own Gurkha Rifles were also working in the North-West and some first hand accounts of their experiences at Amritsar are recorded in *The Bugle and Kukri*. I also looked to Penderel Moon (1961), a senior member of the Indian Civil Service, and Francis Toker, who also reported extensively on the experience from a commanding officer's point of view. Toker wrote an on the ground account of his experience in 1950 and was able to reflect about the bigger picture, 'the army remained true to its traditions ... it did not meddle with politics' (p. 299). Toker concludes with a comment on the 'gesture of supererogation' (1950, p. 300) made by the British in the face of the calamity that followed Partition. It is a rueful reflection.

From Leslie's responses to the photographs, as well as a consideration of the wider context of officer training within a battalion, I suggest that a sense of identity as British was confirmed and affirmed by his status as a King's Commissioned Officer (KCO). The British Indian Army consisted of two levels of officers (to be explained in Chapter 7): under the KCOs were Gurkha officers or Viceroy's Commissioned Officers (VCOs). The most senior officer was the Subedar Major who took his orders from the KCO and communicated these to the men. VCOs could only take commands from their British officers. Thus the relationship between British officers and between British officers and Gurkha officers was absolutely critical. It was a complicated relationship, informed on the British officer's side by the literature the army supplied to inform them of the habits and characteristics of the Gurkhas. In order to analyse Leslie's attitude towards the Gurkhas and his own positioning, I looked to the small collection of military literature

he brought with him from India to Australia. These books came from the 1st Gurkha Dharamsala Library (1947) after Partition. They were instrumental in contributing to the notion of the Gurkha as ‘a warrior gentleman’ (Caplan 1995b). Caplan identifies four types of literature about Gurkhas: regimental histories, recounts by officers who served with the Gurkhas, ‘coffee-table picture books’ and handbooks and manuals produced by the Indian army (1995b, pp. 4-5). Leslie’s library was stocked with samples from each



of these categories including John Masters’ (1956) *Bugles and a Tiger*, an account of his years of service with the Gurkhas. In addition, his was a highly masculinised sense of self, influenced by army literature, an upbringing in an all-male British Indian boarding school system that, although run by Irish Patrician Brothers, had its roots in the British public school system of the day. The British character was positioned as more ‘manly’ or martial than Indians and was also constructed to be more masculine and fit for command than Indians.

‘Work hard, play hard, fight hard and if necessary, die hard.’ (Four Lectures by a Commanding Officer for Officers joining the Indian Army, Government of India Press, Simla, 1942)

The slim compilation of lectures above, was amongst Leslie’s artifacts. Barua (2003a, p. 82) points out that in contrast to earlier, more condescending literature written by commanding officers (such as MacMunn (1911), author of *The Armies of India*), this has a respectful and inclusive tone regarding the relationship between Indian and British officers. Although the lectures begin with a sketch of the ‘various classes of Indians’ it reads as informative, emphasising the positive qualities of each group. When the lectures move to a discussion of leadership qualities and responsibilities the voice is measured and the need for cooperation, good communication and developing an awareness of cultural sensitivities is stressed when working with *sepoys*. Officers are exhorted to ‘never give an unreasonable order ... your men are reasonable beings and will carry out orders if they are reasonable and understood ... be scrupulously fair in all your dealings with your men’. The writer refers to Indian Commissioned Officers

(ICOs) as ‘your brother officers ... God help the unit where the officers are not a happy family’. One lecture even suggests games such as ‘moustache growing competitions’ to amuse the men when there is time to participate in bonding activities. This small booklet was part of Leslie’s collection of pamphlets that also included *The Gurkha Soldier* by Major H.R.K. Gibbs (Gibbs 1944) and *India’s Fighting Men* (Inter-services Public Relations Directorate n.d.). These pamphlets were written for officers in training and covered a range of rudimentary information from religion and caste to eating habits, taste for alcohol, sense of humour and sporting prowess. It also covers the significance of the *Dussehra*.

The origins of Gurkha ‘martiality’

A critical element of the Victorian attitude as to which races (ethnic groups) were more suitable for the army was ‘masculinity’. Masculinity connected to identity which is multiple, partial, contradictory and strategic at different historical moments. As previously noted, the Gurkhas proved themselves to be dependable during the 1857 Uprising and as Callahan suggests, these ‘ties of loyalty and trust between British officers and the Indian and Gurkhas they commanded’ did not go unnoticed (Marston & Sundaram 2007, p. 33). Similarly during the 1857 Uprising Sikhs were identified as being a ‘martial race of the Punjab’ (Peers 2007, p. 46). As Streets (2004) points out in her study of the construction of martiality in the British Indian Army, Sikhs, Scottish Highlanders and Gurkhas distinguished themselves at the time of the rebellion, reinforcing the notion of martiality to their British officers and she suggests, to themselves. This association was connected to a ‘fierce, gallant, honourable, loyal and courageous masculinity’ (Streets 2004, p.11). Both Peers (2007, p. 46) and Streets (2004, pp. 117-118) note that General Frederick Roberts had an acute awareness of the power of the Victorian media and used it to spread ideas about race and martiality and the need to create an army out of targeted groups so that by the First World War 60 per cent of the Indian army were recruited from the Punjab (Peers cited in Marston 2007, p. 48). Streets (2004) argues in her study of representations of the martial soldier that ideas about the identity of Nepalis as Gurkhas became very difficult to resist and has persisted from its origins in the Victorian era up to and beyond Independence. In a recent press article (Kaphle & Wood 2010) about the unlikely ease of communications between Afghan soldiers and Gurkhas in Afghanistan, mention was made of the small stature of the ‘fearsome warriors’, with comment on the *kukri* as an ‘enduring romantic totem of

their violence'. So the martial reputation so carefully cultivated in the Victorian era has successfully resonated through to the 20th century.

This hyper masculine identity was centrally located and encoded in the institution of the army through army training, literature and a manufactured sense of tradition (Roy 2001, p. 139) which created a special 'elite' identity associated with the Gurkhas (Caplan 1995b; Gibbs 1944; Northey 1937; Roy 2001). The significance of the ritual of *Dussehra* will be analysed in the following section, as it served to strengthen loyalty between officers and subalterns. That the British retained the *Dussehra* was a shrewd gesture that strengthened a sense of tradition, created by a link to a past that was not shared (Hobsbawm 2011). This integration of character and tradition was intended to bind officers and men together but only so far as to cultivate the loyalty necessary to perform in the military.

5.2 Martial races, masculinity and modernity

Mangan (2008) in his research about the development of notions of masculinity aligns hunting, among other sports, with military training and schooling in a trinity that produced a particular kind of 'manliness'. This challenged the over-domesticated Edwardian man (Tosh 1999b) with the construction of an outward-bound conquering courageous *man*. This confluence of factors merged into an identity that suited the army and validated those traits valorised in sports and teams that had been experienced before even getting into the army. In a slightly different yet salient context, Robb (1997, p. 246) argues that, 'identities are always multiple, contingent and continuously constructed so that traditions, also continually invented are shared and reiterated'. The army understood this malleability in relation to creating a targeted 'martial' race, the Gurkhas being one such example. According to the literature, amongst other characteristics that enabled Gurkha subalterns to get along with their British officers was their delight in sport, and so they were valued for their sporting prowess: 'the Gurkha is nothing if not a sportsman as is indeed only natural' (Northey 1937, p. 100). Barua concludes that the army literature reflected, 'What emerged in London during the 1860s are three criteria the Victorians used in their selection of the martial races of India: climatic conditions, physical qualities, and behavioural characteristics' (2003b, p. 112). These characteristics were still mentioned in the pamphlets and books Leslie had in his collection taken from the small library in Dharamsala when he left in 1948.

Martial race theory – masculinity

The idealised character of the Gurkha, as Caplan (1995) points out, was more a reflection of the social, racial and masculine traits valued by the British army than of anything inherently ‘Gurkha’. The army certainly manipulated martial race discourse to suit its own ends (Streets 2004). Streets (2004) goes a little further in her research to not only explore how these ideas were perpetuated amongst British and Nepali soldiers in training but also to consider the effect of these theories on the soldiers themselves. The collection of literature Leslie gave to me is comprised of an army canon of these very ideas. I do not know what literature Gurkha recruits may have been provided with and there seems to be no mention of it in the literature consulted for this chapter. There was much invested in the scientific ‘truth’, backed up with ‘proverbial tales’, of the notion that there were particular races in India (from the Punjab Sikhs and Nepal Gurkhas) that were of more heroic and manly character than others (south Indians and Bengalis) (Streets 2004, pp. 2-3). Rand (2011, p. 13) argues that martial race discourse was premised on the violence of the colonial governance and was a product of colonial imaginary that both ‘naturalised British power’ and effaced the ‘colonial reliance on native troops’. This imaginary was built on ‘ethnographic imperatives’ that excluded large parts of the Indian population and was premised on characteristics such as loyalty, bravery, stupidity, simplicity. Gurkhas apparently encapsulated what it meant to be a martial race by being ‘brave but unintelligent, able to enjoy manly sports and look up to European soldiers’ (Rand 2011, p. 11). This imbricated the British and their ‘native troops’ in a contradictory and interdependent relationship built around violence.

The layer that being with a Gurkha unit added was an extra specialness encoded in a discourse around martiality, masculinity, congruency with culturally acceptable British behaviours (enjoying sport, drinking, bravery and sense of humour). Gurkhas are often referred to in the army literature as being ‘some of the smartest soldiers in the world’ (*India’s Fighting Men* n.p.). Contrary to this intelligence and martiality the Gurkha is also seen to be in need of a strong hand to guide him and is somewhat lacking in the intelligence to do so himself (Talbot 1995, pp. 107-108). Caplan (1995b, p. 88) explores the connection between martiality (reflected in the *varna* or caste system) and masculinity (see MacMunn 1911) and the attribution of certain essential characteristics that were described in army handbooks (such as Gibbs 1944 and *India’s Fighting Men*) supplied to officers in training. This reductive characterisation excluded the other skills

and abilities possessed by the men (Ragsdale cited in Caplan 1995b, p. 96). Thus it is not surprising that my father and the other ex-servicemen (Norman Nixon, Rob May, Ralph Reynolds) I interviewed knew so little about the culture of the men they commanded. However, they commented with great sincerity on the military characteristics (loyalty, bravery) that mattered to them as commanding officers. All the ex-servicemen I interviewed commented on the tenacity, ease and dependability of working with their Gurkha troops and none reported a negative experience or case of insubordination. In all they were nostalgic and proud of their association with the Gurkhas and all commented on the 'specialness' of their regiments and their men as 'the bravest of the brave'. They were not so generous in their appraisal of Mountbatten's management of Partition and no amount of analysis could disabuse these men of the reality of their experience and their resistance to a revisionist reflection on the role of the Gurkha regiments.

They [Gurkhas] are warlike, sturdy and cheerful race of men. Good at games they are particularly keen to play games with British officers. They have a strong sense of humour and have the likes, dislikes of the British soldier to a marked degree. (*Four Lectures by a Commanding Officer for Officers joining the Indian Army*, 1942, pp. 3-4)

Military leaflets (as above) and army histories included MacMunn's (1911) *The Armies of India*, written in an authorial voice, which is full of highly generalised information about the 'races of India' and was part of the canon of military books he possessed. British officers were given literature written by 'experts', usually older retired army officers, about the characteristics of the martial races and which of these races were suitable for different tasks. This contributed to creating a mystique and prestige about serving with the Gurkhas. The fact that Gurkhas were not Indian and deemed to be closer in character to their British officers was another factor in their favour. In much of the army literature given to officers in the British Indian Army there is a recurring refrain about the strength, tenacity, loyalty and toughness of the Nepali Gurkhas (Gibbs 1944; MacMunn 1911). Officers in training were given various reading materials related to the men they would command. In the pamphlet *The Gurkha Soldier*, by Major Gibbs, (1944, p. 6) it is said that a 'true Gurkha is a man of the martial clans of Nepal'. Gibbs in his discussion of 'religious customs and festivals' states that out of all the Hindu festivals 'dashera is of outstanding importance and it regulates the whole

of a Gurkha's year' (1944, p. 41). His pamphlet contains information about the character and habits of the 'various tribes' and clans which he compares to 'Scots clans' (1944, p. 7). In this comparison he is referring to the martiality of the Scots, another targeted martial race.

Masculinity is also valorised in the wider context provided by British Army literature regarding the martiality of Gurkhas and their cultural congruency with the British and military training, and more specifically with being a domiciled European in late colonial India. There has been much literature produced around notions of the construction of the martial races; according to this literature these 'races' existed in relation to the less manly 'people of Bengal' (MacMunn 1911, p. 129). As Barua (2003b) notes, MacMunn like many other military experts attributes the enervation of the 'less martial peoples to quasi medical and social factors'. Nonetheless, this is the foundation for the raising of armies under colonial rule. The reputation of the Gurkhas and Sikhs in particular was based on an idealisation of martiality which army literature promoted and circulated amongst officers.

Creating a separate Gurkha identity

'The fighting classes are divided up among various Regiments, thus the Thakurs and Chhetris are enlisted in the 9th Regiment, Limbus and Rais in the 7th and 10th Regiments and Magars and Gurungs in the remaining battalions' (*Four Lectures by a Commanding Officer for Officers joining the Indian Army*, 1942, p. 3).

The uniform of the Gurkha regiments and the inclusion of the *kukri* established a metonymic, the knife with Gurkhas of martiality and killing with fearlessness. Even the headwear for Gurkhas differed from other more indigenous dress such as turbans. The Gurkha headdress was the Kilmarnock cap and a broad brimmed hat very similar to the Australian army slouch hat (Cohn 1996). I have Leslie's cap; it is very small, with a button (a pip) engraved with the crossed swords at the front. I have a bag full of buttons, badges and coloured ribbons, which all signify different things but are all identified with crossed *kukris* and are used on different uniforms to indicate different ranks and dress codes. According to Cohn, the British Army actively created a sense of tradition through the trappings of distinctive uniforms, badges, insignia, headdress and the *kukri*, which was adopted as a 'traditional' weapon (1996, p. 124). The 1st Gurkha regimental

badge has a red backing which references a historical tie with one of its ancestor units, the 66th Regiment.

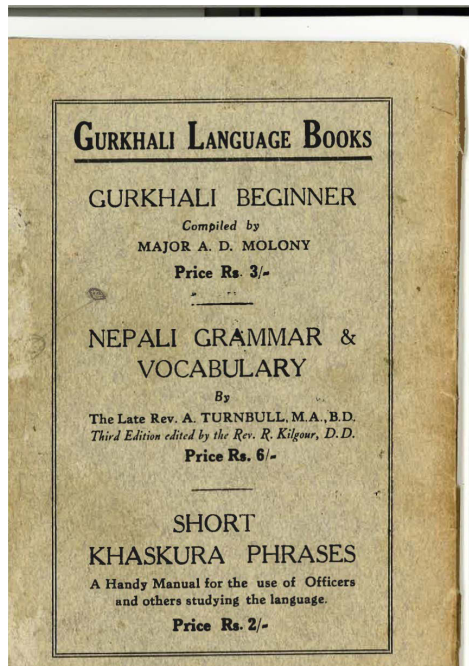
In addition the various regiments were raised and 'homed' in different parts of North India so that there was a sense of belonging geographically somewhere in a foreign land. Depots provided a home base for the regiments, such that the 'The 1st and 2nd Gurkha battalions of the Gurkha Rifles had depots at Dharamsala in the Kangra valley of Punjab and Dehradun' (Roy 2001, p. 140) and each regiment identified with a base, hence Leslie was in Dharamsala during Partition and the *dusserha* photographs were taken in Dharamsala. The deliberate development of a distinct identity for each regiment was enhanced by the use of the word 'rifle' to denote an elite force (2001, p. 143). These techniques were employed with a great deal of success by the British to foster a sense of loyalty by the troops to their regiments. As well as being identified as an elite force this specialness associated with Gurkhas may have contributed to Leslie's sense of being 'neutral' in relation to India and Indians during Partition, of somehow not being connected while being in the middle of the action.

Congruency with characteristics of British soldier

'I have naturally enough a slight preference for some of the classes with their, to me, more attractive manners and customs ...' (*Four Lectures by a Commanding Officer for Officers joining the Indian Army*, 1942, p. 1)

The British invested in highlighting the differences not only between Indian and Nepali Hindus but in 'supra-tribal identities' (Roy 2001, p.132) in order to create separate group loyalties in regiments. In addition, the information supplied to officers about the cultural background of Gurkhas focused on their similarity to the British ideal of soldierly qualities. I found amongst Leslie's books a surprising number of pamphlets and texts that foregrounded this affinity between British officers and their Nepali subalterns. Humour, sport and drinking are often cited in the army literature as indications of this congruency in character of British officers and their men. At the same time the physical characteristics of Gurkhas as plucky and sturdy although 'diminutive' endears them even more to the British (Northey 1937, p. 97). Northey goes on to extol a Gurkha sense of humour which he finds 'to an extent that is rarely found in the more solemn and austere man of Aryan descent' (1937, p. 97). This emphasis on character is displayed in almost all the earlier military literature, even down to the reliability of

‘native’ servants. In the *Military Handbook of General Information on India* (1908, pp. xl-xli) warnings abound about the character of servants, exhorting the new officer to ‘not be too considerate for a servant’s feelings; they have no gratitude’, and a particular caution about those claiming to be Christian and speaking English. One slim pamphlet derived from a series of lectures for new officers was at least written in a more



moderate tone than the earlier handbooks. However, despite being a less ‘distorted’ view of Gurkhas, the *Four Lectures by a Commanding Officer for Officers joining the Indian Army* (1942) still characterises them as follows: ‘the Gurkha has no scruples about eating and drinking. They are a sturdy warlike and cheerful race of men. Good at games especially football. They are particularly keen to play games with British soldiers’ (1942, p.3). These are just two examples of the reductive attitude towards the ‘devoted’, ‘shy’, ‘independent’, ‘warlike’, ‘humorous’ Gurkhas with a ‘tendency to

drunkenness’ that differentiated the ‘cheerful soul’ from ‘their ‘Indian brothers’ (Northey 1937 p.96-98,). The literature in general approaches the Gurkha subject with a paternalistic attitude that praises their resilience while describing them as in need of discipline and not very intelligent.

British officers were required to learn Urdu and in the Gurkha regiments they had to learn *Khaskura* (also known as Gurkhali). Learning the language of command was very important as part of the training of officers. I have a copy of Leslie’s textbook *Practical Elementary Gurkhali for British officers* written by Major Campbell, with a preface written in Palampur in 1943. Its yellow pages still exhorting the officers to ‘talk talk talk ... force yourself to talk’. I see his writing on the notes page where he has made a special note of the word, ‘*Hannu*: to kick fire hit shoot’. The language is peppered with useful military phrases, for example: ‘Here lad aim at that target with this rifle. *E Keta. Tyo chand ma yo raifal lo tak I*’. In addition, he has another book with translation exercises in it; the yellowing paper is thick and crunchy, the exercises require translations into English and Urdu, the language of the Indian Army: ‘all men

expected to learn the language....' (*Four Lectures by a Commanding Officer for Officers joining the Indian Army*, 1942, p. 3)

5.3 Insiders on the outside

It was always regarded as dangerous to use troops of one class or religion in quelling a riot by the same class. For this reason Gurkhas with few ties in India were extensively used in civilian riot control. (Cohen 1971, p. 129)

Leslie maintained his view that he was positioned as neutral during Partition, not to abrogate responsibility for the loss of control in some of the tragic circumstances he was involved in but perhaps to distance himself from India. He frequently stressed his neutral position:

we were the white officers, the Gurkhs (sic) were the only troops that weren't on either side, you see, because they were from Nepal a completely independent nation... So we didn't care, our job was to keep two bloody fighting crowds apart. (Leslie Nixon Interview 2005)

Both the (KCO) Indian officers and their Gurkha regiments were to some degree outsiders, or positioned outside the tensions that were building towards Partition. In my father's case there was little idea of how much the violence was building. Although Leslie said he felt 'British' and being in the army may have assisted him in identifying more as an outsider commanding outsiders, thus increasing his distance from 'the Indians' and what he perceived to be their uncontrollable violence, the violence challenged his authority as a Gurkha officer and an incident, to be discussed later, with women and children throwing themselves into a well has haunted him ever since. This is not what was supposed to have happened. In my interviews with him he refers disparagingly to *all* Indians as a group, and as the enemy, untrustworthy *and* leading him into tragedy, British officers, in his mind, were more open to attack than subalterns (Leslie Nixon Interview 2007):

The Hindus tricked us... the idea was to try and kill us (the officers), you see? So that they leave the Gurkhs leaderless, you know. And then when the Indian officers moved in, they could use the Gurkhs to go into action....

During training, learning the language and participating in certain ceremonies the psychology of the soldier was being laid down – follow orders, maintain discipline, lose your individuality to the regiment, dress in a uniform, think about and take responsibility for the survival of others, both your men and civilians. The wider political scenario would obviously have meant something to him as an individual but the army functions as an extension of political thinking, and no matter what his opinion, the individual subaltern loses his/her agency to act as an individual. At the centre of training, familiarisation with the military version of Gurkha culture and creating a special bond between British officers and their Gurkha subalterns was the *Dussehra*.

***Dussehra* and tradition**

Dussehra (sometimes spelt *Dashain* or *Dasara*) is central to the Hindu Gurkha's calendar of religious events and the successful ritual beheading of a buffalo signals the fate of the battalion for the following year. Hatton, a British Gurkha officer, described his shock when the ritual went awry in Malaysia just before travelling to India in 1946, commenting that 'the omens were very bad for the coming year' (2004, pp. 71-73), and he was right the coming year being 1947. By its very nature *Dussehra* is violent and bloody albeit staged and contained. Participation in this event was essential in building up 'fictive kinship and camaraderie amongst soldiers' (Woodward & Jenkins 2011, p. 253) across caste, religion and the hierarchy of the military. The ceremony is part of what Hobsbawm (1993) refers to as 'tradition', it connects with pre-existing Hindu practices that have been stitched into the 'tradition' of serving in the British Army with the Gurkhas. This is reflected most obviously in changes to Gurkha uniforms and the early inclusion of the *kukri*; this unique piece of weaponry adds a sense of the traditional authenticity of its origins in Nepal. The colour of the 1st Gurkha uniform was changed from scarlet to green in 1886 so that the red backing of the crossed *kukri* badge worn on the Kilmarnock cap indicates the regiment's past connection to the red uniform of the 66th Battalion (Petre 1925, p. 82). 1st Gurkha officer Brigadier Panesar (Interview 2012) was very well versed on all the connections here and displayed this knowledge by reciting the different shapes in the backings for the cap badges. The regiment, he explained, went through many name changes from an infantry regiment to that of a rifle regiment in 1890 (Petre 1925, p. 91), which was intended to refer to the shooting prowess of the regiment. The title of the regiment changed thirteen times until 1910 when it was retitled The 1st King George's Own Gurkha Rifles, and by 1947 it was

referred to as 1st King George's Fifth (V) Own Gurkha Rifles (1st KGVsO). Knowledge of this dizzying change of uniforms and titles is key to each generation that enlists and serves in the Gurkhas, referencing layers of its history. However, two elements that have remained central to serving with the Gurkhas is wearing a *kukri* and participating in *Dussehra*.

Together these *Dussehra* photographs and interviews reveal an experience of the military influenced by being male, identifying as British born in India (domiciled European), coming from a railway background, and being in the army in 1947. But more than merely expressing an individual gendered experience they express an individual 'military identity', part of a collective military identity, and they are more than illustrative, they are an extension of an experience. As Woods and Jenkins (2011, p. 259) point out, weapons (such as *kukris* and rifles) are very much a part of the material constitution of soldiers. This confirmed identity results not just from carrying a weapon but through 'the trained ability to correctly handle it' (Woods & Jenkins 2011, p. 259). In this regiment the *kukri* acts as a potent signifier of belonging (to the Gurkhas), a skill (one clean fatal blow), religion (caste, sacrifice, the *lingam* notch) and transformation through training and induction (*Dussehra*). The *Dussehra* is an opportunity for a display of skills for bonding, building trust and for creating good luck.

Photographs evoke an emotional response, they can help to stimulate memory, feelings and knowledge connected to an experience (Berger cited in Harper 2002, p. 13). The responses I elicited when showing individual photographs to Leslie were more detailed than those in answer to interview questions on their own. The photographs are also 'reflexive in as much as they refer back to the photographer at the moment of their creation' (MacDougall 2006, p. 3), they locate the photographer and the event in a particular way. In this series of pictures the location is the ritualised space of the *Dussehra*, the photographs thus locate Leslie as both an officer of the men involved in the ritual and as partaker in the ceremony.

Traditionally *Dussehra* takes place in October and November; Leslie is hazy about the exact month but he concurred that it definitely took place in 1946 and it could have taken place in either October or November. He does not recall attending a *Dussehra* in 1947. Since he was still in training in Bangalore for part of 1946 he did not recall seeing any action or being aware of the growing unrest and communal violence that had begun to escalate in early 1946, reaching an apotheosis in the great Calcutta killing of August

1946 (Talbot 2009, p. 37) which would foreshadow the August 1947 upheaval. Perhaps he was also unaware of the wider political context because he had been in training in South Africa in 1945 and was on his way to the European theatre of war. Victory in Europe Day was announced as he was moored off the north west coast of Africa. I imagine there was both a sense of relief and disappointment that the Second World War was over but here he was, a newly trained and ready to go rifleman thwarted in his purpose so he travelled on to the UK and retrained as a Gurkha as his brothers had. He then returned to India in 1946 and began his Gurkha officer's training in Bangalore.

Both Caplan (1995b) and Roy (2001) argue that the British sought ways to strengthen the bonds of loyalty between subalterns and their commanding officers. This was partially achieved through the participation of officers and their men in the *Dussehra*. It is considered to be one of the most important festivals of the Hindu calendar for the Gurkhas. I will explore this by examining a series of photographs of the *Dussehra*, a festival referred to by Gibbs (1944, p. 41) as 'of outstanding importance as it regulates the whole of the Gurkha's year'. It is often mentioned in literature and biographies, for example, John Masters (ex-Gurkha officer) provides a graphic description of the ritual in *Bugle and a Tiger*, referring to the auspiciousness of the occasion. According to Roy (2001, p. 131), the separate Gurkha martial identity was carefully constructed by the British to distinguish the Nepalis recruited from the north of Nepal from the 'inferior plainsmen' of India. In addition, the religious affiliations and caste of each of the different groups recruited into the Indian Army (Magars, Khas, Gurungs, Chetris, Limbus) were homogenised into a Raj inspired Hindu identity. However, as Gurung told me caste was a serious concern for the British, because 'the Chetris wouldn't eat with anybody. Even the British', (Interview 2007) this meant castes had to be separated for meals. An understanding of caste even at a rudimentary level was vital to the army, and splitting the regiments up according to their castes made sense at an operational level. Part of developing this special(ness), identity was to encourage participation in 'indigenous customs' such as the sacrifice of animals and blessing of arms at *Dussehra* and the wearing of *kukris*.



The crowd

Dussehra involves the ritual sacrifice of buffaloes, goats, chickens and even a pumpkin if a participant cannot afford to sacrifice an animal. In the context of the Gurkha regiments, swords, *kukris* and arms were ‘blooded’ and a carnival atmosphere prevailed as people from the surrounding districts converged in the area of the rituals. The series of photographs included in this chapter were taken in Dharamsala in 1946 and they reveal the ritual step-by-step and in doing so lay bare some of the elements of British Indian Army life in 1946. The *Dussehra* allows for the British officers and their men to participate in the ritualised violence of animal sacrifice that draws together notions of colonial masculinity derived from a tradition of martial masculinity developed during the Victorian and Edwardian era. In a sense the *Dussehra* provided a safe, directed, purposeful arena for killing (albeit animals) that practised the art of beheading, a skill Gurkha subalterns were valued for. This skill also added to myths about the reputation of the Gurkhas as efficient killers (Caplan 1995b).

Tradition and history

When I first began questioning Leslie about the photographs of *Dussehra* he commented only briefly on the content, reminding me that if I wanted to know more they were captioned in his large album. Or alternatively I could ‘look it up in one of those army books’ (Leslie Nixon 2009, pers. comm.), referring to his collection of military literature on the history of the Indian Army. However, this did not provide a detailed enough description of the ceremony and only certain photographs were selected

for the large album, the rest were kept in tiny grey packets or in a smaller album in paper sleeves. In addition Leslie's supposition was that I wanted to get factual 'true' information about the *Dussehra* but what I wanted was his subjective experience of it and what it meant to him. In a photograph album an ordered space is opened up and limited by parameters that are set because the images are selected, either ordered chronologically or themed around events or locations, and tethered by captions to act as evidence of an event. However, if a photograph is isolated from the album the narrative order of the album is disrupted, which forces a closer look at the individual image, focusing on its particular significance rather than gliding over it in favour of the whole narrative order. Returning to the images in the album allowed for the repetition of stories and events and for more detail to emerge, as Langford puts it, 'repetition serves memory and also camouflages its gaps' (2008, p. 225). I found that sending individual scanned photographs and particular questions to Leslie gave him time to look at them and consider the content before I spoke to him. The questions were very simple: Was this trench photo taken during Partition? Is this the campsite at Nagrota? If I posited a caption and made a mistake (e.g. incorrect location), his response was fuller and more detailed. So the photographs acted as more than mnemonics, they assisted in Leslie's ability to recall specific details within photographs and sometimes for a description that included details that were outside the frame. Photographs also stimulate affective responses that cannot be framed or captioned.



Captions left to right: 1 collecting on the parade ground at dasara ; 2 the goats to be sacrificed; 3 swinging down with the khukri; 4 through the neck; 5 the head rolls away; 6 the job completed and khukri cleaned; 7 the sacrificial buffalo calf swinging back on the blade; 8 the khukri half-way through the neck; 9 the head

In the absence of a movie camera, movement and meaning are created through an ‘association with contiguity’ (Pinney 2008a p.3) this is evident in the above sequence as every step of the sacrifice is carefully photographed, images selected and matter-of-factly captioned (‘the blade half-way through’, ‘the blade pulls away’). The action is captured in stop-start frames in an attempt to render a sense of filmic movement and the linearity of the sacrifice; they offer an, ‘illusion of animation’ (Batchen 2001, p. 68) not by turning the pages but through the captions and the progress of the sacrifice. Batchen argues that the album gives ordinary people the opportunity to be creative about their autobiographies, usually starring ‘me’, but in this case Leslie always refers to himself as ‘self’, never ‘me’.

The curt captions and close connection between the photographs and the movement of the story they tell ‘provides them with the unmistakable structure of narrative, with the declared capacity to tell a story, always a weakness of the individual photograph’, according to Batchen (2000, p. 66). The album collection expands the narrative across a time frame whereas the individual image captures a moment within the narrative frame.

However, I would argue through my experience that the photographs themselves encapsulate micro narratives that are just as resonant as the longer dialogue produced in the album. The photographer is complicit with the subject in as much as the photographer is active in selecting and capturing a particular image (Macdougall 2006, p. 3).



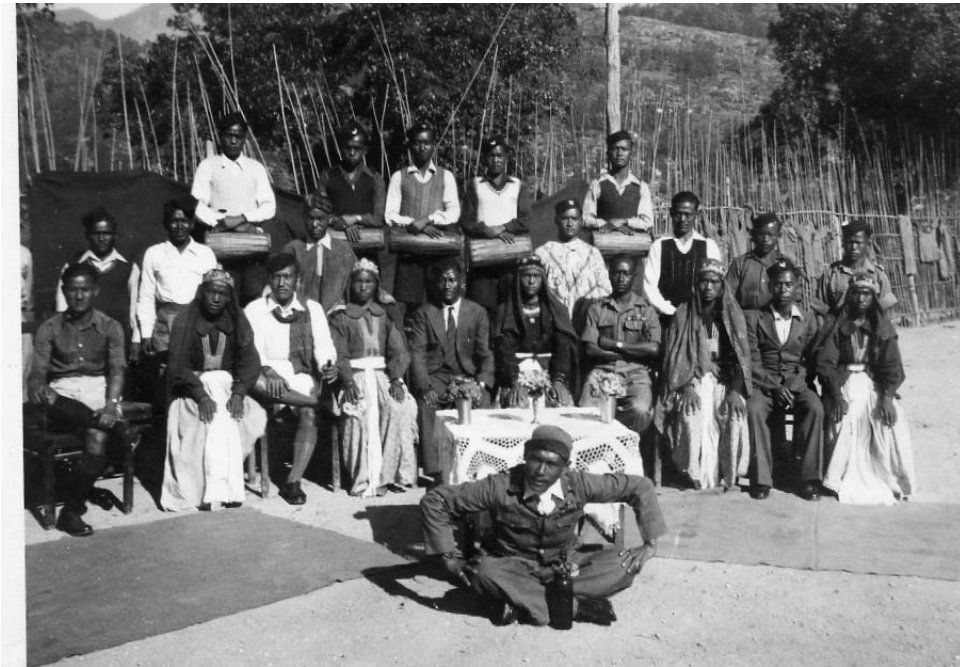
Swinging down with the khukri

We bought goats for our troops and we (brit officers) blooded our *khukris* on them, cut their heads off – to prove we could take a head, then we gave our guys the goats for meat. (Leslie Nixon 2009, pers. comm.)

This ceremony was highly valued by all who participated, indeed Gibbs (1944, p. 42) comments that ‘even if all the other festivals are missed every Gurkha makes great efforts to celebrate the dashera’. Leslie did not make many other comments about the *Dussehra* except that on the night before his large *kukri* was blooded (*kalratri*) he got very drunk on *Raksi* and *Jholl* (strong rice spirits) and joined in the dancing. He then had to be carried back to his sleeping quarters. He remembers a murderous hangover the following day and asking the army doctor, Bill Fleming, what to do. The doctor told him there was nothing he could do except to get on with whatever he was doing which in that instance meant going down to the parade ground for the last part of the ceremony, the *Maula*, when the buffalo sacrifices occur (Gibbs 1944, p. 42). When I asked him why some of the men were dressed as women he said he didn’t know why, he just said, ‘they used to do that’ (Leslie 2005). They were in fact Marunis, ‘female dancers impersonated by men’ (Gibbs 1944, p. 42). His knowledge about the Nepali Gurkhas he commanded was relatively limited; he knew their castes and the regiments that each caste belonged to. He was familiar with the language of communication

required by the army, *Khaskuai* or *Gurkhali*, he respected their ‘martiality’ and toughness and referred to the ‘legendary’ Gurkha loyalty (Caplan 1995b, p. 107)) but he also suggested several times that the Gurkhas were limited in their thinking, an assumption commented on throughout army literature, describing the characteristics of the ‘unimaginative’ Gurkha (Niven & Omissi cited in 1995b, p. 108).

The night before there would be a dance a *nautch* with the men dressed up as women and I got so pissed on *rakshi* and *jhall* I was carried to my quarters I called Bill Fleming the Dr the following day because I felt so crook and I wanted to go to the head cutting but he said there was nothing I could do but get on with it. (Leslie 2009, pers comm.)



Uncaptioned

Maruni dancers (Deborah Nixon)



Uncaptioned

Mahabalidan the great sacrifice (Deborah Nixon)

This photo shows me in the bottom right corner. The ritual is the blessing if [sic] the arms which does not appear in this photograph. the small arms are placed in the middle of the parade ground and blessed by the holy men. The headcutting takes place after the blessing. In this case it was a young buffalo. A rope is tied over its horns and put through a hole in a post at the bottom of which is placed a bunch of flowers. When the buffalo bends its head to eat the rope is pulled tight stretching the buffalo's neck [sic] and the khukri [sic] strikes the head off. By the way the camera I am using is the same one that I took all my other photographs with. Love dad (Leslie 2009, pers comm.)

A change in register will allow me to look at this photographic 'moment' and search for a connection with the crouching figure of the man. I know it's my father, I knew it was him before he identified himself as the photographer. I knew it was him because of his black hair and the goat hair jacket he is wearing. There is a quality about his figure, a familiarity that positively identifies him to me. The photograph is particularly interesting because of the element of reflexivity in it, it is evidence of him as being present at the *Dussehra* and of his witnessing the bleeding of his *kukri*, a ritual of great importance to him and the men he would command in the coming months during Partition. I asked him why there was a photo of him photographing his knife

being blessed through the sacrifice of the buffalo but he could not remember why or who took the photo. I can only guess that he was being cautious and had asked a friend to photograph the moment as a precaution or maybe he particularly wanted that evidence of him being there. Perhaps, after all, his inclusion was accidental and his friend gave him the photo as a souvenir. Included in the *Dussehra* collection, judging from the angle and subject, is the shot he seems to be taking. Leslie said very few other people had cameras and there are no other photographs of him at the ceremony on that day, only of the stages in the ritual sacrifices.

After the sacrifices the heads of animals are placed around the arms and in a strange note the guns are festooned with flowers; this is known as the *shastapuja*. Northey (an ex-Gurkha officer from 1st K.G.Vs.O.) describes the decapitation of animals in the ceremony as ‘barbaric’ and ‘revoltingly wild and savage’ (1937, p. 166). In much the same tone in an email exchange with an ex-police officer and self-declared India expert Peter Moore (2011, pers. com.) describes the scene;

There is something bizarre and wildly oriental about the blood-spattered executioner the execution-square holding up the late buffalo’s head and spraying blood over the rifle-racks (in worship of the ‘tools of their trade’) lined up in a hollow-square around the execution site, the assembled battalion and their families all cheering madly while the Pipe Band hammers out “Pibroch O’Donnell Dhu”.

Moore served in the Indian police after Partition but told me he had witnessed *Dussehra* many times. His view is of one ‘who was there’ and witnessed the ritual but not as an officer and so was outside the intimacy that the ritual space afforded the officers and their men. He invoked his credential as a witness to legitimate his comments, particularly his comment of the oriental ‘wildness’ of it all. For those who were participants in the ritual it was an enjoyable event and provided for a level of mutual involvement that at other times would otherwise not have been possible. Leslie does not make any colourful statements (like Moore) on these aspects of the ceremony, he seemed to accept it as part of his duty to participate and believed in the ‘luck’ associated with it. Leslie was the only British officer I interviewed who talked about the *Dussehra*, he was also the only British Gurkha officer I interviewed who was born in India.

The person who offered me the most lucid insights as to what happened during the transformative bonding of the *Dussehra* was Brigadier Panesar (Interview 2012). Brigadier Pansesar was referred to me by the commanding officer at the First Gorkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment) training centre in Subathu in North Himachal Pradesh. Panesar joined the First Gorkha battalion in 1957 and served in the Congo, then in the first war with Pakistan. He understood every part of the ritual process and more than that he grasped the purpose of the integration of the ceremony into the Gurkha calendar. He is the author of several authorised histories of the 1st Gurkhas, and he commented that at *Dussehra*, ‘As officers we are the guests and hosts of your [sic] own men – all men are equal in another way’ through the rituals. Panesar, although a devout Sikh, recognised the significance of participating in the *Dussehra* because, ‘officers must identify with their men, through the ceremony, [it] made regimental cohesion to make a cohesive force’. Panesar (Interview 2012) reflected on his own identity by adding, ‘I am a Punjabi but my beliefs and religion go in the background, you have to reduce your own identity ... the ritual makes you part of the same unit ... the British were clever in not forgetting the customs of the men. Priests have a solution to every problem.’ When reflecting on the role of the British Indian Army during Partition, as an extension of the discussion of *Dussehra* and the strong bonding it ensured, Brigadier Panesar insightfully commented that despite the overwhelming catastrophe of 1947, ‘Hats off to the British, they did not lose the cohesiveness of the army and they made no preference between the Muslim or Hindu sides’. Panesar was an illuminating interviewee because of his ability to identify the larger function in the *Dussehra*. He looked beyond it as a curious tradition borrowed from the Gurkhas, and saw that it was integral to developing trust and it was highly effective as a bonding experience.

A very recent (2015) account of participation in this event comes from a young British lieutenant; his reflection expressed deep feelings about the power of the ceremony to connect to Gurkha *kaida* which he explained is the ‘special glue that binds ... soldier to officer, man to man ... it is reactive and proactive – constantly evolving but recalling that which has come before’ (Lieutenant Cassini pers comm 2015). After attending the *Dussehra* in Pokhara, Nepal, Lieutenant Cassini returned to his unit where the young riflemen under his command enquired about the ceremony in order to ‘infer from its conduct the outlook for the coming year’. Through participation in this ceremony he felt as if he had been written into the ‘tapestry’ of Gurkha history and

tradition. I found his account to be an eloquent and insightful expression of his involvement.

Carnavalesque

The photograph of the bull's head acts as a conclusion to the pictorial narrative in the album. The photograph is striking on a number of levels, both aesthetically and in its representation of the relationship between the men. The composition of the photograph is stark and strange, the severed buffalo head attracts all the attention of the viewer; it has the elements of a grotesque Picasso painting. The foregrounded head, its tongue lolling out, lays like an afterthought on the empty parade ground, the scene of so much frantic activity (dancing, celebration, drinking) there is now replaced by an element of stillness in this photo. Masters (1956) also provides a lengthy and detailed description of his *Dussehra* and the humiliation caused by the failure of the *bahun* (head priest) to take a buffalo's head off in one stroke. He also describes the carnival atmosphere and revelry at the end of the day, the grounds 'littered' with animal parts and the head left to one side to be blessed by a 'Brahmin' with a hot coal.

Pinney's (2006) comment that the photograph both includes and excludes again seems relevant here as clearly the head is the focus captured against the whole field. In the background can be seen the British officers' tent on the right hand side and subaltern Gurkha soldiers on the other side of the parade ground with their musical instruments. The photograph creates a triangulated tension-power-sacrifice-ritual – a syntagmatic concatenation forms a link between related images in a series and when unconstrained by captions they are informed by the subject. The uninformed observer retains a desire to order them into a comprehensible story. At first I wanted to label them, provide them with their 'missing' captions but I did not need to, as there are invisible threads drawn



between all the photographs in the brown palm-sized album that held them. Each photograph placed in acid-free paper pages that opened up like a small leather-bound book. The photographs must be removed carefully so as not to slice the

sleeve edges like withdrawing a *kukri* from its sheath. The myth of the blade is persistent. Recently Leslie accused me indirectly, as one of the ‘kids’ who had played with his *kukris*, of secretly taking the knives out of their scabbards to look at them. We ‘kids’ were aware of the danger in doing so, of not only incurring my father’s wrath but we knew the myth of the hungry naked blade that needed to be appeased with blood. This myth survives in unexpected places. My *kukri*, given to me when I turned 21, was in a damaged scabbard so I took it to a museum to be repaired and a young man ironically named Macbeth withdrew the sword the wrong way and nearly severed his thumb. He knew the myth too. When I told Leslie about it he laughed and made a dismissive comment about the incompetence of the man.

To participate in this ritual and to invest in the belief that it brought luck to the whole regiment required a suspension of differences and a desire to gain the respect of one’s subaltern charges. It required more than complicity or a mere suspension of the ordinary, it required actual involvement and it engendered genuine enjoyment.

Conclusion

The photographs are a very intimate view of a very public event. It is made intimate by the reflexivity of the photographer, the high value attached to the event, even the anecdote about getting drunk, of the safeness of losing control and letting go a little within the confines of army discipline and law. Allowing the officers to mix with their men and for all of the soldiers and locals to participate in the ceremony. The number and angle of the photographs suggests the importance of the day. It is the end of 1946. The ceremonies and tradition (albeit appropriated from existing Hindu ceremonies and absorbed into ‘tradition’), uniforms and bonding were of service in commanding Leslie’s men but there were simply not enough of them to effectively protect the people they had to transport during Partition. Caplan’s (1995b) critique of the relationship between the Gurkha officers and their men seems a little churlish at times; he comments very briefly on how enduring the bonds were between some of the men which were essential when one reads of their experiences and what they were assigned to do with so few. Both Nepali and British officers bought into the army construction of the Gurkha and they have an enduring reputation thanks to the effective representation in the literature of the Gurkha as an exceptional fighter.

Leslie's experience and that of many other British officers is rarely mentioned in a persistent narrative about Partition that casts the British as hastily fleeing without a contingency of soldiers to transport the refugees. This is of course mostly true but it also sweeps away the existence of the small number of soldiers left to oversee the migration. Writers such as Khan (2010) writes a Partition narrative that almost elides the presence of Gurkhas and or any British officers still serving in India, outside the Punjab Boundary Force. Evoking the theme of 'death trains' in the Punjab, Aguiar (2011, p.74) writes that, 'soldiers who did travel on-board often had communal allegiances'. That may have been true of some Indian soldiers and it may have been true that they did not have proper state protection but it is not entirely true that they had no British Indian Army protection. It was also the case according to Lt. Colonel Wilson, when referring to the situation in the Doon valley in 1947, that Indian officers did act with credit when faced with difficult decisions regarding 'their co-religionists and in some cases their relatives' (letter held at the Gurkha Museum, Winchester, UK).

In an interview with a retired Nepali Gurkha officer, Thaman Gurung in Dharamsala in 2007, I was told emphatically that, 'we saved so many people in the Partition, they would not have survived without us'. Gurung went on to explain, 'we bore the brunt of the Partition – we had to give shelter to people – there had been train massacres'. Throughout our conversation Gurung repeatedly told me he had learnt 'discipline and loyalty' through being in the army but he also shrewdly observed that it was British administrative powers and character that made it possible for them to rule for so long in India. In a review of work on Partition narratives Butalia (2007) notes that, 'As more and more fields of enquiry open up, it becomes increasingly clear that there is no longer one, single, undifferentiated narrative of Partition. Rather, such a major historical event contains within it multiple, layered and nuanced narratives... which enable us to seek out its multiple histories'. This more generous and inclusive view allows for the inclusion of the Indian Army and those on the ground who oversaw the process.

For some like Leslie born in India and sensitive about his ancestry, the army provided an unequivocal British identity, confirmed by the mandatory rule that one had to be British in order to be a Commissioned Officer (KCO) in the Indian Army. This was repeated many times by Leslie, 'I was a King's commissioned officer, they [Indians] couldn't be. I was a British officer'. There was nothing liminal about this

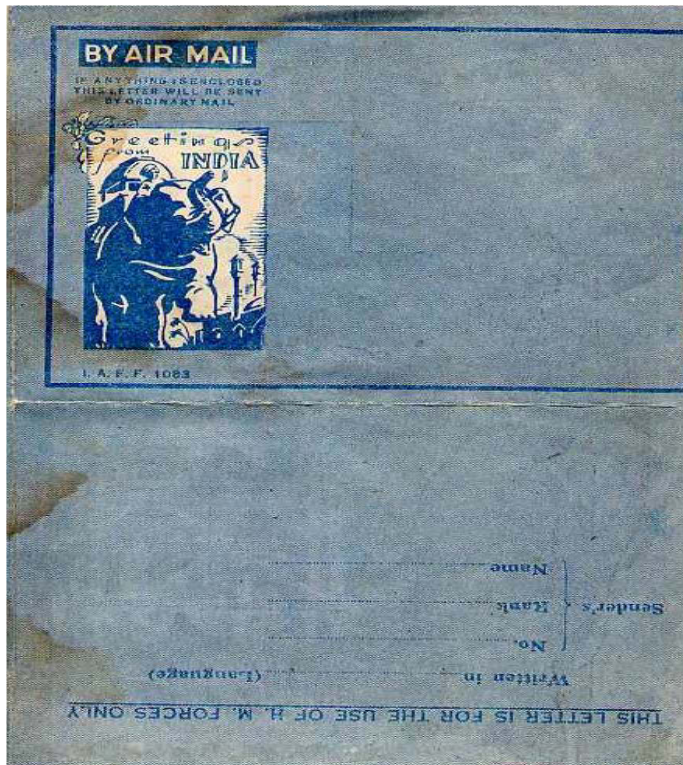
identity, it was enshrined in an institution that invested in and codified identity and rank in dress, language, privileges, loyalty, status and authority. Participating in a ceremony like *Dussehra* may have been part of connecting with a tradition (Hobsbawn 1993; Roy 2001), and used by the British to strengthen identification within and between regiments, but it was a potent ritual in itself. After talking to those who had participated in it, it seems unnecessarily reductive to strip it of its affective power. The *Dussehra*, like the *kukri*, was appropriated in a canny recognition by the British for its ability to create a connection to a tradition that could strengthen a belief in a unique martial identity. According to those who have participated in the ritual (Nixon 2012; Panesar 2012), it was highly successful in fulfilling this purpose and it is extremely difficult to disabuse those who were there of its other purposes.

The impact of the ceremony still resonates in Leslie's descriptions and is evidenced in the 35 black and white photographs devoted to these ten days alone. What I managed to retrieve from the process of photo elicitation was a new level of memories that were connected to the details in the individual images. The photographs arranged in an album interconnect with memory and photographs so that one informs the other in a constant sensory interplay. Whatever sense of power may have been invested in the officers and soldiers during their training, the *Dussehra* and the build-up to Partition was to be sorely tested in the following year (1947) when chaos and an unpredictable 'enemy' (attacks by civilians) challenged the order of war and in transporting refugees, Gurkhas became a target for snipers, de-mobbed soldiers and civilians whose own communities were breaking down.

The next chapter focuses on Gurkha deployment in civil unrest based on Partition literature and interviews with (non-family) former Gurkha officers who served on trains as escorts during the Partition.

Chapter 6 – Other voices

Gurkha deployment in civil unrest



6.1 Introduction

There is no doubt that the people who suffered most in the attacks while in transit were the Muslims moving from India to Pakistan, most of whom travelled by train and were subjected to attack en-route by Hindus and Sikhs who had lost their land in Pakistan.... I saw more dead in one day that I saw in the whole war [WW2]. (Colonel George Bolton 6th Gurkhas, 2005, p. 103)

In this chapter I introduce the experience of British Gurkha officers serving during Partition; this is explored through a particular focus on how it was experienced by those in the army who escorted refugees on the trains, which had become extremely dangerous, that ran through the Punjab. In order to do this, I conducted semi-structured interviews with two ex-servicemen, Ralph Reynolds and Peter Reeve, at the Gurkha Museum in Winchester, UK in 2007. Talbot and Singh (2009) argue for a more synthesised approach to the use of first hand accounts but they also acknowledge the

valuable contribution they make to the historiography of Partition. Their contention is that personal testimonies tend to emphasise the violence and migrations, so that these accounts fracture and permeate the historical narrative at a level that risks colouring the complexities of the wider context for the violence (Talbot & Singh, 2009, p. 19). Gilmartin (1998, p. 1070) brings to the fore the tension between high politics and the 'multiple identities and (multiple narratives)' that feed into the 'problematic narrative' that polarises the story of Partition. However, for the millions caught up in the events, knowledge of the wider political situation remained obscure. Cognisance of the bigger political picture for those in the lower ranks of the army, like Leslie and the officers I interviewed for this chapter, was limited by military rank, unanticipated contingencies, confusing military intelligence and poor communications.

I will rely on written and spoken first hand accounts of escort travelling on trains and participating in the movement of refugees with the literature to shine a light on the situation. The officers discussed here are British; in order to become a King's Commissioned Officer (KCO) one had to prove one's lineage was British hence an Anglo-Indian could not become a KCO in a Gurkha regiment. Leslie as a domiciled European was considered British, so he was able to join a Gurkha regiment and serve from a base at Dharamsala in the district of Kangra; part of this area is now called Himachal Pradesh. I had greater access long term to Leslie so his account is much more detailed, and I was also able to see his handwritten orders, other military documents and photographs. In order to analyse this particular experience I have devoted a separate chapter to his description.

Many current researchers (Butalia 1998; Das 2007; Pandey 2001; Talbot 2007) in the area of Partition narratives acknowledge the value of the position of individuals who were present at these 'critical events'. Likewise Khan (2007, p.10) suggests that 'Partition stories are personal, intensely subjective constructed through memory, gender and ideas of self and span the continent'. They are not linear narratives, they can change upon retelling, details may be recalled and added, memory jostled— what they are not is the 'truth' in an absolute sense. Truth is destabilised by the atomised nature of the lived experience. I would add that these stories go beyond the sub-continent and are retold in other locations in families that were generationally connected to India in ways that are complex and conflicted by notions of race, identity and home.

Partition represents a rupture on almost every level of life for Indians, Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans; it punctures the narrative of the generation that was closest to it, psychologically and geographically, no matter where they were from. But for those born in India and serving at this time Partition involved a double blow. Leslie was unable emotionally to return to India, he had no desire to go 'back' as if his 'basic trust' or sense of security, not in India but in himself in India, was damaged beyond repair. Erikson (cited in Caruth 1995, p. 198) makes a salient comment on the pervasive erosion of trust engendered by trauma into all aspects of lives that goes beyond the intimate to 'governments and institutions' affected by these kinds of events. On each of my research trips Leslie warned me repeatedly about the dangers of travelling in India. However, this was not typical of other British born ex-servicemen I interviewed. I suggest that a persistent fear resided in Leslie and that he articulated this in his concern regarding my travel in India. More particularly I felt it could be sourced to the fact that he witnessed the results of violence against women and that this fed into the unresolved nature of his trauma and his concern for my safety. In addition his own life was at stake and , at this time, his future uncertain.

The emergence of a 'new history' built partly from testimonials was presaged by feminist research into the fate of women during Partition (Butalia 1998; Menon 1998; Spivak 1999). Treatments such as these gave voice to more subjective views of Partition as a lived experience and deconstructionist methodologies placed the individual experience at the centre of the narrative (Kamra 2002; Talbot & Singh 2009). In seeking a balance, Talbot and Singh (2009), like Kamra, warn against the particularisation and specificity of these experiences, embedded as they are within a wider political context and established or elite historiographies (2002, p. 21). The power of these testimonials is apparent, even as Kamra (2002, p. 21) cautions against valorising the 'recovered voice' at risk, of 'essentialising humanism', revisionism and 'privileging or reifying notions of the subject' (2002, p. 20). There is a place where these voices fit in larger historiographies first identified by the subaltern movement. This has paved the way to include British Indian Army voices that are neither a challenge to subaltern revisionism or more elite historiographies. The value of a 'new history' is that the addition of various accounts (previously sidelined by an analysis of 'high politics' of gender, race, religion and in this case rank) from refugees and their escorts produces an expanded narrative of Partition as a process not just an event (Talbot & Singh 2009, pp. 18-19).

The impact of the experience is still evident in the elderly voices that articulate what happened to them decades ago, in some cases when they were teenagers.

Cross and Gurung (2007) have collated 'eyewitness accounts' of Partition from the perspective of the Nepali subordinates in the Gurkhas as part of their overview of Gurkha participation in Partition. Although it is partisan and suffers from being 'personal', it is rare in the literature in that it allows a space to accommodate this raw subordinate voice. In the foreword Field Marshall Sir John Chapple (ex-Gurkha officer) comments on the disparity between the 'Gurkhas' memories' and his own around the 'same series of events', with no reflection on what may have inflected those accounts (2007, p. 9). Chapple (2007, p. 9) then makes an interesting comment regarding the British forces' ability to get their account 'in print before the other side do' in order to give the right version primacy. He rather reductively concludes that the value of these renditions, which he describes as 'eccentric' and 'confused', lies in the psychological relief it offers to the old soldiers. The elite view that those like Chapple's provides is informative at one level but it does not penetrate through to the corporeal effects that long periods of exposure to the uncertainty and tumult that the subaltern has to endure. The confusion he refers to would have been created by the circumstances in which soldiers were attempting to operate. Giving orders and following orders are two very different ambits of responsibility. In the following accounts Gurkha subordinates are rarely mentioned but, as most ex-officers do, Reeves, Reynolds and May extolled their virtues as soldiers. These officers were working in extremely trying conditions related to the coming of independence and the fate of their regiments as well as the exigencies they faced.

The Gurkhas

Military history and the organisation of battalions and regiments at this time is extremely complicated (something the military seems to specialise in), so I will provide a brief overview of how the regiments were organised. The Gurkhas were comprised of ten regiments, separated into different battalions, and were part of the British Indian Army up to 1947. Regiments were named after the places they were raised in. For example, Leslie's regiment 1st King George the V's Own Gurkha Rifles was also known as The Malaun Regiment because it was first formed at Malaun in 1815 but the depot in 1947 was in Dharamsala. This is where Leslie was based for seven months

during Partition. The Gurkhas were cantoned in various 'home' depots across North India. They were considered to be a frontier regiment so they were deployed to help with the population transfer when it began in the north-west Punjab. Leslie was stationed in the district of Kangra (now Himachal Pradesh) where the remit of the first Gurkhas was to escort refugees, consisting mostly of 50,000 Muslims, from three collection camps and escort them to Pathankot where they would be put on trains to Pakistan. Simply put Gurkhas were deployed 'to escort convoys of Muslim refugees from Hindustan to Pakistan and Hindu refugees from Pakistan to Hindustan' (Bolton 2005, p. 105). They had a massive and overwhelming task to complete over a short but terrible three to four months.

Who were the soldiers and who drove the trains?

a bloke cut another's head virutally off on the platform. It was right in front of my eyes, only six feet away ... Then the train went on, the train had soldiers on it too they were guarding it. It was a nasty time. As it has been said they weren't attacking Anglo-Indians or English people at all, it was Muslims against Hindus.' (Rob Abbott cited in McMenamin 2010, p. 135)

Abbot was a schoolboy in Simla at the time of this incident and all the Muslim boys at the school had been evacuated. What is so clearly expressed in this one terrifying encounter contains the essence of that was happening in the north-west Punjab, extreme violence between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and desperate attempts to escape. Mass evacuations on trains, trucks, foot, bullock carts and any other forms of transport were arduous and horrendous journeys. There are as many ways to write about Partition, as there were experiences of it; there were military and civilian incidents overlayed by the religiously inflected communal ethnic experience. An inclusion of a discussion of the violence is almost unavoidable. Talbot and Singh identify five features of the violence as follows: it was a form of ethnic cleansing; it was a political contest for power and territory; it was extreme, 'intense and sadistic'; it was private – women and children were shown no mercy; it involved planning (Interview 2009, p. 68). There were witnesses. The train drivers more often than not were Anglo-Indians and some of the soldiers, particularly on the trains across north India and between Delhi, Ambala, Jhullundar, Amritsar and Lahore, were Gurkhas.

The coming of Independence meant that Raj institutions such as the Indian Army had to be completely reorganised. In order to grasp the nebulous position of the army during Partition it is worthwhile considering what extrinsic and intrinsic pressures were bearing down on the armed services in the febrile political atmosphere during which it was also being dismantled. Gilamartin (1998, p. 1087) points out that there was no 'mediatory political framework' in place to link local communities to 'regional collectivity' and there was no really neutral protection available from local police. The British had denied Indian soldiers access to top officer positions so there was a lack of an adequate and experienced command structure in the unprepared new Indian Army. Marston (2014), in a recent publication about the Indian Army, provides a comprehensible and sympathetic overview of the fate of the army at this time. He is one of the few researchers to analyse the restructuring of the army in detail during Partition and in particular the invidious position the Gurkha regiments were placed in at this time. He provides a thorough analysis of the difficulty the Indian Army faced and states that the Indian army 'did *not* fall' apart but remained mostly 'impartial and cohesive' during Partition (2014, p. 350). By the end of 1946 '1.3 million men had been demobilised' which created an enormous number of unemployed men who needed to retrain and channel their wartime skills into civilian jobs. Marston points out that in 1946 and 1947, many were recruited into militias despite the army's efforts to provide retraining qualifications for finding employment. Some of those that were demobbed and unemployed were ready to participate in 'cleansing operations' (Jalal cited in Marston 2014, p. 283). The late decision made regarding the fate of the Gurkhas meant that some regiments were locked in to staying on in the British Indian Army up to and beyond Independence and thus became involved in the communal violence (Marston 2014, p. 278). By involved I refer to the role of the army as an aid in the transfer of refugees, therefore rendering the soldier escorts vulnerable to attack themselves.

At Independence in 1947 Gurkha subordinates from the ten Gurkha regiments were offered the 'opt' to go to with the British Army or the Indian Army. This naturally added an extra layer of anxiety that filtered through all ranks, from commanding officers through to their subordinates. The 'opt' to stay was taken up by a surprising number of Gurkhas, which baffled many British officers who had assumed they would stay with the British Army. Others took a more pragmatic approach to this dilemma and advised members of their battalions to stay together and not to opt as individuals

(Parker 2005, p. 224). Apart from the 'opt' being offered to them at a time of confusion caused by the retreating British Army, Gurkhas themselves were undoubtedly feeling abandoned. There has been much speculation over the decision to 'opt' but as Cross (Interview 2007) suggested to me; the decision to stay may simply have expressed the simple desire to stay in north India, closer to home. That may well have been as forceful a reason as any to go to the Indian Army considering that the regiments who stayed with the British would more than likely be sent to serve during the 'Malayan Emergency' (Marston 2014, p. 277; Strettell 1948, p. 130). Expressing the bewilderment and disappointment he felt when he heard that his regiment would 'go to India', Reynolds (Letter 13/8/47, held at Gurkha Museum, Winchester, UK) likens the day he heard the news to the 'blackest day in the history of the 9th'. Other officers, such as May (Interview 2007) and Cross (Interview 2007), in retrospect considered the decision at a pragmatic level that took into account the situation of many of the Gurkhas who had served continually under the British since the beginning of the Second World War. Marston (2014, p. 280) rightly comments that any army would have been rendered 'broken' and dysfunctional under the pressure the Indian Army and the Gurkha rifle regiments were placed under. It is important to be reminded of the intensity of the strains put on the army at that time when it was expected to act with impartiality in a civil disruption that impacted on soldiers recruited from the Punjab, and that they managed to remain even relatively functional is astounding.

I was able to conduct semi-structured interviews with two ex-servicemen, Lt Colonel (Retd) Reynolds and Lt Colonel (Retd) Reeve, at the Gurkha Museum in Winchester in 2007. The interviews with Reeve and Reynolds were different in structure to the interviews carried out in India with Anglo-Indians. I was able to semi-structure the interviews because my focus was narrowed to a very specific period of time. I had a list of questions I used to loosely structure the interviews but I soon let the speakers take over. The time covered had a certain narrative logic of its own, beginning in 1946 and ending in 1947; it accommodated a beginning, middle and end to their accounts. Their accounts were built around a sense of incredulity about the explosion of violence, confusion and misinformation, the travails of the train journeys, the constant attacks and finally the slow cessation of violence and the disbanding of their units. Both men spoke confidently, following a well-practised narrative arc that covered signing up, deployment, Partition and repatriation or redeployment. I was also permitted access to

materials held at the museum such as letters, photographs and personal reports about serving in India over the last two years of colonial control. I believe my own connection to the first Gurkhas facilitated my ease of access to the museum collection and to Gavin Harris, the curator, with him contacting Reynolds and Reeves for me. Reynolds related his history to me with some difficulty (he does not have a tongue); this may partly explain why he also gave me copies of the detailed letters he sent to his mother from the Punjab. Reeves also gave me a CD of a lecture he had given several times at the Museum which covered the same story he told me during the interview. Both these men were in their 80s at the time of the interviews. They had belonged to regiments that were tasked with working in the Punjab and their accounts reflected the disorder and horror of what they saw but both had returned to India and visited Nepal later in life. Reynolds had stayed on and served with the Gurkhas until his retirement. They were to participate with their men as an aid to the civil power during Partition so before outlining their experience I will elucidate on what that entailed.

6.2 Acting as an aid to the civil power

Soldiering and fighting in Aid to the Civil Power in civil wars and internal rioting forever creates a cloud of uncertainty ... *when engaged* in conventional warfare the 'rules of engagement' are clearly laid down and are easy to follow... (Roberts 2005, p. 99)

The above comment reflects the difficulty of the role assigned to the troops remaining in India, which was to oversee Partition and the unexpected chaos in the mass migration that followed, particularly the difficulty of being involved in community unrest in a post-war situation. The crucial difference in the role of the army in this post-war scenario was that Partition did not occur during wartime conditions, i.e. that the army was acting as an aid to the civil powers. Soldiers were not directing their energies into the pursuit of a known enemy but attempting to protect the vulnerable from attack. There were explicit notes in army training materials stating that, 'Aid to the civil power is not war'. Officers and men were instructed to restore law and order, first through persuasion and patience, then through the police and lastly by using minimum military force. This was to be achieved through a combination of soldierly duty and the obligations of a citizen set out in the 'Platoon Commander's Guide to Duties in the Aid to the Civil Power' (Marston 2009, p. 473). The army was to act with local security,

such as the police, to maintain order but this soon proved to be almost impossible in areas that were most affected by evacuations. Again and again the lack of confirmed or reliable intelligence was cited as a reason for misleading information regarding what the army was meant to do, for example, Lt Colonel Wilson refers to the atmosphere of ‘uncertainty turmoil and confusion’ that met him on his arrival in Delhi in 1947. He expresses his exasperation that ‘GHQ was a wilderness of committees, posting orders and inaccurate information’ (Letter held at Gurkha Museum, Winchester, UK). The remaining British officers left in India during Partition had to operate from this invidious position of tumult.

The telling of the experience by three ex-Gurkha officers, two British and one domiciled European, and having recourse to several accounts reprinted in the *Bugle and Kukri* magazine, help to clarify how the events unfolded at a different level of experience. The *Bugle and Kukri* produced a special edition in 2006 to allow those who served in the Punjab to recount their experiences. It was noted at the time of its publication that even in official regimental histories Gurkha involvement in the Partition was barely mentioned. More recently the contribution made by Gurkhas outside their brief deployment in the Punjab Boundary Force and more generally throughout the Punjab during Partition is included in Marston’s (2014) history of the Indian Army.

In a review of several Holocaust memoirs Tumarkin (2012, p. 23) ponders whether, ‘we are forgetting what we must remember ... not just the facts ... but the eviscerating *essence*’, in this case, of the survivors of the German concentration camps. The *essence* in this chapter is of being actively engaged in the horror and at the same time of being outside it, of not understanding it at the time and of recalling a sense of its meaning retrospectively. Or at least of understanding Partition at the level of politics related to Independence and Hindu, Muslim and Sikh clashes in the Punjab. Pandey (2009, p.60) identifies the political dimension as the aspect that distinguishes ‘Partition –related violence ... from earlier communal riots’.

The task – ‘No one knew anything’ (Leslie Nixon Interview 2006)

The bald facts are a testament to the magnitude of the migration. It is estimated that 673 refugee trains ran from August to November 1947, carrying over 2,800,000 people, and that approximately 12 million people crossed between the new Pakistan and India (Butalia 1998, p. 76). In many cases, Anglo-Indians train drivers remained relatively

untouched throughout these dangerous journeys (McMenamin 2005). The numbers of casualties and refugees are not agreed on but vary between 2.8-2.3 million refugees relocated on trains and 8-12 million people displaced in both directions. The number of deaths is unknown but varies between 500,000 to 1 million. The general comment in much of the literature about the role of the military, particularly the Punjab Boundary Force, during Partition is that it was an abject failure and that British soldiers were ordered to stay in their barracks before being demobbed out of India or that British soldiers were instructed to save only British civilians (Khan 2007, pp. 128-129). However, British Gurkha officers in command of Nepali soldiers were instructed to 'carry on', as is evidenced in an entry in the Journal of the 1st K.G.Vs.O. Gurkha Rifles (Malaun Regiment) April 1947:

As an interim measure we are carrying on entirely with British officers until 31st dec 1947 and have been allowed to keep sufficient officers for the whole regiment including British service regulars and attached officers until that date. There has not been the least difficulty in getting the required number of officers to volunteer to serve for the remainder of this year. (p. 18)

Khan in her book on Partition released in the 40th anniversary year of 2007 creates the impression that most British troops were evacuated by declaring that, 'the British command confined them [soldiers] to their barracks and evacuated the men as quickly as they could' (2007, p. 128). Khan (2007) goes on to mention the failure of the 'toothless' (2007, p. 129) boundary force. Butalia is one of the few writers who commented on the role of Gurkha regiments: 'for many who travelled from Pakistan to India and in the other direction at the time the only safe escorts were the Gurkha regiments seen as somehow more neutral than the Hindu or Muslim armies' (1998, p. 79). As riots began to tear Lahore apart in August 1947, von Tunzelmann, in her narrative history of the last years of the Raj, comments that when riots broke out in Lahore the only help available was from '200 Gurkhas stationed nearby under the command of an inexperienced British captain who was only 20 years old' (2007, p. 3). There were scattered mentions of the role of Gurkhas in the broader context of the British Indian Army during Partition but recently there has been an expansion in the literature about the role of the Indian Army, most particularly in Marston's (2014) insightful analysis. Marston is empathetic in his approach, as he takes into account the enormous pressure on the army to function after the Second World War, in the civil

disruption and the political chaos that accompanied the path to Independence and Partition.

The number of refugees moved by train, on foot in *kafilas* (caravans of people) and in bullock carts through the Punjab was overwhelming for the number of officers left in charge of the Gurkha regiments working in the Punjab and Pakistan. The sheer number of refugees on trains was enormous; examples can be found in documents from the Mountbatten Papers (MB1-D276). The Eastern Punjab Railway line to Lahore with armed escorts carried between 3,000 and 9,500 refugees at any one time. The numbers on foot were similarly 'biblical in scale' (Khan 2007) for example it was recorded in November 1947 that 'a column of approximately 40,000 Muslim refugees swelled to 70,000 left Rohtak on 29th October on its way to Ferozabad' (Mountbatten Papers, MB1-D276). The accounts below testify to those figures; however, what is left out is that the very few Gurkha officers left in charge were often extremely young, for example, Lesley was slightly older, at the age of 22. It is hard to imagine assigning this responsibility to people so young and inexperienced.

6.3 First person accounts

I have relied on the eyewitness accounts in this section because they capture the sense, perhaps even *the essence* of the chaos with a spare immediacy. The first short account below is derived from a letter, held at the Gurkha Museum in Winchester, and written by Lt Colonel (Retd) Reggie Twelvetrees, an officer in the 1/6 Gurkhas. He describes the situation from his base at Montgomery (in Pakistan). The other account is based on an interview conducted with Lt Colonel (Retd) Reynolds from the 2nd/9th Gurkha Rifles. Reynolds also wrote the aforementioned letters to his mother that chronicle his time in the Punjab, serving from 31/7/47 in Ambala until the last letter written in Delhi on 9/11/47. My second interviewee was with Lt Colonel (Retd) Peter Reeve from the 1st/4th Gurkha Rifles who told me of his experience of working with Meo refugees south of Delhi.

In a heartfelt letter (held at the Gurkha Museum, Winchester), written to another officer, in November 1947, describing his situation in Montgomery towards the end of the main migrations, Twelvetrees refers to his concern for families being split up during attempts to move refugees to different camps. Twelvetrees describes the terrible task of selecting 3,000 refugees out of 10,000 refugees to be relocated to different camps, one

at Lahore and one at Fazilka. He likens himself to a warder in Belsen, 'so many inhuman things are happening that a little humanity in trying to reunite split families is the least I can be allowed to do'. He goes on to say that he 'will stay and see it done and [I] don't want to quit with my company until this mess is cleared'. Likewise, as a 19-year old British officer Lt Colonel (Retd) Ralph Reynolds sent a letter on 29/8/47 to his mother describing the situation in Ludhianna as a 'dangerously disturbed area'. He writes of seeing the badly mutilated bodies of a small group of five people and expresses frustration at the reluctance of the local police to assist in burying the bodies but that he managed to enlist the help of some Pathans. He notes to his mother in that all his letters that 'when I say dead people I shall always mean Muslims, by the way' (Reynolds Letter 29/8/47). The Pathans who assisted in the burial were from a group of 'several thousand with all their donkeys mules and baggage ... We had no idea if they were friendly or hostile so we went in for a bat chit'. As it turns out, the Pathans were labourers from a building project on the Bhakra Dam. Reynolds reports that he heard heavy rifle fire coming from a Muslim village on the outskirts of Ludhiana, which had been declared 'dangerously disturbed'. Reynolds writes that he could hear:

a continuous rat tat tat of machine gun fire from the city ... there were two wounded children among the refugees they had been horribly slashed about by knives and *kirpans*. Whole streets were burning and piles of bodies lay about ... they lay along the Grand Trunk Road along the railway lines and in the city. (Reynolds 29/8/47)

Hindus and Sikhs had attacked the village. Reynolds comments that General Rees, Commander of the short-lived Punjab Boundary Force (PBF), was having trouble keeping Sikhs from joining bands of police raiding villages and that the Gurkhas were the most reliable escorts they had. This was an astute observation because it was exactly what was happening. Many of the soldiers in the PBF had been recruited from the Punjab and naturally could not maintain an unbiased attitude to what was going on around them. However, as mentioned above, Marston contends that the Indian Army acted in a manner that was 'like a rock in an angry sea' (2014, p. 351), suggesting that it was the Punjab police who 'could be communally focussed' (2014, p. 328). This is born out by Reynolds' experience described below.

In a letter dated 3/11/47, on his last train trip, Reynolds describes in great detail the agonising transportation of refugees on a particularly slow and overloaded 28 coach train that was travelling from Ambala to Attari, a distance of approximately 280 kilometres. He was the only British officer in charge of four or five Gurkha officers and 120 Gurkha subordinates escorting 9,500 refugees; it took nearly 30 hours with no food or water for the refugees to complete the journey. He tried to provide some protection but the number of people who needed assistance rendered the task impossible. Both escorts and refugees were under constant threat of attack from ‘Sikhs and Hindus who were looting and killing the Muslims’. Arriving late at their destination, the Subedar (superior officer) who was supposed to meet them had come and gone. In another incident he described his frustration when trying to find some assistance with the removal of several dead Muslims and to his consternation found the local police to be completely unhelpful, virtually turning their backs on him. Reynolds was also in a Gurkha regiment, the 2/9th, that was going to go to India rather than ‘empire’. This was announced to Reynolds’s deep consternation at Independence; however, with his usual pragmatism his letters end with a note that says, ‘However we are here now so we must say ‘2/9th *moriyo chha*, 2/6th jai’ (the 2/9th is dead, long live the 2/6th).

In an interview with Lt Colonel (Retd) Peter Reeve, formerly with the 4th Gurkha Rifles, an ex-Gurkha officer was present at the Palwal camps about 18 kilometres south of Delhi. The camps were set up to protect Meo refugees; I was shown photographs of a massacre that had taken place. It was a terrible image, showing the bodies of women and children who had been stabbed to death. The bodies were close together as if huddled in fear, the faces of the victims, in the photograph, were averted from the camera. Reeve (Interview, 2007) told me he had taken the photograph to prove to his superiors that people were being attacked and murdered and that they, i.e. he and his men, needed to stay where they were and also that they were undermanned. Another photograph showed tents set up to house officers; the encampment looked piteously small compared to the number of predominantly Meo refugees seeking protection from attack by Muslims and Hindus (Meos being neither Muslim, Hindu nor Christian). The photograph taken by Reeve at Palwal was used as proof that more support was needed in order to protect Meo refugees from attacks by Hindus because Hindu communities surrounded them on three sides; however, extra support was not forthcoming. Reeve told me in our interview that the Meos were being slaughtered as early as May 1946 by

groups of up to 700 Hindus. The situation worsened after Mountbatten's public announcement regarding Partition in June 1947, Reeve still expresses bewilderment at the mishandling of security, saying that in the army 'everyone hated him [Mountbatten]'. Like other regiments, his was first ordered out of the area before he felt the job was finished and in October 1947 he left Dharamsala for Karachi. He said leaving refugee camps 'was really sad'; 'you really cared but you felt like you were bailing out'. This is a frustration that is echoed in the literature and by the officers I interviewed but it points more to the magnitude of the task than to military incompetence.

For the soldiers who remained during Partition it was a horrifying journey and one is reminded again and again through reading first-hand accounts and secondary sources that reliable information about what was going on was extremely hard to come by. Writing from Ambala in July, Reynolds refers to rumours about the movement of his battalion to Secunderabad (Reynolds Letter 31/7/47) which did not eventuate. Throughout this terrible unfolding of events he juxtaposes a comparison of the shopping centres in Ambala with Lahore and the heavy rains that had begun to fall with the escalating number of casualties they had to deal with. Twelvetrees also despairingly refers to the general confusion and gives the impression that in the end he was making his own decisions on the grounds of his experience. Reflecting on the impact of Partition in Dehra Dun, Lt. Colonel Wilson reported in 1949 that, 'Another difficulty that faced the army in restoring order was the almost total lack of reliable intelligence ... rumours were rife and a string of panicky and inaccurate police accounts of often non-existent occurrences poured in without ceasing' (Wilson Letter, 2/3/49 held at the Gurkha Museum, Winchester). Leslie would be led astray by misinformation as related to me in an account to be included in the next chapter. Similarly, in a Gurkha Regimental Association Newsletter written in 1948 it is noted that communications were slow and information unreliable, 'One of our chief troubles was that we could get very little information out of GHQ. They were urgently required for the military situation and equally urgently required in H.M. Gurkhas as well as for repatriation'. All Gurkha regiments were operating under the uncertainty of their own futures, deciding where their loyalties lay, as the Gurkha 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th regiments would become the Brigade of Gurkhas with the British Army or the 1st, 3rd, 4th and 9th regiments in the new Gurkha Brigade under the command of the Indian Army. Like Leslie, Reeve and

Reynolds remained close to, what sounded like, a script that included graphic moments that could 'never be forgotten' (Reeve Interview, 2007). However what came through in their accounts was a sense of the immensity of the responsibilities they took on as very young men and their bravery, none of them mentioned either of these characteristics.

Trains

In 1947 the image of desperately overcrowded steam trains became irrevocably entwined with that of the moving population, as unsafe vehicles of despair and tragedy particularly in the North-West of India where some of the most intense and violent transfers of populations occurred. Almost everything the railways were intended for was reversed, the previously reliable safety of the space of the carriage was invaded and became dangerous and deadly. The train trips undertaken at Partition created a schism with old lives, a transitioning away from the past via an anxious and terrifying journey to an uncertain future, if one survived. Kerr refers to trains used during the Partition as 'Trains of death' (2007, p. 134) and similarly a chapter by Aguiar is entitled 'Partition and the death train' (2011, p. 73). In one way or another in almost all accounts of the use of trains to transport refugees the death rate is highlighted over the survival rates. Religious identities were intensified, depending on the direction the train was travelling as it approached and crossed borderlines (Aguiar 2011, p. 85). This is most poignantly exemplified by the stories that Butalia (1998) recorded with women who were targets of the most brutal attacks and abductions. The story Dayayanti Sahgal tells of travelling alone from Lahore to Kulu and her determination to reach it is illustrative of this forced transformation to a new life (Butalia 1998, pp. 109-110). Aguiar argues that the train had become the 'dominant icon' for representing the violence of Partition and 'the journey into modern nationhood' (2011, p. 84) but the high cost of Partition destabilised this connection. Indeed, Aguiar (2011, p. 99) comments that this reversal of the progressive trains and modernity narrative changed 'the forward paradigm of modernity'. What worked against trains in this situation were the very characteristics that made them so 'modern' and efficient at other times. This included the ability to carry large numbers of people, travelling in a fixed direction and running on a timetable. Despite running trains at times at variance with official timetables in order to minimise opportunistic attacks on 'refugee specials' information was disclosed, by 'railway officials' to local marauders (Khan 2007, p. 136; Talbot & Singh 2009, p. 84). People were energised by fear into leaking information and thence into a forced complicity

with local militias but this was also balanced by some acts of compassion. These acts of saving life sometimes involved protecting servants, such as occurred when one Anglo-Indian family suddenly found themselves and their Hindu cook living in Pakistan. The head of the family spoke to the Muslims who had come to take the cook away and managed to talk sense into them (McMenamin 2010, p. 222). Unfortunately, however, as Brass (2003, p. 90) points out, cases of compassion remain as a 'chimera' to the viciousness of the acts that were committed by people from different groups on each other. Apportioning blame to certain groups deemed to be responsible for committing more murders than others is not supported by reliable statistics. Clearly this is an aspect of Partition that may always remain unresolved.

On average during Partition trains carried up to 5,000 passengers (Kerr 2007, p. 136) but sometimes this number was exceeded. The experience of train drivers has received some attention from oral historian McMenamin (2003) who concludes that their exclusion from the killing can be related to a 'level of goodwill' extended to them by Hindus and Muslims (2006, p. 22). This is derived from oral interviews conducted with 38 Anglo-Indians many of whom had ties with the railways. McMenamin (2005) speculates on the nature of 'colonial and local relationships' that were exposed during Partition and finds that a surprisingly tolerant attitude towards Anglo-Indians existed at a time when feelings against those aligned with the British could have been inflamed. Needless to say, the Anglo-Indian community were performing essential services in the railways and telegraph throughout 1947. In a similar way, although they were sometimes killed in attacks, British officers were not usually the main targets for attacks on trains.

The situation in the North India

In the Gurkha Regimental Association Newsletter of 1948 there is a brief description of the situation in Dharamsala where Lesley was cantoned with the 1st Gurkha Rifles. The whole Punjab had been classified 'as a disturbed area under the provisions of the Punjab safety Ordinance' (Gurkha Regimental Association Newsletter of 1948). There were virtually no police left in the area as 90% of the police force was Muslim and there were 50,000 Muslim refugees in the valley that needed to be first evacuated to centres set up at Yol, Jawalamukli, Kotwali, Nurpur, Pathankot and Amritsar. The camp at Yol (south of Dharamsala) had been an Italian POW camp and now housed 10,000 refugees, aided

by nurses from the Canadian mission. From Yol refugees were walked to Nagrota, a railway siding, where the refugees were put on a small gauge train and taken to Pathankot where they were then handed over to the 7/10th Gurkha Rifles for the next part of their journey towards Pakistan. News about what was happening elsewhere in India and in the Punjab was hard to come by. Leslie said that he was unaware of the scale of the killings happening further down the line but eventually news came through, from those closer to the new border with Pakistan, of massacres and attacks on trains. I asked him how he felt about putting people onto trains that would eventually have to cross the border into more disturbed zones and he simply replied, 'We didn't know how bad it was and in any case we had no choice' (Leslie Nixon Interview, 2006). For the Gurkha officers and their men 'safe conduct of refugees' meant 'Gurkha Regiments in charge of them were being constantly attacked and having suffered in moving to India would then be attacked again on their march back' (Taylor 2005, p. 105).

Terry Dawe (Interview, 2006), a domiciled European who served with a Gurkha regiment, talked of his experience from the relative calm of Madras:

The north was very bad but we didn't hear about it. But it must have been bad the main towns like Amritsar ... the 1st Gurkhas had a helluva bad time ... stories from the 1st Gurkhas say there were dead everywhere. Chaps of the first came to us after and said those who died of starvation or were killed, the bodies were put in fields and one arm kept going up and down because an animal was trying to eat it – so they [the Gurkhas] saluted him.

I was told several versions of this story. The ex-officer who told me this story almost laughed as he remembered it. It was even printed in the *Bugle and Kukri* magazine. I didn't know what to make of this grotesque humour – it was matter-of-factly related to me as if the arm did not belong to a person but a thing, a remnant of something human. There is a way of talking and writing about these onerous duties that absents the speaker from the emotions experienced at the time. Ralph Reynolds' letters to his mother paint a picture of his soldierly duties that lack the emotional texture he displayed when talking about it. No doubt the young Reynolds was to some degree sparing his mother the reality of the conditions he was working in.

The graphic description below from an officer in Jullundar is of a grimmer reality:

I was given the task of ensuring the safe passage of thousands of Muslim refugees moving by day along the Jullundar –Amritsar road and railway lines which were two miles apart. Our responsibility stretched for about 60miles, so my platoons engaged on either escorting or static protection duties were very thin on the ground....The company area was encircled by barbed wire and carefully guarded. The surrounding countryside was littered with the corpses of refugees and carcasses, the victims of violence, cholera, starvation and exhaustion. (Lt Colonel Henry Burrows 1/4 GR *Bugles and Kukri* 2006, p. 130)

The Holocaust is invoked

I do not wish to compare Partition to the Holocaust as they are so different in all but a few features such as the use of trains and their association with death and misery. However, the Holocaust is often invoked to register the scale of the casualties and the targeted nature of attacks on trains that were, simply put, carrying Muslims if travelling west and Hindus if travelling east. Huysen notes that discourses about trauma do indeed seem to radiate out from an evermore ‘ubiquitous Holocaust discourse’ (cited in Kennedy & Bennet 2003, p. 16) as if the Holocaust represents a benchmark in human suffering against which all other catastrophes must be measured. It is often the use of trains to transport refugees on trains and their association with death that marry the two in the imagination.

In 2007 whilst in Delhi I purchased an illustrated copy of Kushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* what I saw in the photographs (captured by Margaret Bourke White) was the magnitude of the experience that Partition was and continues to be. Singh’s story adds a reality to the situation in the ironic way that literature can, by investigating the incomprehensible through fiction. It is not a book I would show my Leslie who for all his measured talk about his service would be troubled by the images of things he did not want to photograph himself. These images are graphically invoked in his recount of certain incidents (see Chapter 7). During the process of my research on Partition I looked for images or photographs and noticed that the same images of crowded trains and *kafilas* seem to accompany many of the texts in much the same way that Margaret Bourke White’s photographs of Buchenwald showing piles of discarded bodies and emaciated inmates in camp dormitories illustrated the Holocaust. Partition is often coupled with the Holocaust; as Kamra puts it, it is a ‘moment that forms a singular

breach of contract with civilised ideas' (2002, p. 19). The collapse of order, displacement and violence in both cases lasted for an agonising length of time. The choice of the word 'moment' or even 'event' casts a net of speed and singularity over Partition but as a process it has resonated for decades in the memories of those that were there, and not only the millions of displaced Indians but of domiciled Europeans, British people and Anglo-Indians who were also living there at the time. For those who served in the army in frontier forces like the Gurkhas it was an experience that lasted over the five months of the full migration and population transfers. The train trips did not end in a camp after one train trip; it meant going into 'disturbed areas' again and again. The use of the adjective 'disturbed', a term employed by the military, seems a mild choice to make when describing the reality of the situation. It is so restrained it almost underplays the enormity of the problems but it took on a more ominous meaning as I read through Leslie's movement orders. Again, as Kamra (2002) stresses, the experience of the trauma of Partition, it is multifaceted and impacted by where one was positioned, both socially and geographically at the time and in the life one was jettisoned into as a result.

Conclusion

For Gurkha regiments this was the beginning of an uncertain time as the full handover of regiments was not finalised until 1950. Leslie's regiment was selected to remain in India and go to the Indian Army. If a person wanted to remain with the Gurkhas under the British Army or go to the Indian Army, but his whole regiment was being transferred, he could opt to change regiments. Perhaps there was disappointment amongst the British officers that their men did not want to stay with the British Army but as pointed out by ex-Gurkha officer Rob May (Interview, 2007), the men had been on duty in Burma until Independence and had had no leave. They were wanting to see their families and these were the practical considerations of the decision. In addition, the British 'couldn't give them the "terms", meaning better family or pay conditions because of the tripartite conditions'. The Tripartite recruitment conditions May refers to were established after Independence between India, Britain and Nepal.

Alert to the use of photographs in the literature I noted that Talbot and Singh (2009 p.94) used images taken in Lyallpur in 1947 in their book on Partition. Plate 8 on page 94 includes a caption that reads: 'Soldier, police and camp officials...' This does not

reflect any particular synchronicity with the men in the photograph. The middle figure is the 'soldier' and his uniform and facial features suggest he may be a Gurkha – could this be right? Similarly in the second photograph, 'Plate 9: Part of a crowd of 30,000 evacuees awaiting trains to take them from Lyallpur to India' (Talbot & Singh 2009, p. 94), I noticed that although the details are indistinct, the uniformed figure of the soldier appears to be wearing a Gurkha style hat (similar to the Australian army slouch hat) and uniform. I emailed my queries to Dr Talbot who replied that;

Gurkhas were deployed to escort refugees and to guard refugee camps, so it is quite likely given the uniform that the figures you refer to in Plates 8 & 9 are Gurkhas. I do not know for certain. As you are aware Gurkhas had a good reputation for protecting refugees, unlike some other troops who were communalised and either stood by when massacres occurred or joined in. The Baluch regiment (consisting of Pathans and Punjabi Muslims) had a particularly bad reputation in this respect. Little has been written about the Gurkha role in Partition. There are scattered references that could be deployed in Government sources. Partition refugees I have interviewed over the years confirm the sense that they felt safest when Gurkha troops were present (Talbot 2010, pers. comm., 17th May)

Partition occurred at the nadir of British rule and it has become part of a trope of abandonment, death and sacrifice. The few British officers and their men who stayed in India worked against enormous odds to save lives at a time when their own regiments were breaking up as part of the British withdrawal. Leslie's regiment, the 1st KGVsO Gurkha Rifles, was one of the six regiments that would 'remain with the Dominion of India' (Marston 2014, p. 277) after Independence. Therefore they were obliged to stay on in India during the population transfer, this was the reason why they were deployed as aid to the civil power. The following chapter seeks to explore some of this perspective. It is based on several interviews with Leslie, as a young subaltern responsible for escorting and protecting refugees from the Gurkha headquarters in what is now Himachal Pradesh from August to November 1947. The following chapter focuses on Leslie's last year in India and the impact Partition had on him.



Uncaptioned

This air letter was unused. The image references the Taj Mahal, the army and perhaps a wistful thought towards home for those who came from Europe, represented by the snow and mistletoe. /(Deborah Nixon)

Chapter 7 – Partition



Uncaptioned

Dharamsala 1947 (Deborah Nixon)

7.1 Introduction

The photograph above was taken in 1947, when civil unrest between local Hindus and Muslims had begun in Kangra, North India. These Gurkha soldiers are sitting in a trench and in the background can be seen small figures in a crowd. The soldier in the foreground of the photograph looks very young and nervous; he and the other soldiers are wearing their *kukris* and are ready for action. Leslie says this photograph was taken near Dharamsala and that they had been called to this place because they had been told Hindus were saying that, ‘Muslim blood would run in the streets’. He said nothing did happen that particular day but it was very tense. In a later interview he commented that he had ‘forgotten a lot of stuff’ (Leslie Nixon Interview 2007) but in May 2011 when I sent him this individual photograph he was much more forthcoming with detailed information. This photograph is one of the very few taken of an ‘action’, taken by him during Partition.

In 1947 the use of trains became irreversibly linked with the Partition as vehicles both of death and despair and the birth of a nation. They were most notably used in the

north-west of India where some of the most intense and violent transfers of populations occurred. The dominant colonial rhetoric of civilisation and progress was shattered by the violence of Partition as the modern secular space of the train was invaded and a counter narrative of modernity emerged from the wreckage (Aguilar 2003). As mentioned in the previous chapter, McMnamin (2003) argues that Anglo-Indian train drivers and Parsi railway staff were excluded from the killing because of their perceived neutrality; this is a position that Leslie also takes in his story about Partition. It is not an abrogation of agency, it is a belief that he really was to some degree outside the violence and yet as his recount reveals, at others times he was tragically implicated in it.

Postmemory

This chapter connects to a form of postmemory work, through the writing of this thesis, of the experiences my father had during Partition. I have lived with this story for such a long time that it feels like a part of me as well. In a sense I have assumed custodianship of the story, it has become a postmemory (Greenberg 2002; Halbwachs 1992; Hirsch 2008; *The Lost* 2007). I am also the second generation descendent of a person from one of the communities who was affected by Partition. I am interweaving this micro history, this individual memory, with other more public histories and other soldiers' recollections. Grappling with the after-image of the Shoah in relation to children of Holocaust survivors, Hirsch (1997) posits the concept of 'postmemory', albeit 'with some hesitation, conscious that the prefix "post" could imply that we are beyond memory'. What differentiates it from memory is 'generational distance and from history by deep personal connection' (Hirsch 1997, p. 22):

a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated, not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation. ... Postmemory characterises the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated' (Hirsch 1997, p. 20)

Postmemory work is not related to absence or a void, it is 'as full or as empty, certainly as constructed, as memory itself' (Hirsch, 1997, p. 22). The stories that are told by those who lived through Partition, to their daughters and sons, and then what

happens to these stories when those children grow up and become adults is the kind of creative postmemory work that Greenberg (2006) considers as he discusses silence, forgetting and trauma. His insightful discussion of the way Partition is remembered, not just by those who experienced directly, but also as it is passed on through stories and to the next generation, resonated with my own experience with Leslie. Postmemory research work also provides for 'the public working through of personal and family issues' (Greenberg 2006, p. 264). In this way this story sits at juncture of both private and public histories and articulates the connection as complementary. I grew up with vague references to this time, which were implanted in a wider recount about serving with the Gurkhas. For many years the latter was the focus for recollections of India, not the terror and loss of control that eventually occurred. Perhaps Leslie was sparing us as children from these stories but when they did emerge I felt they explained his behaviour, particularly in traffic. In a moment of losing his rational thinking he once stalked my mother with a loaded rifle, imagining she was an intruder when she had returned home unexpectedly late one evening. This is not a normal response to noise. My mother also told me that he suffered from nightmares and that a recurring nightmare included the sound of jackals because they sounded like people being killed. He has rung me several times to ask me if I knew what jackals sounded like and explained the noise to me. It has never left him.

I am what is referred to by Greenberg (2009) and Hirsch (1997) as a member of the 'hinge generation', 'a living bridge' between a person who experienced a trauma first-hand and one who is trying to understand the impact it has had on, in my case, Leslie. Even though Leslie was not a refugee he was, he believes, targeted as a British Indian officer by people he identified as from the Indian Army. He was not able to elaborate on this except to say that 'the Indians' had become 'untrustworthy', this suspicion was confirmed by several situations he felt he had been entrapped in. When referring to the transporting of refugees to Nagrota Leslie expressed a naïve underestimation of the feelings of those he identified as being 'Indian Army soldiers', 'We were often threatened, I thought they [Indians] would be scared of us' (2007). He soon learnt that 'they' [Indians] were not afraid to attack and after a skirmish he arranged for his men to ride on the trains from Nagrota to Pathankot. He sat in the tender of the train, a car that is reserved for carrying coal and water close to the front because it was elevated and he 'got a clear line of fire'; the other section escorts of Gurkhas covered the middle and

back of the train. He said his area of the Punjab was not as bad as the area around Amritsar, a city closer to the new border with Pakistan and Lahore (Talbot 2006). What Leslie's story reveals is a long lasting suspicion that he really was a target in a place that had suddenly become as volatile for him as for the people who were forced to migrate.

The retelling of this story is not to establish it as 'truth', rather I seek to explore the way in which memory and experience create the past as a different country that pervades living history. My contention is that the past is never dead; rather its spectres haunt the present, giving it a contingent, unsettled quality. To this purpose Leslie's voice is allowed to dominate and his narrative, poignant, sometimes self-deceiving, evocatively captures the atmosphere of those tumultuous times.

The Partitioning up of India in 1947 speaks to so many levels of trauma and disruption that it seems impossible to find a new way to enunciate it and that is partly the challenge here, to go beyond the collective military, British, domiciled European in order to see it as an individual might have experienced it. But how does one talk about unspeakable inexplicable sights, and articulate the psychological impact this inflicted on him at the age of 22. Leslie's voice comes from the *habitus* of colonial India, it permeates the framing of his position in such a manner that does not accommodate reflection. The ambiguity of his role, the paradox of his position as a soldier in peace time and the residual trauma he experiences when recalling some events may have all impacted on his inability to contemplate the past.

No final figures

As previously discussed, it is agreed by most scholars in the field of Partition studies that the number of people who died during Partition will probably never be properly calculated. Pandey (2001, p. 67) argues that whatever official records were kept of the number of people who died during Partition will remain a mystery as a result of the reluctance of 'successive regimes to release documents'. Talbot also comments that because no official records were being kept at the time, there is no final tally so the figures vary greatly from 200,000 (Moon 1961, p. 293) to 500,000 (Khosla cited in Talbot 2009, p. 62). Others have figures of up to 800,000 or a million (Talbot 2009). It has been variously characterised as 'ethnic cleansing' (Ahmed 2012; Khan 2007, p. 128; Pandey 2001; Talbot & Singh 2009), as gendered (Talbot 2000; Khan 2007; Das 2007; Talbot 2009), as 'reciprocal genocide' (Brass 2003), as planned (Talbot 2009)

and as religious, political and territorial. Pandey argues that there were three Partitions: the demand for a separate Muslim state, the splitting off of Muslim majority areas and the violence (2001, pp. 29-38). Just as there is no final figure on fatalities, ultimately there are as many Partitions as there were people involved in the migration, displacements, abductions, death and loss and it therefore remains unquantifiable.

The motivation towards violence has been a topic of much speculation but it cannot be denied that religion was the strongest factor. Khan (2007, p. 20) points out that religious 'differences' between people were exacerbated through colonial practices such as those expressed through regulations on railway platforms and Indian trains regarding 'Hindu water' or 'Muslim water'. She quotes Gandhi's lamentation at the indignity of having to bear 'the shame that is peculiarly Indian' of these rules, imposed by colonial powers, predicated on a simplistic and essentialised interpretation of what it meant to be Hindu or Muslim. This fed into the fear surrounding what would happen on the 15th of August. Leslie still expresses disbelief when describing this explosive first night of Partition. The same level of disruption and carnage also unfolded on the new eastern border between India and East Pakistan.

Although unexpected, the fierceness of the clashes between different groups of migrating people followed on from a tragic trajectory of violent outbreaks that related back to months of uncertainty, rumours and sporadic 'disturbances' across north India. It radiated out from riots that occurred in Calcutta on Direct Action Day in May 1946 (Talbot 2009, pp. 68). The researchers I have mentioned agree that it was the departure of the British and the migration that followed which provided the stage for the terrible casualties that occurred. The violence is the grain of modernity: the consequence of an attempt to provide a division of land that, ironically, was supposed to ameliorate the Muslim League's desires for a homeland. At the time no proper account seems to have been taken of how the populations already living in those areas would respond to the new borderlands (Khan 2007; Pandey 2001). Religious differences were a direct cause of the violence; they contributed to the overall web of political decision-making and the drawing of the border, which did not presage well for the immediate future.

Mass killings, abduction, rape, displacement and loss of control were witnessed by the British Indian Army soldiers whose task it was to accompany refugees on their migration from India to Pakistan and vice versa. The numbers of those who died and those who were involved in the population exchange does not really illuminate what it

felt like to be caught up at ground level. Examining the way it happened at this level of involvement assist in arriving at an understanding of it. Over the last two decades there has been a shift in the historiography of Partition to include the experiences of women, children and the displaced (Butalia 1998; Das 2007; Datta 2009; Kamra 2002). As mentioned above, the scale of the violence and the indeterminate number of victims has received attention from many researchers but what expands our understanding of it lies in the singular experiences of those who were there. Pandey (2001, pp. 65-66) and Das (2007, p. 17) argue that to more fully comprehend the magnitude of what happened it is necessary to leave 'high politics', blame and ultimate responsibility and listen to what happened to ordinary people. This includes all people from 'Muslim artisans' to Anglo-Indians and those who 'fled or stayed' (Pandey 2001, p. 20). Talbot and Tatla (2005) report on the experiences of people who lived in or around Amritsar in order to address the overlooked 'dimension of the refugee experience'. They focus on this region because this area, as the title of the book suggests, was at the 'epicentre of violence'.

As Datta (2009, p. 35) sets out to explore one particular testimony, she comments on the 'incremental' nature of the narrative as details are recalled at different times and added to the story later. This was also my experience when interviewing Leslie. I was fortunate in that I could ring him or visit him to clarify details about his account and he often rang me early in the research as he remembered other aspects of our conversations. Sometimes I felt responsible for taking him back to a time he would rather forget but I think the research provided him with the sense of an objective framework for him to work within. I was always mindful of my unique access to this participant. I was close to him in a way that I could not be with anybody else and mindful of the sensitivities around interviewing a relative. My research project legitimised my enquiries as academic rather than personal and that the work was to be as objective as I could make it. I used the transcript from the first extended interview in 2005 to act as a template for other questions I needed to raise with him. This chapter follows the narrative arc of the story he told at that time but he has also amended and clarified some points over the intervening years. Just as a map reflects a historical connection with time and place so does the way a person creates a cogent and meaningful narrative around the past. In these chapters on Partition I did not ask for the life story of the participants, I maintained a focus just on their experiences of the army in India in 1947 in order to 'include that point of view' (Carr 2001, p. 153). The

narration in some ways was episodic with less binding between memories because it was outside customary lives. Carr (2001, p. 157) argues that narratives about the same event can paradoxically accommodate 'multiple realities' and an historical upheaval like Partition obviously generates multiple points of view.

Brass (2003, p. 74), writing about Partition, comments that very little had been written at that time, in the way of accurate accounts of 'precisely what happened' by those who were involved at the time 'and what ... the feelings, attitudes, and consequences for the sufferers were'. The sufferers included, amongst others, displaced Indians from all communities and Anglo-Indians, domiciled Europeans and the British soldiers who remained in India until November 1947 to assist in the transfer of populations. To some extent this experience has been recorded in military autobiographies and by those at the upper levels of the military but it is also true that the number of 'adult survivors and their memories are dying out' (Brass 2003, p. 74). Paradoxically the value in Leslie's account lies in his partial, confusing, ground level experience; as he puts it himself, the 'view of a subaltern in the Indian army' he is as much a survivor of the evisceration of the Punjab as the refugees he protected.

Trauma

Naturally trauma became an unwanted extension of the journey of refugees and their escorts as Caruth succinctly observes: 'the experience of the soldier ... in a numb ... state ... is a central and recurring image of trauma in our century' (1996, p. 11). Trauma is a highly subjective tailor-made experience, intrusive and unpredictable it can revisit and resurface as part of a narrative (Winter 2012). It plays a part in the reconstituting of oneself in a newly destabilised world and it inflects how this world is spoken of decades later. Memories of traumatic events can also arise unbidden in unpredictable situations and the following incident illustrates this point. Recently, as Leslie was recovering from a medical procedure and had become dehydrated and light-headed, he suddenly began talking to his nurse about the cries of women and children who had fallen into a well during an 'action' in India in 1947. Later when I asked him about this episode he told me he thought it was a bad sign, that it was an omen. He simply could not talk further about it and a silence followed as I tried to soothe him, reminding him that he was not responsible for the deaths that occurred but this offered him no consolation. His account of this incident is fully explained later in this chapter. Caruth (1996, p. 11) defines

trauma as the defining image of the soldier in our time, characterised by a ‘response to the events [that] occurs in the often delayed uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena’. She challenges the possibility that history can be straightforwardly referential (based on simple models of experience and reference that it has an epistemological purchase on fact and is therefore the truth) but working with narratives has its pitfalls, in the de-contextualised nature of the narrative, and reliance on memory.

Khilnani in his reflections on the idea of India comments on how other cultures have recurrently used India as a foil to define their own historical moments (1997, p. 197). He points out that this last deed of the British Raj, the supposedly ‘rational slicing of the land on the basis of religion’ (1997, p. 199), is comprehensible only in terms of an understanding of the Indian people as backward and superstitious. The borders that were so hastily created were based on the population density of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus living in contiguous areas in the Punjab. These figures were drawn from the 1941 census, a technological tool that reflected the ‘more visibly and exclusively racial’ (Anderson 2006, p. 164) and religiously determinate categories the British used to quantify and thereby manage the empire. So by 1946, as Auden writes in his poem ‘Partition’ (cited in Khan 2007, p. 49), the census and the maps were ‘most certainly inaccurate’. Added to this was what Khilnani’s captures as the ‘weary, fearful, honest pathos’ (1997, p. 201) of Cyril Radcliffe, the man entrusted with creating this new cartography of South Asia, a jurist who knew nothing about India and would never return there.

The aftermath of Partition was a period when millions of ordinary people were pushed into new and, in many ways, strange countries and acquired new identities. Nandy writes that the 1940s introduced into South Asian public life a new actor, the refugee – the uprooted, partly deracinated, embittered victim who knew suffering and had seen the transience of social ties, betrayal of friends, and the worst of human depravity, his own and that of others (2005). Historically mass movements of people had not happened on the scale that they did in India in 1947 and yet this internal migration was unanticipated. According to Talbot, ‘Migration was the single most important agony which attended the transfer of power’ (1995, p. 47). Despite its significance Pandey (1992) noted more than two decades ago that Partition was not talked about in mainstream histories of the subcontinent. Rather this silence and elision

inscribed Partition as an inexplicable event, an aberration in the narrative of modern 'India', the price paid for national independence. Since then, however, there has been a spate of scholarly work on recovering the untold stories of Partition. These stories have been recovered from interviewing ordinary people and in particular women, who have been included most notably by feminist historians such as Butalia in her ground breaking work (1998). Kamra (2002, p. 5) also notes that Pandey was amongst the few historians addressing the paucity in the 'scholarship on Partition as a lived moment'. As Butalia asserts, it is essential for any understanding of the Partition experience to listen to how people remember it and to be mindful that these stories are not 'pure' or 'unmediated' but influenced by memory, nostalgia and trauma (1998, p. 11). However, since Kamra made this comment significant contributions have been made by researchers such as Das (2007), Talbot and Singh (2006), Datta (2012) and Ahmed (2014) to name a few. In addition, new digital archives, such as the 1947 Partition Archive, have been created in an effort to capture people telling their stories on film. As argued by Talbot (2009, p. 18), these stories 'challenge state and community constructions of Partition' and thereby that all communities were involved. However, one perspective has been little addressed, which is that of the British soldier, duty bound to maintain an 'unbiased' objectivity yet complicit in those terrible events, charged with protecting rioting communities from each other, while simultaneously coming to the realisation that they too would have to leave India. For officers in Gurkha regiments an additional anxiety was whether their Nepali soldiers would elect to stay with the British Army or go to the Indian Army. They were operating under the double sword of Damocles.

Leslie's observations provide a ground level perspective of a time whose incredible violence found everyone, including the new governments of India and Pakistan, unprepared for the sheer magnitude of its brutality (Butalia 1998, p. 3). Pandey (2001) argues too that the violence was not a sudden lapse into chaos, that Partition could not be distanced from violence – it did not 'accompany Partition', it was violent. Leslie's particular story, like many others, is a view into a much bigger historical drama. In addition, witnessing an event of this nature is in a sense the first step in embalming it in a narrative that is acceptable to the teller. When talking about Partition Leslie assumes the non-reflexive authorial voice of 'I was there so I know what happened'. His tone suggests that his purchase on this reality is complete but what it lacks is a broader

political context. Leslie draws on a set of incidents that are described repeatedly in unvarying terms. Remembering Partition more than 65 years after the fact is a process that has accumulated a layer of emotion and guilt to settle over the original experience. Despite being unable to fully articulate these feelings does not mean that he does not understand them. Leslie was a 22-year old soldier and as such was not afforded a wider context for the military action in which he was involved. It was only after Partition that he began to understand the political dimensions of this as a major event of the twentieth century. At the same time the entire British Raj was collapsing, and so were identities forged by old paradigms of power and control. Decades later, Leslie's stories still reflect this ambiguous attitude towards 'the Indians', a negative paternalistic tone combined with a real fear and abiding mistrust. Leslie (Interview 2005) often referred to the memories as having been burned into his memory as an excoriating reminder of the trauma and confusion of events: *'There were painful incidents, it was so long ago I don't know how to recall some of them. On the other hand some things are burned into my memory.'*

Some of his memories are easily accessed and related in a practised narrative but what he can not remember are the periods between incidents that perhaps are too painful to be recalled, yet others that are horrific float up with a 'just now' clarity. He does not provide a seamless link between one event and the next but rather his narrative focuses on several particularly frightening memorable encounters.

Leslie's account of his experiences of Partition displays, as expected, the influences of his schooling and upbringing in India. His voice was formed in the time of the late Raj, and exposed the fragility of colonial control and the fraught relationships that existed between the players caught in the dysfunctional power relationship between the British, their colonised subjects and those trapped in the interstice; the long-term mixed and European populations that resulted from this union. The unease felt by those in this triangle is expressed most eloquently by Bhabha as 'the deep psychic uncertainty of the colonial relation itself' (1994, p. 63). When listening to Leslie first talk about growing up in India and then his army time I thought of the *habitus* Bourdieu (1977, p. 86) identifies as the embodiment of both individual and collective experiences. In this case, of the end of colonialism in India lived through corporeal memories from a 'past which survives' (Bourdieu 1977, p. 82) and that sometimes intrudes into the present. Collingham's research on the physical experience of the British Raj references the

concept of *habitus* as acting like a social bridge ‘between personality and social structure’ (2001, pp. 2-3). For Leslie Nixon and Rob May this corporeal ‘memory’ was often invoked through remembering leave from the army: the smell of cordite on *shikar*, ‘the sweetness of strawberries at Ooty’ (Robert May Interview 2006) or the ‘cool smell of wet *khus* mats’ (Leslie Nixon Interview 2006).

Neutrality

In the telling, Leslie (Leslie Nixon Interview 2005) always positions himself tangentially, as a ‘neutral participant, something like a UN peace-keeper’. What is of significance is that this position was only neutral in a very limited sense, in that Leslie was not Indian or a Hindu or a Muslim. Also, as an observer, he was not objective but very much a participant in the action. His perception is further complicated by his sense of himself as a soldier, following orders, ‘unlike an historian who has never seen a bullet fired in anger’, and who had the responsibility of making life and death decisions in the process of transporting and protecting thousands of uprooted people in hostile territory. Fundamentally, the basics of Leslie’s story remain coherent; perhaps he will never be prepared to be more self-reflexive about his role and that of the British government in the events of Partition. Perhaps he fears that changing part of the narrative would necessitate rearranging the entire account, accompanied by other unwelcome memories likely to arise.

After leaving school at 19, Leslie joined the Air Force, training in South Africa. When he learnt while traveling to Europe on a tramp ship that the Second World War was over, he decided to join the Worcester Rifles. He then retrained in Britain and India before being assigned in 1945 to a frontier regiment, the 1st K.G.Vs.O.Gurkha Rifles based in Dharamsala.



Lieutenant L.G.B. Nixon 1st K.G.V's.O Gurkha Rifles, The Malaun Regiment

Leslie brought with him to Australia his collection of *kukris* (fighting knives), clothing and books about the armies of India, movement orders and photos of his time serving in the north of India. He is still very proud of his connection with the Gurkha Rifles. Before I went to on a trip (2012) to the Subathu Gurkha Training Centre in Himachal Pradesh, Leslie specifically requested I buy him a beret with the crossed *kukris* on it. He considered the Gurkhas (whose ancestors came from what is now Nepal) as superior to 'the Indians' and often commented admiringly on their 'do or die' mentality, blind loyalty and bravery. In part this attitude was certainly influenced by British Army rhetoric about the Gurkhas. However, the unflattering comparisons he makes between 'them' and 'the Indians' reflect his conflicted and unresolved emotions about the nature of his situation in India at this time; these ambivalent feelings were clearly exacerbated by the terrible experiences of Partition.





Uncaptioned

Leslie's Gurkha kit on charpoy (string bed). (Deborah Nixon)

The concept of the Gurkhas as 'warrior gentlemen' explored by Caplan (1995b) suggests that the British identified a level of congruence in soldierly characteristics or martiality as existing between themselves and the Gurkhas. This helped to cement the relationship between them but, in spite of the much vaunted trustworthiness and soldierly characteristics of the Gurkhas, the latter were never given command of regiments. In an anecdote about their toughness, Leslie recounted that if a group of Gurkhas was commanded to take a position they would literally keep fighting even when completely routed unless they were commanded to stop; in other words, they were unable to think for themselves. Leslie has no idea of Gurkha cultural practices apart from the *kukri* knife initiations and his admiration for their ability is tinged by paternalism. Beyond the ritual confines of *Dussehra* there was little fraternisation between non-commissioned soldiers and officers and Leslie says the Gurkhas preferred to stay amongst their own. Colonel (Retd) John Cross (Cross Interview, 2007) commented that poverty is a great motivator and that was why the Gurkhas were willing to be enlisted into the British Indian Army.

In his book about the Gurkhas, Northey (1937) remarks that, apart from physical differences, it is humour and '... his frank open character [that] permits an intimacy in his intercourse with Europeans that is seldom achieved by other native races in the east' (1937, p. 97). And yet, the Gurkhas were subject to stereotyping and derogatory myth-making as much as other groups under colonial rule.

I think this is actually written in a book but it was a comment by one of the colonels of one of the Gurkha regiments – see the Gurhks didn't look dissimilar to

the Japs and we used to pay them a bounty per Jap head they brought back. You know, if they came across a bunch of Japs swimming in the river or something like that, they'd wait until they got out and when they came out the Gurkhs would attack them, take the heads off and take the heads back, because the colonel paid them 50 rupees a head (or 5 rupees a head, or something). And that particular story (it might be an anecdote, I don't know), the colonel picked up this head and said "That's my subedar major!" (Leslie Nixon Interview 2005)

In reading some of the army literature (MacMunn 1911; Petre 1925) about the Gurkhas Leslie brought with him from India it is clear that he internalised an essentialised notion of the Gurkhas' history, culture and identity. Caplan argues that it is from sources such as those written and circulated by the military that the idea of the fearless Gurkha was constructed as, 'a creation both of the military ambience in which he assumes his persona, and of the military authors who represent him' (1995b, p. 12). Even the term Gurkha was developed as a convenient umbrella term for the soldiers recruited from Nepal; 'the word "Gurkha" is an English word not used by either the Indians or the Nepalis, the former use Gorkha and the latter use neither but would use "Gorkha" as a spelling' (J. Cross 2006, pers. comm., 26 April). It is difficult to disabuse Leslie of his attitude towards the Gurkhas from Nepal, particularly with respect to the martial characteristics that were assigned to them through the literature of the day. Leslie's general inability to offer a more reflexive account of this time indicates an investment in a narrative step locked in his mind so that if one piece is adjusted the others may well crumble. It is within this framework that he refers to Gurkha soldiers recruited from Nepal in the following accounts.

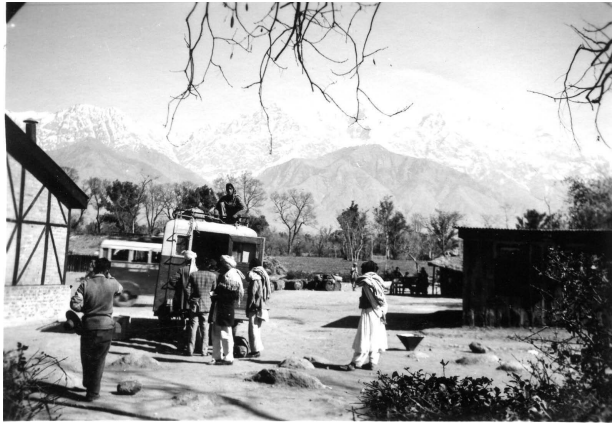
7.2 Partition Fires



Uncaptioned

First Gurkha mess Dharamsala 1946-a composite of two coloured positives (Deborah Nixon)

Dharamsala, where the First Gurkhas were ‘homed’ in 1947 is in the beautiful, mountainous district of Himachal Pradesh made famous by the presence of the Tibetan community in exile and the Dalai Llama. However, in 1947 communications and transport throughout this area, then known as the district of Kangra, would have been difficult. The Partition of this area was also bound to be controversial as it contained districts ceded to India but with majority populations of Muslims. For example, Radcliffe awarded ‘three of the four *tehsils* of the Muslim majority Gurdaspur district ... as well as the Hindu majority *tehsil* of Pathankot – to eastern Punjab’ (Ahmed 1999, p. 154). Thus, Muslims in the north of (what is now) Himachal Pradesh who wanted to go to Pakistan had to make their way down to Dharamsala to be evacuated by train or truck towards Pathankot and then to the border. It was a terrible task for those responsible for the transportation of refugees and an even more heartrending and tragic experience for those forced to leave their homes behind.



Nagrota

Leslie cannot now recall exactly how long he was involved in this process but he thinks it may have been about four months from August to November. However, even after the intervening years, his sense of responsibility and feelings of guilt around certain actions that he had to carry out remain discernable. As a Lieutenant, Leslie's duties included escorting refugees from a refugee camp at Yol south of Dharamsala to a railway siding at Nagrota where refugees were assembled and then put on trains and transported along a relatively short but dangerous railway route to Pathankot. The camp at Yol had been converted from an Italian prisoner of war camp during World War II to a refugee camp. By the time refugees arrived at Yol many were wounded and were treated in the camp hospital, which was staffed by Canadian missionary nuns. Leslie recalls that on one occasion they were trapped in the camp by snipers for nearly two weeks and that they had to live off bully beef.

Muslim refugees by bus and, if they were fit enough, would be taken to Nagrota and put on a train to Pathankot. If they were wounded they were taken to an Italian POW camp. Sometimes they were cut with swords. Canadian missionary nurses would treat them. There was a hospital there, of course set up for the Italian POW's. So they just moved into the hospital and they were doing amputations and stitching people up. The main casualties weren't caused by gunshot, it was sores and wounds that they'd had inflicted on them. In some cases gangrene was setting in.

At Pathankot the First (Gurkha Rifles) would hand the refugees over to the second (Gurkha Rifles) on trains to Amritsar, where they were often attacked by Hindus, and take them out of India. Or we put them on trucks and we'd bring them on by

road. Those were the two ways we took them; by truck and by train. We didn't take that many by truck. (Leslie Nixon Interview 2005)

The violence came as a shock to Leslie, as it did to many, who had naively imagined a seamless handing over followed by the peaceful process of migration. To him, and the other British soldiers, the 'Indians' were a homogeneous group whose religious beliefs were secondary characteristics. His complete lack of perception of the deep emotions raised by this event is noteworthy since he was no newcomer to India; rather his family had lived there for over three generations. In addition, the attitude that Partition was going to be an uncomplicated process of migration further illustrates his ambiguous relationship, as a domiciled European, towards the meaning of place and home. Caplan (1997) comments that some Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans felt a profound sense of disconnection from their local environment, accompanied by a feeling that home was elsewhere. This disconnection could be traced to some extent to the physical transience of the railway colonies and the removal of children at such a young age to boarding school. This may have been why Leslie's account expresses a distance from events as if he was looking on at the violence.

Headquarters for the First Gurkha regiment was high up in the Kangra valley overlooking the plains so soldiers based there looked down on the fires that began at midnight on an August night in 1947. Leslie is hazy about the date but he recalls that when Partition was officially announced the situation became literally incendiary as neighbours and villagers torched each other's homes. Below is Leslie's account of how he saw the events unfold.

We knew Partition was coming. But it was confusing. I don't know whether Partition started at midnight or on a particular date, we were isolated and had no newspapers or radios... however the first thing that comes to my mind is the flames up the Kangra Valley. The Indians really went berserk and they set fire to all the Muslims and started killing them and all the rest and the Muslims were prepared to slaughter the Indians on the other side of the border. But I had no idea it was going to be so violent, that there'd be killing. It never entered my head that that would happen! I knew that, when Partition came, the Muslims would either go to what was Pakistan or go to what is now Bangladesh but I had no idea that the feelings would be so dreadful and that so much killing would go on! I

thought it would just be like "You're a Muslim, you're going to have Pakistan. You're a Hindu, you're going to have Hindustan or India" and that was that.

The killing was taking place up in the Punjab and up in the hills around us, where we were getting the refugees in to camps and then taking them down to the trains. And of course, they tried to kill us, which didn't enamour me to the Indians much. On our side, the Hindus were slaughtering the Muslims. On Pakistan's side, the Muslims were slaughtering the Hindus. And, of course, when these people came across they'd tell everybody on the other side how they were being slaughtered, you see, so it just triggered off more and more killing (Leslie Nixon Interview 2005).

The document below was discovered amongst Leslie's papers. The orders capture the sense of immediacy and tension at that time. Leslie is the person referred to as 'young Nick'.

Dear Dickie,
The situation is now very serious in this area. I am afraid we have got to pinch six of your trucks to collect tps from PARAMPUR. Please send young Nick with a section ^{of 6 trucks} to PARAMPUR immediately.
Les
P.S. This IS a disturbed area and you may act accordingly.
P.T.O.

Hannington is evacuating 1000 Refugees from Jawala mukhi and has been told to get six of your trucks. Tell him he must wait until we have got these tps from Palampur.
P.P.S
There's a hell of a fire in NABROTA. Tell NICK to keep his trucks well under control. He may meet trouble on the way.

Dear Dicky,

The situation is now very serious in this area I am afraid we have got to pinch six of your trucks to collect tps from Palampur. Please send young Nick with a section escort and 6 trucks to Palampur immediately. Fred

P.S. This IS a disturbed area and you may act accordingly.

Harrington is evacuating 1,000 refugees from Jawalamukli and has been told to get six of your trucks. Tell him he must wait until we have got these tps from Palampur.

P.P.S.

There's a hell of a fire in Nagrota. Tell Nick to keep his trucks well under control, he may meet trouble on the way.

Nick – old chum, the trucks have been tanked up. Leave Sub.Gangamani in charge – tell him to *milap* with me here this evening. There probably won't be any outside patrolling tonight.

Fred

These extracts from Leslie's operation orders although understated, clearly articulate the intensity of the situation.

Copy No 2

SECRET

IGRC OPERATION ORDER

No 4 of 1947

(Ref map sheets No's 52 D/SE,53 A/NE)

INFORMATION

1. Communal feeling is high in the Hamirpur Tehsil and some atrocities have been committed.

INTENTION

2. pl (composite D&E Co43) will move to Hamirpur on 22 Aug. to act in aid to the civil power when required

METHOD

3. Move by road in civilian TpT to Thural (53A/NE 8 213)

Leslie remembered random or opportunistic attacks in the holding camp and on the journey from Yol to Nagrota and from Nagrota to Pathankot, depending on whether they were taking the refugees by road or rail.

I remember, on one occasion we were bringing refugees down and halfway down – this is by road – there was a fort and we were organising at the fort to take them on down south. A couple of things happened there. One was that we knew there were snipers around. They were trying to pop us off all the time and they'd pop the Muslim refugees too. And in this fort there was a big pond. We overnighted there because I know these two Muslims were killed here. They'd gone out to a jhil, a tank. We told them not to do it we said "For God's sake don't go out and expose yourselves"; anyway, two of these blokes took their little prayer mat and put the prayer mats down and started praying to Allah and bang, bang they were knocked over. And I don't even know what we did with the bodies, to tell you the truth; I just can't remember.

Another time we were up there when one night, we were in the camp and there were a lot of swallows hanging around – I remember that. And we could hear this noise like jackals. Jackals have a maniacal laugh, a little like a kookaburra, ... a human maniacal laugh. Anyway, I had a young officer with me and suddenly ... well, I thought they were jackals starting up, screaming and maniacal laughter. It went on for a while and he said "Oo, what's that?" I said "I don't worry about that, that's bloody jackals". Anyway it put the wind up him very much because he didn't know what it was. And I found out the next day that it wasn't jackals, they were Indians being put to the sword in a village where we could hear them; and they were screaming and carrying on but they just sounded like jackals. Just sheer terror and screaming, you know? That's all you could hear.

Then the next day we'd load the refugees into the trucks and we'd get them to the town where we'd hand them over to the Second Gurkha Rifles. Now the Second would take them on and when they took them on to Amritsar where there were much bigger attacks, there were a lot of casualties, on the main train.

After Amritsar sometimes the refugees were taken by road. Well, the column would be miles long and these people would be getting attacked as they were

going along the road. So you're getting refugees going out of the camps here and bringing in the dead and wounded and putting them back in the camp. That's how bad it was (Leslie Nixon Interview 2005).

Gurkhas recruited from Nepal and working for the British, although of Hindu religion, likewise saw the situation as occurring outside their sphere of interest. Corporal Rana from the 2/2 Gurkha Rifles reflects on what the situation meant to him.

In 1946 and 1947 Hindus and Muslims killed each other. It was like war. It was dangerous to drive around then and the situation was tense. We went about armed. But they were killing each other so it was not my business. We heard that Jawaharlal Nehru let the country be Pakistan and India to keep the population balanced. (Rana cited in Cross & Gurung (eds) 2002, p. 172)

At the announcement of Partition in June 1947, Tucker (1950, p. 298) comments that amongst Muslim, Sikh and Hindu officers the attitude was 'manifestly unfriendly Hindu to Muslim' and Anglo-Indians were bewildered but 'Gurkhas took no interest'. He takes on a paternalistic tone to explain this by inferring that the concept of Partition was too confusing for the Gurkhas to understand. But it was actually confusing and difficult for everybody, civilian or military, to comprehend the repercussions of the decision to divide India.

The army was warned in the turbulence before Partition (as evidenced in the document below) that in the Punjab some people were pretending to be Nihang Sikhs so as to be able to carry weapons, thereby adding to the proliferation of armed and potentially dangerous groups who could later threaten refugees. Gurkhas also observed that Sikhs, in particular seemed to be more involved in the killings in some areas in the Punjab than other groups. The kinds of unconfirmed and irrational rumours, referred to in the document below, added considerably to the stresses and trauma of the time.

Copy of HQ Lahore Area letter No: 1042 GI dated 28 Apr'47 Fwdd by HQ Jullunder Sub area under their letter no.426 dated * May '47

Subject :- POLITICAL BODIES

The Punjab CID has reported that the number of NIHANG SIKHS has recently increased considerably. This is thought to be due to spurious conversions

being carried out with the object to carry arms: as NIHANG SIKHS are allowed to carry the 'NISHAN SAHIB' (or spear) in areas which are not classified as "dangerously disturbed" areas under the Punjab Public Safety Ordinance.

This sect is primarily a body of militant missionaries but which in normal times is not politically conscious. The obvious deduction from the information in para 1, however, is that they might be used as a military body in the event of a major clash with the Muslim community.

The account below is from a soldier from the second Gurkha Rifles while they were in Hyderabad, later to be stationed in the north. It was to this regiment that Leslie delivered refugees for the onward journeys to Pakistan, where unfortunately the violence did not cease. There is again a mixture of horror at the atrocities and a desire to stand outside, to be positioned at a distance from it. There is an unintentional irony in the comments below from Corporal Limbu of the 2/2 Gurkha Rifles regarding the role of the Gurkhas and the beheading of three Muslims even as he asserts his indifference to the killings.

There was much communal violence, which we had to try and prevent but we were not allowed to use rifles. The Muslims had arrows and were persecuting the Hindus. In one brawl I cut off the heads three Muslims and we had no trouble at all after that. They (Muslims) were afraid of us, our kukris and our rifles. The Hindus came to us in streams, like a column of ants, trying to grasp us, hang from us and pay us obeisance so happy were they to be relieved of persecution. "Take us to Nepal," they implored. We Gurkhas were a peace-keeping army.

From there (Hyderabad) we went to the Lahore area after it had become Pakistan. Hindus and Muslims massacred one another with atrocious cruelty. There was no one to look after affairs, no one to collect countless dead bodies and the corpses rotted with such a stench that none of us had any appetite left. There were uncountable deaths. We escorted [Muslim] refugees from Amritsar to Lahore and [Hindu] refugees from Lahore to Amritsar. The worst killers were the Sikhs: they were the most dangerous of all, killing any non-Sikh they met. They took notice of nobody but themselves and observed no laws but their own. They had to be kept under observation. If it had not been for the Gurkhas, they would have taken the whole country over. India owes that not happening to us Gurkhas. How can

India and Pakistan work together after such happenings? I was young then and none of that affected me personally. (Limbu cited in Cross & Gurung (eds) 2002, p. 171)

Trains

Many scholars and novelists have written of the horror that trains full of dead and wounded refugees evoked when they arrived at stations in the newly created nations. It was as if the rioters on both sides of the border were sending messages to each other that could only be conveyed via the medium of corpses. Leslie recalls one such incident:

In some of those places like near Amritsar, just near the border, I heard that one of these trains pulled in and one of the Gurkh officers handling the transfers, getting them across the border, went along the train saying “Everybody out! Everybody out!” and there wasn’t a bloody movement. There wasn’t a person alive on the train – not one person alive! (Leslie Nixon Interview 2005)

On occasion, so many rioters beset the Gurkhas that they ran out of ammunition:

Sometimes the Gurkhas fired the machine guns until the barrels were red hot and they couldn’t fire them anymore. If you can imagine this if you were small enough to be on an ants’ nest, the ants are coming at you and you had a machine gun but you couldn’t stop them, they just kept coming and coming and coming –thousands of them! Came from everywhere on both sides of the train, front and back.

The railway line that ran between Nagrota and Pathankot was small gauge and the trains were slow so the refugees on the trains were particularly vulnerable to opportunistic attacks and ambushes. Attacks on trains were not uncommon and were sometimes carried out with ‘a military precision’ (Talbot & Singh 1999, p. 208) around Amritsar and Lahore. Leslie describes an ambush by the ‘Indian Army’ (probably Indian soldiers in the army though this is not clear) on a train full of refugees, which had come to a halt. He had to investigate what was going on and, although no one was injured or killed during this stand off, it was nonetheless a terrifying encounter:

Well I wondered why the engine driver kept blowing the whistle all the time. So I went up the front to find out why the train wasn’t moving and he said they’d pulled up the ties. They hadn’t taken the rails away but they’d taken them off the ties so that the train couldn’t go along. They said “Oh, there’s a little command

post over there” and I went over there with some of my Gurkhs and the soldiers were all lying in firing positions, you know, facing us. I thought, this is going to be pleasant! Anyway, I said “Where’s your commander?” and they pointed him out and I said “What have you been doing?” and he said “Lying down for the Koran”. I said “Don’t just stand there” and he looked a bit reluctant and I said “I’ll tell you what; if you don’t stand your men down, the rest of the regiment is coming down the road and we’ll kill every one of you”. That frightened him so he stood them down. Nobody was following; they could have put a bullet into me and nothing would have happened. But we made them put the ties back on and then took the train on in to the town. This was the Indian Army! (Leslie Nixon Interview 2005).

The refugee trains were very crowded as people were crammed into tiny carriages and, against their escort’s advice, raised the windows to let in air. The summer in 1947 was particularly hot and the rains were late so the trains were suffocatingly hot with the windows closed, but opening them was lethal. Leslie’s description invokes the immediacy and terror of the trains:

But the refugees still would leave the windows open. Coming down on the train sometimes the refugees were skewered because, they wouldn’t put the windows down. The windows were open and they’d wait for an opportunity to attack. They’d have long bamboos, much bigger than you get here, which were sharpened at one end and hardened in a fire and they’d just charge the train and push bamboos through, just like skewering meat on a kebab, all these people. The same thing happened when the train was moving...the train was slow it used to wind in and out and the jungle was quite thick it came right up to the train... people could wait until the engine went passed and come onto the train in the middle somewhere ... Because we weren’t in with the refugees - we were protecting them from the front and the back - I didn’t know about it until we actually got there, that the woman had been killed on this train. I don’t know what happened, but a bloke took a shotgun and pulled both the triggers and blew her face off. She was a young girl - about 18 years old, I suppose. Well, we handed the refugees over. And the Indians used to snipe at us in that refugee camp, too, and try to kill us. (Leslie Nixon Interview 2005)

One of the more traumatic incidents that Leslie recalls involved a group of women and children in a village that had been abandoned by its men folk who may have been fighting somewhere else or who had been killed. It is something he cannot expunge from his memory and, though he ostensibly blames ‘the Indians’ because ‘they deceived us into it, the feelings of guilt and responsibility have never left him. Unfortunately the action was so chaotic the Gurkhas were called away to another incident before they could rescue the remaining women and children who had jumped into the village well in fright. His voice captures the chaos and tragedy in the following passage:

It was a terrible thing! I was given an order to go to a particular place. I went to the village and had two Gurkhs with me, and the people in the village were all Hindus and they said that a bunch of Muslims was going to attack and kill them and they were just over that hill there. And they would have out-numbered us, I guess, but we had machine-guns and it was frightful!

.... When we got there the people could see us armed to the teeth but there weren't any men; they were all women and children and they were throwing themselves into this big well. And then I got some of the villagers down from where they were and I said "Take your dhotis off and try and get these people out" and then I was given an order to move somewhere else. You can't do everything! So I said "You've got to get these people out". I don't know whether they were Muslims or not; if they were Muslims, they were only women and children anyway. There were about 15 to 20 people in the well, some had already drowned; little babies and women. I don't know why, they seemed to lose their strength. They might have been there for too long because sometimes when we got them nearly to the top, sometimes they'd let go and fall back to the bottom. We had to keep going with our patrols because we were getting calls from all over the place from people being attacked.... Things were going on all over the place. You'd get an order to go somewhere else and ... "What will I do?" You know, all these people in this well! We organised the local people to get them out, there was no danger to people. Because there wasn't, there wasn't a gun between the whole lot of them - all women and children. (Leslie Nixon Interview 2005)

The horror of women and children preferring death by drowning to other more horrible forms of death or dishonour of themselves or their religion occurs frequently in

the literature (Talbot & Singh 1999, p. 64). Butalia recounts how in a Sikh village, Thoa Khalsa, near Rawalpindi in Pakistan some ninety women threw themselves into a well ‘in order to preserve the “sanctity” and purity of their religion, and to avoid conversion’ (2000, p. 183). The incident described above was particularly harrowing because of the age and gender of the victims. Despite the fact that Leslie knew he and his men had received misinformation, he obviously still feels that he was somehow complicit in their deaths and is unable to forgive himself. These are the images and sounds that return to him. This is symptomatic of the intrusive nature of traumatic memories that can arise when one is most vulnerable. I was wary of pushing him to reflect any further on this incident but he has brought it up recently several times. As old age weakens his memory he seems to want me to remember it for him. What appear to be isolated incidents – the women in the well, the dead girl on the train, being sniped at, hearing the cries of people being killed – are brightly lit punctuation points that stand out in four months of killing, uncertainty and fear.

Railway reports memo 12.12.1947 Government Minutes of railways – Eastern Punjab Railways

There were no trains programmed to run on 12th/ 13th December. The movement of Muslim refugees is almost completed. (note in margin ‘Good’)

1.1.1948 Karnal to Pakistan 6,800 refugees.

17.1.1948 no trains ran the week ending 16th January (MB1-D276)

Eventually the violence began to abate and Leslie thought that by about November 1947 it had lessened in the region. This time also coincided with the end of his commission and his friend Rob May was able to persuade him to leave India and start a new life in Western Australia. Rob May told him they would go crocodile hunting and that there would be opportunities in Australia.

For Leslie, India’s independence marked the end of his life there; the bloodshed and violence that he witnessed confirmed him in his decision to abandon the place that had been home to his family for so many generations. The experience of Partition also strengthened in him the feeling that Indians were not responsible or disciplined enough to govern themselves. This is reflected in his comments below:

I was disappointed because it seemed to me that, having the Brits there was peace, you know? There was good government and that sort of stuff and when you look at the chaos before the Brits came, you know, these warring chiefs and things like that, and I thought “When we leave, maybe they’ll break up, India will break up into these warring parties”. As it turns out, it did break up into three parts, you know, to Pakistan and Bangladesh and then north, where they’re trying to get independence for the Nagas and Kashmir. And I really thought that that would affect the type of life that the Indians had lived until Partition. When I was there before Partition and as a child, there were landowners that exploited peasants. This was slavery in its own way. You took a loan out and couldn’t pay it so you were virtually indebted to the bloke that lent you the money - forever. So, in that respect, I was feeling for the Indians that were going to be left behind and yet some of them said they were sorry Partition had come but I think, on the whole ... people wanted to be free, you know, which I can understand. I was more worried and concerned about the poor peasants. (Leslie Nixon Interview 2005)

Despite his original conviction that his position was neutral he recently told me (Leslie Nixon 2013, pers. comm.) that British officers had been targeted in attacks in order to undermine the security of the Gurkha escorts and that this has left him with an abiding sense of fear of ever returning to India, commenting that, ‘they might remember me’.

Going doolali

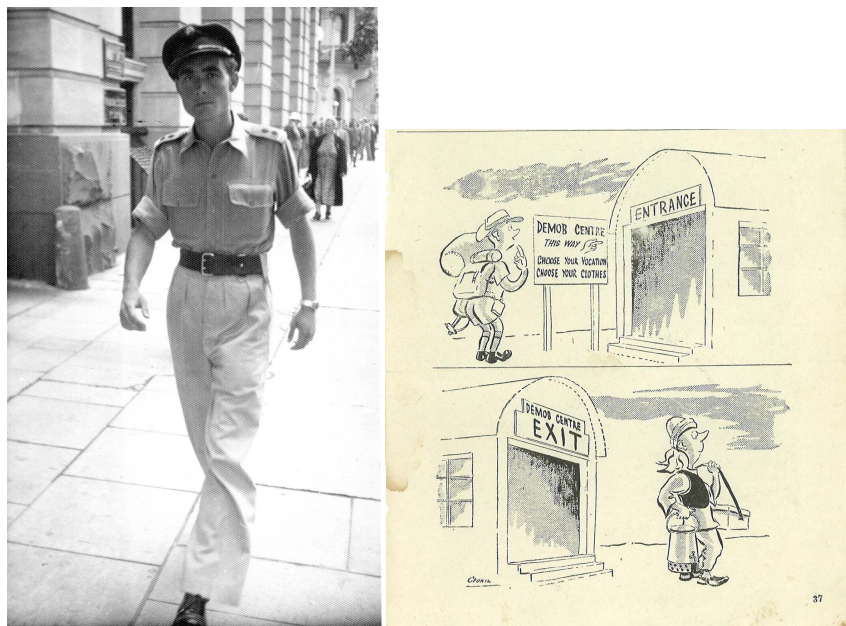


The final anecdote Leslie recounts about his service in India occurred in a military camp at Deolali. This place is connected etiologically to the term ‘*doolally tap*’, ‘going doolali’ or going mad (Martin 2006, pp. 94-95). Deolali, established in the late 1860s by the British, was a military acclimation and disembarkation centre and hospital for British soldiers; it is located north of Bombay. However, by January 1948 when Leslie arrived in the camp he was probably amongst the last of the troops waiting to leave India. I rang him (Leslie Nixon 2013) to confirm the details of an incident he once

described to me of what happened to him there. He told the story again with flourishes of fright and humour. This is how he told it:

I was the only one in my tent it was raining and cold I don't know what woke me but I saw the tent flap fold back. I used to sleep with a kukri under my pillow. I yelled and he took off. I knew he had a knife he was a dacoit naked except for a langoti a kind of cloth and he ... they cover themselves in grease so you can't grab them, if they get close enough they'll put a knife in you. If he was close enough he would have had a go at me.

He then rounded off the story by telling me that, once on board the ships, British officers leaving India for good opened a bottle of whiskey throwing the cork overboard to indicate they were going to finish the bottle.



Uncaptioned

Leslie in Perth in 1948. The cartoon was tucked into Leslie's album. Perhaps he was pondering his own future when he saw this (Deborah Nixon).

After Partition Leslie did not see his father and at least one of his brothers ever again. The Nixon family split up and migrated to the UK, North America and Africa. Perhaps the periodic long separations of his childhood prepared him for this severing of ties. It was only in his old age that he resumed regular contact with his remaining brother Norman Nixon. Leslie came to Australia, a 'new' frontier, and became a geologist because he would not enter a trade that Indians would occupy. Yet whenever

we have sat talking together, it has been obvious that India is the unseen presence in his life, a spectre that haunts his imagination and his house, with Gurkha artefacts and documents that he has never been able to throw away. Several times when I have rung him to talk about Partition he asked me if I knew what jackals sounded like. At first I thought it was an obscure question until he told me his account of hearing refugees being 'put to the sword'; it was a chilling thought. His life has been unexpectedly marred by what he saw just as his friend Rob May's was. Rob May sent me documents from his psychologist, after our interview, documenting his trauma. His hyper vigilance, alcohol consumption and nightmares all relate back to his time serving with the 10th Gurkhas in Malaya. In 2010 he told me he still slept with a *kukri* under his pillow, this revealed how deeply the trauma still lived in him. I was moved that he had confided in me with this information. Unfortunately Rob May died in 2012.

When asked why he chose to migrate to Australia rather than Britain Leslie dismissed the idea of moving to Britain, the place that had for so long occupied his sense of national identity, because it was 'too cold'.

'You could draw a circle from London to where you were and swing a circle around and if you could ask for repatriation to the place you wanted to go to if the arc enclosed your destination you could go there.'

I wonder too if he did not choose Australia for its distance from India, from people he knew, even from his family, for an opportunity to re establish himself and to find some 'normality' again.

Chapter 8 – Conclusions

‘No matter how precautionary and punctilious the photographer.... the lens’s inability to discriminate will ensure a substrate or margin of excess. However hard the photographer tries to *exclude* the camera lens always *includes*’ (Pinney 2008a, p. 4)



Uncaptioned

This curious photograph inadvertently references modernity by including the telegraph pole in the background. The telegraph pole signals that the figures are probably standing near a railway line; trains were dependent on the telegraph for switching commands. The gravel road suggests a driveway; it could have been Bundy’s house in Jabalpur. The man represents a tiger and this dancer would have taken part in the Muslim festival of Muharram. Grieve (1910, p. 474), describing the ritual, suggests that they were startling figures, ‘dancing, raging even killing people’! Leslie says he remembers watching these dancers and that they were frightening and at the same time exciting; then, like young

children do, he said he copied the movements in his room. He added that the tiger man killed a goat with a knife and then shared the meat with the crowd. The two little boys are dressed in European clothing and appear to be holding fob chains. This image prompted Leslie to go on to tell me that tigers were common around Jabalpur so that the postman had to run between houses shaking a stick festooned with small bells to frighten away animals as he delivered the mail.

What has been

I have hesitated to use the phrase ‘gap in the literature or research’ in relation to this thesis. I contend that very rarely is there an actual lacuna possessed of such defined boundaries that it could be filled by a thesis. What I have done is to demonstrate that a more nuanced and deeper understanding of how communities in small towns lived in the late Raj can be reached through the use of vernacular photographs. Vernacular photographs produced by this group of people have received little attention, thereby overlooking a valuable archive that reflects small town life from the main body of research about the quotidian of colonial India. I have found little or no mention in the research of photography practised at an everyday level by long-term ‘settlers’ in India. The value of this thesis is that it engages with this aspect of living during colonial rule, thereby opening up a path to further study in this area.

The focus of my thesis has been on an analysis of a family narrative that found expression in technologies of modernity, particularly that of the railways and photography. My work has woven biographical information with ethnography to create a narrative that is derived from texts, semi-structured photo elicitation interviews and photographs (taken between 1910 and 1947) of the Anglo-Indian and domiciled European communities who lived along the Great Indian Peninsula Railway line up to and including Partition. The photographs introduced elements of serendipity into the research, they set the time parameters and they evoked unexpected memories and drew out connections between people. As in any research there were awakenings as I worked through to find a proper expression to pull together the family narrative against the broader heavily contested historical milieu of the time. Through the use of vernacular photographs, unforeseen outcomes of an experiment I conducted early in the research when interviewing Leslie, I found a methodological path that was both intriguing and unique. During the interviews he was reluctant to admit to any social interaction with

Anglo-Indians or Indian communities and emphasised his social distance from them. Going through family photos taken in India prior to 1947 I was struck by the dissonances in the way Leslie presented his story and what was evidenced in the photos, finding that there was a significant and constant amount of contact with Anglo-Indians in all spheres of social life, from school life and *shikar* (hunting trips) to the existence of an adopted European -Indian 'brother' Hussein Amir (Gordon Forbes). From that point on I became interested in how they might act to initiate richer responses to enquiries about living in pre Independent India. The collection of family photographs I used show how this parallel archive of private and public lives enriches an understanding of living in late Raj India in a long-term settler community. In particular it shines a light on life in the railway colonies of the GIPR line, as variegated as they were, and the engagement and fascination that was felt towards these new technologies of modernity. The connection between the photographs, the railways and the tragic cartographic consequences of Partition is made through the lens of colonialism and modernity by looking at representations of colonial subjects taken of themselves in the railway colonies. This also talks to a fascination with the new technologies the British introduced to India. This thesis has provided a unique approach to the use of vernacular photographs to gain entry into the representations of the quotidian in colonial India. This final chapter draws together some of these themes, speculations and insights and looks briefly at two new archives that seek to create a place to accommodate the more difficult memory of Partition. These digital archives are being created by a younger generation that sees the value in listening to the last of those who lived through this period of time. Time is indeed of the essence in recording these stories.

There has been very little research conducted on the use of vernacular photographs taken in pre-Partition India by those in the interstitial communities I have mentioned and virtually no mention of photo elicitation used in this context. In other words, by those (not quite British) born in India and living in small towns (and recording it) outside the main British cultural and political centres of control. I believe that my research offers a broadened understanding of living inside the railway colonies, at a time of change, and this is achieved through the novel use of family photographs. What this focus also affords is a more productive look through an alternative lens at the communities who lived in pre-Partition India and who worked on the railways. Rather than relying solely on the official archive, which as Cooper and Stoler (1997) point out

reflects the interests of the colonial rulers, vernacular photographs leave an archival trace of a different kind in contrast to the taxonomising of knowledge based on surveillance. Photography, like the railways, held wide appeal to people from all backgrounds and invited engagement at different levels according to proximity to the technologies. Thus although it is limited and restrained by the same conventions it is complementary to research that analyses official archives.

As I have shown, an unforeseen counter-narrative of brutality and exploitation accompanied the technologies, originally deployed by the British to further the colonial project partly through the management, recording and control of subjects and partly with an eye to economic advantages. This is evidenced in the parlous treatment of local populations throughout the late Raj and the ignominious ending of colonial rule in ill-thought through plans for Partition and Independence. The very technologies that had worked to advantage in peaceful circumstances were turned to different purposes when removed from the hands of the authorities. As Pinney (2008) so insightfully argues, the camera, for example, captured much more detail than the photographer might have intended, and it is these accidental inclusions that have inspired my investigations. My combined reading of family photographs has acted to articulate the in-between of private, less authorised discourses against (but not counter to) those of the British bureaucracy. This raised questions and challenges around how to use family photographs in interviews to elicit accounts of personal experiences of the public and very traumatic time of Partition and revealed more intimate details about domestic life and living under colonial rule.

In its early stages this research began with the intention of focusing on Partition modernity and technology but gradually the inclusion of vernacular photographs into the interviews and on their own demanded more attention on three levels. The first was on the surface level of evidence, then as artefacts in a history of the image in India and finally as an interview tool in photo elicitation. At all levels they yielded a rich return. Using the photographs in social encounters allowed people to spontaneously go ‘off script’ to find their own way into the past through the colonial ephemera, the street scenes and people captured in the images. In some research there has been a tendency to polemicise the relationship between colonial subjects when, as Dubow (2000) points out, what may have been missed is ‘a desire for mutual imbrication’. By first lingering on the surface then excavating the deeper currents of the image during photo elicitation

interviews, something is exposed of what it was like to live in colonialism, in an ill-defined space between the coloniser and the colonised. Through my account I have argued that photographs to some degree reflect the increasingly unstable and ill-defined colonial boundaries of the day.

The investigation of this engagement, with living in a time when technologies of modernity were becoming more ubiquitous, has rippled out from Leslie's core narrative about his life and his family. Accommodating multiple perspectives has enabled this richly textured story to be told. In one of many reversals that occurred during this research the photographs also 'worked' on me. Sometimes I had to restrain my own responses to them to allow interviewees the freedom to remember. However, there is not a complete lack of subjectivity here; my involvement with the research material using photographs of family and interviewing my father means that there is a high level of layering and reflexivity (Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011) in this writing. This kind of writing is not memoir, biography or auto-ethnography but it does not deny this close even intimate connection to the subject of the research. The obvious intimate connection is to my father but this also extends to those I befriended during my extended visits, particularly to Jhansi, Jabalpur and Mussoorie. I learnt that identities are 'multiple, partial, contradictory and strategic at different historical moments' (Burton 1998, p. 18). There is no stable self at the centre of the stories that people tell of their lives, influenced as they are, in this context, by the modernist triumvirate of race, gender and class in colonial India.

Resonances

With Partition and Independence domiciled communities began a staggered migration that lasted for several decades to countries including Australia, Canada, South Africa and Britain, recognising that opportunities for a life in the railways and other civil services were inevitably going to be reduced with the Indianisation of the work force. The impact of Partition and Independence was as dramatic, disruptive and in some cases as tragic for these communities as it was for Indian families uprooted from ancestral territories. Procida (2002a) comments that the autobiographies, written before 1947 by British men and women, presented their individual life stories as a mirror of the larger history of British imperialism in the subcontinent. They constructed autobiographical narratives that linked the personal events of their individual and family histories with

the public, political questions of the empire. However, with the demise of the Raj and subsequent migrations out of India this voice lost the insider expert edge once provided by the carapace of empire. Procida (2002a, p.146) concludes that life 'had come to an abrupt and irrevocable end'. I contend that that way of life has remained resonant in the stories told by those who were forced to migrate through circumstance or who chose to leave India for economic reasons.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, there is now a plethora of memoirs and biographies written and often self-published by Anglo-Indians who want to tell 'their story'. There is a wistfulness in some of the titles written by Anglo-Indians: 'Hearts Divided in the Raj' (McGready-Buffardi 2006), 'Anglo-Indians: vanishing remnants of a bygone era' (Williams 2002), 'Haunting India' (Deefolts 2003), 'The Jewel Returned' (back cover, 'this is the story of one of the last children of the raj' (Lethorn 2008). And similarly there are some that are nostalgic and celebrate and reclaim the Anglo-Indian heritage: 'The Absolute Anglo-Indian' (Sen 2001), 'The Anglo-Indian Australian story: MY EXPERIENCE' (Phillips 2004), 'From Darjeeling to Down Under' (West 2004), 'One Hell of a life' (Blackford 2000), 'Farewell Raj' (Hearne 2009), to mention a few. These biographies tell of lives lived in railway colonies, the telegraph and police services and reclaim the positive role their communities played during the late colonial era. The authors reconstruct the past in nostalgic discussions of domestic details around food, servants, schooling, socialising and encounters with exotic animals.

New archives

With the development of digital technology it is possible to scan photographs at a high resolution and navigate around a photograph to feel as if one is inside the landscape, like a cut inside the cut in the referent that Metz (1985) refers to as a fetish; a desire to to return again and again to a certain image or point in the photograph. Benjamin writing in 1936 was also taken by the technological characteristics of photography that allowed the viewer to uncover 'what is hidden through enlargement', revealing 'entirely new structural formations of the subject' (2007, p.236)). What the viewer is looking for, is not always easily surrendered, so that the 'return of what was once there takes the form of a haunting' (Ramanathan 2007, p. 6). That haunting and the foregrounding of 'hidden' details invoke the past bringing it into the present.

Although there are few monuments or memorials to the survivors and victims of Partition (it is subsumed into the less problematic celebration of Independence) it is now being actively remembered through websites that act as digital warehouses for memories. A new generation of young Indian archivists is engaging with their heritage in a more public manner. The Indian Memory Project (www.indianmemoryproject.com) and the 1947 Partition Archive (www.1947Partitionarchive.org), to name just two of these, are valuable audio and visual repositories that provide a space for testimonies and photographs from the last of those who came through 1947. It is through this new level of technology that the memories and experiences of the Partition generation are being memorialised by a younger generation enabled by generational distance and the desire to record these accounts before they are lost. The Indian Memory Project is a particularly rich source of family photographs. Each image is accompanied by a text that tells a story, usually from a family member who has inherited the photographs. It also affirms that there was a wide engagement with photography from the 1920s to the 1940s amongst all levels of people. By contrast the 1947 website is described as an ‘oral history project’, recording stories through crowd sourcing and ‘citizen historians a grassroots volunteer movement’, young interviewers who visit those who witnessed the Partition with the purpose of preserving ‘history before it is too late and the memories are lost’ (<http://www.1947Partitionarchive.org>). On this website one can view the participants being interviewed and read transcriptions of their stories or go to a facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/1947PartitionArchive>) and share the stories. Sameer Ashad in the ‘The News’ (Oct 30, 2013) comments that the website embraces the telling of all sides of the experience and in contrast to the way Partition is treated through the ‘prism of politics and religious hatred ... many survivors witnessed remarkable instances of compassion’. These people are now very elderly but their recounts of the experience are detailed, firm and highly affective. Leslie was accompanying refugees on trains between Nagrota to Pathankot so I was taken by a story from one individual, Mr Sharma, who was six years old at the time, he remembered that his teacher was beheaded in front of the class and the panic that ensued. There is no theory that could shed more light on the horror of that experience than Mr Sharma’s simple recollection. He mentions that the army came to escort people safely away from Pathankot (<https://www.facebook.com/1947PartitionArchive>). That ‘army’ could well have been comprised of Gurkhas since they were working on the trains in that area of the Punjab.

Reflection

Leslie saw himself as physically located in India but outside India culturally. He repeatedly stressed that his mother was born in England and that, ‘you learnt your culture from your mother’ (2007). I reminded him that his mother died when he was twelve and he went to boarding school for long periods of time but he assured me that he learnt about England from her. In a sense he absented himself from the wider context when it became too difficult to be a part of it. The Gurkha subaltern identity helped to further distance him from ‘the Indians’ and provided him with the identity of a Kings Commissioned Officer (KCO). This officially asserted his British identity because one had to be British in order to be a KCO or at least to identify as British if one was Anglo-Indian of a light skin colour. The photographs on one level provide evidence of the construction of that identity in the *Dussehra* series of photographs through his positioning as a British officer during the ceremony.

Very few photographs accompany the last part of Leslie’s narrative. When first asked he told me it was for security reasons, that soldiers were not permitted to use cameras or keep a diary at this time. However, recently (2015) he corrected this to say that they (the Gurkhas) were not at war so they could take photographs but he did not have time to take photographs and there was nothing he wanted to remember of the scenes he saw. Because of the absence of photography I resorted to more public forms of photography such as Margaret Bourke White’s photographs of 1947 used in Kushwant Singh’s book. The effect of the photographs is powerful and I thought they might enhance an understanding of what it looked like to be there. They were shocking and at the same time the crisp black and white photographs were so beautifully produced they almost had a biblical quality to them.

I would like to end this conclusion on a more personal note. From early conversations with my father about where his family lived, the pieces of this puzzle have fallen into place along the GIPR line. In 2005, before I began my research, armed with some scans of the railways of Bhusawal in Maharashtra and the address ‘40 Blocks’ I finally located my grandmother and great-grandmother’s graves in a small Catholic cemetery in a town I first encountered in the photographs. When I saw the gravesites I realised that I was the only family member to have visited India since 1948. As I sat on the edge of the grave a small piece of grey marble broke off so I pocketed it. I then rang Leslie from a public phone box in Bhusawal to tell him I had visited his

mother's grave and I read out the inscription on her headstone. He was rendered speechless, I simply heard a telling intake of breath; it was a moment full of pathos. Later when I returned to Adelaide I showed my brother the piece of marble I had saved and he said it was as wondrous as looking at a piece of the moon. Before this research began the history of the family and why they lived and worked where they did, felt almost as remote as a 'moon rock'. At a different level this thesis has contextualised that family history within a larger narrative set against a time of immense social and technological change in India.

In reading a book about the effects of trauma I noticed that a previous reader had substituted the word death for trauma, running a line through the word and pencilling in 'death' every time it appeared. The same ghost hand had written 'death and traumatic death' over a sentence about shared histories. At first I found it irritating and then it made me think that too often I had been thinking of trauma as only being associated with death or its witnessing. But its insidious effects are triggered by other circumstances that surrounded the kind of upheaval, separation and loss that was incurred by Partition. Evidence of this lay in a persistent inability to concede a more balanced view of the events. Trauma follows a person and manifests in illogical reactions and hyper-vigilant behaviour triggered, for example, by minor events in traffic. Like many men of his generation who have lived through civil conflict or war Leslie was a strict, at times, difficult father. Never having experienced a settled home life, living in a violent disciplinarian school environment and losing his mother at an early age did not prepare him for a family of six children. Growing up with him was at times trying for all of us. As he is in his 90th year he has become more reflective about his earlier self and he is now able to express his feelings of gratitude for having a family that has provided him with the satisfaction of the home life he did not have. I am appreciative of his interest in this project and his surprising patience with all the questions I have asked him over the years it has taken to complete the thesis. This year in particular I have noticed that his memory for the level of details that he once provided me with has declined considerably. I am privileged to have such an intimate connection to the history and I sense that perhaps my persistent enquiries have helped him remember his own life in a way that may have ameliorated some of the more lacerating memories of his last year in India. There are myriad narratives and interpretations of what happened in 1947 and for those directly involved what actually

happened and is remembered can be quite different to the story that is told about it. Trauma may introduce silences into the story telling process or a default to a known script but what was seen remains with the person for the rest of his or her life

I am not an Anglo-Indian and I am generationally and geographically removed from the railway towns I stayed in during my research trips. Thus I consider myself to have been fortunate to have had such access to the community, particularly the elderly, through my ancestral ties and perhaps more powerfully through the photographs. On my last evening in Jhansi in 2012 with Peggy Cantem and her friends, playing housie and having a meal of *roomali* roti, *dal*, mutton curry and egg curry, followed by *kheer* and *gulab jamun*, I was made to feel a part of the community. For many travellers, Jhansi is a transit town for Orchha and Khajuraho and offers little of interest, apart from a visit to the Rani of Jhansi's fort. But I found much more, and it was hard to leave. After returning to Delhi from my research trip, when somebody remarked that it must have been boring being in 'those towns for so long', I had to disagree. The generosity I was shown when people considered the photographs helped to make visible familial threads that connected me to places and people with whom, for a short time, I stayed under the same skies as my ancestors.

Appendices

Appendix 1: A Short Glossary

Anglo-Indian – Article 366 (2) of the Indian Constitution reads: ‘An “Anglo-Indian” means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only.’ (Anthony 1969, p 5)

Chi chi or Chee chee – ‘A disparaging term applied to half castes and Eurasians and ...their manner of speech....’ (Yull & Burnell cited in Caplan, 2001, p. 88) and ‘also used to describe domiciled Europeans many of whom had acquired identical language habits’ (Hull cited in Caplan 2001, p. 88).

Dacoit – criminal or thief

Desh – home-land or ‘home territory’ (Bear 2007, p.11)

Domiciled European – A person born and domiciled in India of European or British ancestry, ‘unlike the “heaven born British elite”, who usually returned home in their retirement, the ‘country-born’ domiciled community consisted of people of European descent who were permanent residents in India’ (Blunt 2005, p. 5).

Dussehra – A ten-day Hindu festival involving animal sacrifice that is integrated into the calendar of Gurkha Regiments, during which soldiers and their officers have their arms (kukris and rifles) blessed or ‘blooded’ through animal beheadings.

Jhil – water tank

Jholl – spirit distilled from rice

Khus mats – reed matting hung around verandahs and dampened with water so that the air that passes through them is cooled

Kukri – a large curved knife incorporated into the uniform of Gurkha soldiers

Parsis (also spelt Parsee) – people descended from Zoroastrians of Persian or Iranian origin who migrated to India around the 8th-10th century, (Luhrmann 1994, p. 336).

Rakshi – spirit distilled from rice or mulberry

Shikar – a hunt

Shikari – hunter

Sola topi – a pith helmet

Appendix 2: List of Interviews

Location and year of interview	Name of participant	Identified as
Australia		
Adelaide, South Australia, 2005-2015	Leslie Nixon	European/British
Adelaide, South Australia, 18 February 2006	Stan Blackford	Anglo-Indian
Adelaide, South Australia, 18 February 2006	Des Tellis	Anglo-Indian
Adelaide, South Australia, 18 February 2006	*Major (Retd) Robert Nicholls	Anglo-Indian
Adelaide, South Australia, 18 February 2006	Lois Harding (nee Maelzer)	Anglo-Indian
Perth, Western Australia, 18 July 2006 and 10 July 2007	*Robert May	Australian
Perth, Western Australia, 18 July 2006	Terry Dawe	Australian
Britain		
Gurkha Museum, Winchester, 8 September 2007	Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Ralph Reynolds	British
Gurkha Museum, Winchester, 9 September 2007	Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Peter Reeve	British
Leicester, 15 September 2007	Norman Nixon	British
India		
Barlowganj, Uttarakhand, 12 November 2007	Lillian Singh	Anglo-Indian
Mussoorie, Uttarakhand, 13 November 2007	Creena Aurora	Anglo-Indian
Landour, Uttarakhand, 13 November 2007	Ruskin Bond	Anglo-Indian
Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, 20 November 2007	Colonel (Retd) Thaman Gurung	Nepalese
Kharagpur, West Bengal, 22 January 2012	Olive Lennon	Anglo-Indian
Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, 1 February 2012	Dunstan Gamble	Anglo-Indian
Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, 3 February 2012	Mrs Watkins	Anglo-Indian
Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, 3 February 2012	Fay Wills	Anglo-Indian
Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, 3 February 2012	Maureen Robinson	Anglo-Indian
Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, between 9 and 22	Peggy Cantem	Anglo-Indian

February 2012		
Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, 14 February 2012	Roy Abbott	British/European
Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, 21 February 2012	Farokh Pestonji	Parsi
Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, 21 February 2012	Percy Pestonji	Parsi
Chandigarh, Punjab/Haryana, 9 & 10 March 2012	Brigadier (Retd) Panesar	Indian
Nepal		
Pokhara, Nepal, 1 & 2 December 2007	Colonel (Retd) John Cross	British

*Robert May and Robert Nicholls have since passed away

Bibliography

- Aguiar, M. 2008, 'Making modernity: Inside the technological space of the railway', *Cultural Critique*, vol. 68, Winter, pp. 66-85.
- Aguiar, M. 2011, *Tracking Modernity: India's Railways and the Culture of Mobility*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Ahmed, I. 1999, 'The 1947 Partition of Punjab: Arguments Put before the Punjab Boundary Commission by the Parties Involved', in I. Talbot & S. Thandi, eds, *Region and Partition: Bengal, Punjab and the Partition of the Subcontinent*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 95-116
- Ahuja, R. 2004, 'The bridge builders: Some notes on railways, pilgrimage and the British 'civilising mission' in colonial India', in H. Fischer-Tine & M. Mann, eds, *Colonialism as Civilising Mission; Cultural Ideology in British India*, Wimbledon Publishing, London pp. 95-116.
- Allen, C. 1975, *Plain Tales from the Raj*, Futura Publications, London.
- Allen, C. 1977, *Raj: A Scrapbook of British India 1877-1947*, Andres Deutsch, London.
- Alton-Price, J. (n.d.), 'Railway colonies in India', viewed 10 April 2007, <www.pricewebhome.co.uk/index.htm>
- Alvesson, M. 2003. Methodology for Close up studies - Struggling with Closeness and Closure, *Higher Education*, Netherlands, 46, pp. 167-193.
- Anderson, B. 2006, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London.
- Andrews, R. 2005, 'Being Anglo-Indian: Practices and stories from Calcutta', PhD thesis, Massey University, Wellington. viewed 12th September 2014, <<http://mro.massey.ac.nz/handle/10179/959>>
- Andrews, R. 2007, 'Quitting India: The Anglo-Indian culture of migration', *Sites: A Journal of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 32-56, viewed 14 October 2014, <<https://sites.otago.ac.nz/Sites/article/view/73/63>>
- Anthony, F. 1969, *Britain's Betrayal of India: The Story of the Anglo-Indian Community*, Allied Publishers, Bombay.
- Appadurai, A. 1997, 'The colonial backdrop', *Afterimage*, vol. 24, no. 5, pp. 4-7.

- Appleby, R. 2010, *ELT, Gender and International Development: Myths of Progress in a Neo-colonial World*, Multilingual Matters, Bristol.
- Appleby, R. 2014, *Men and Masculinities in Global English Language Teaching*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Arnold, D. 1979, 'European orphans and vagrants in India in the nineteenth century', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 104-27.
- Arnold, D. 1980, 'Industrial violence in colonial India', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 234-55.
- Arnold, D. 1983 'White colonisation and labour in nineteenth-century India', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 133-58.
- Arnold, D. 2000, *The New Cambridge History of India: Science Technology and Medicine in Colonial India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Arnold, D. 2004 'Race, place and bodily difference in early nineteenth-century India', *Historical Research*, May, vol. 77 no.196, pp. 254-273.
- Arnold, D. 2006, *The Tropics and the Travelling Gaze*, University of Washington Press, Seattle.
- Arnold, D. 2013, *Everyday Technology: Machines and the Making of India's Modernity*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
- Artworks Feature Homi Bhabha* 2008, radio program, Artworks, Radio National, Melbourne, 3 February.
- Ashad, S. 2013, 'Archiving memories of shared, partitioned past', *The News International*, October 30, viewed August 21 2013, <www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-14-210979-Archiving-memories-of-shared,-partitioned-past>
- Banks, M. 2001, *Visual Methods in Social Research*, Sage, London.
- Barenscoot, D. 2006, "'This is our holocaust': Deepa Mehta's *Earth* and the question of Partition trauma', *Mediascape*, Spring, viewed September 13th 2010, <http://www.tft.ucla.edu/mediascape/Spring05_ScreenAngst.pdf>
- Barthes, R. 1997, *Image Music Text*, Fontana, London.
- Barthes, R. 2000, *Camera Lucida*, Vintage Press, United Kingdom. (original 1980)

- Barua, P. 2003a, *Gentlemen of the Raj: The Indian Army Officers Corps 1817-1949*, Praegar, Westport, CT.
- Barua, P. 2003b, 'Inventing race: The British and India's martial races', *Historian*, vol. 58, no. 1, pp. 107-16.
- Batchen, G. 1997, *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography*, The MIT Press, Cambridge.
- Batchen, G. 2000, *Each Wild Idea: Writing Photography History*, The MIT Press, Cambridge.
- Batchen, G. 2008, 'Snapshots: Art history and the ethnographic turn', *Photographies*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 121-42.
- Batchen, G., Gidley, M., Miller, N.K. & Prosser J., eds, 2012, *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Civil Crisis*, Reaktion Books, London.
- Bate, D. 2010, 'The memory of photography', *Photographies*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 243-57.
- Bayly, C.A. 1988, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Bear, L.G. 1994, 'Miscegenations of modernity: Constructing European respectability and race in the Indian railway colony, 1857-1931', *Women's History Review*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 531-48.
- Bear, L. 2007, *Lines of a Nation: Indian Railway Workers, Bureaucracy, and the Intimate Historical Self*, Columbia, New York, NY.
- Benjamin, W. 2007, *Illuminations*, ed. H Arendt, Schocken Books, New York.
- Bennett, J. & Kennedy R. eds, 2003, *World Memory: Personal Trajectories and Global Time*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Berger, J. 1990, *Ways of Seeing*, Penguin, London.
- Bhabha, H. 1994, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, New York.
- Bishop, E. 1976, *Better to Die: The Story of the Gurkhas*, New English Library, London.
- Blackford, S. 2000, *One Hell of a Life: An Anglo-Indian Wallah's Memoir from the Last Decades of the Raj*, Author, Adelaide.

- Blunt, A. 2003, 'Geographies of diaspora and mixed descent: Anglo-Indians in India and Britain', *International Journal of Population Geography*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 281-94.
- Blunt, A. 2005, *Domicile and Diaspora: Anglo-Indian Women and the Spatial Politics of Home*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.
- Bonea, A. 2011, Review of: *The Meaning of White: Race Class and the Domiciled Community in British India 1858-1930*, Author's Response, Review no.1317, <http://www.history.ac.uk./reviews/review/1317>
- Bourdieu, P. 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
- Bourdieu, P. 1990, *Photography: A Middle Brow Art*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Brass, P. 2003, 'The partition of India and retributive genocide in the Punjab 1946-1947: Means methods and purposes', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 70-101.
- Brown, E.H. & Phu, T. 2014, *Feeling Photography*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC.
- Buettner, E. 2000, 'Problematic spaces, problematic races: Defining Europeans in late colonial India', *Women's History Review*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 277-98.
- Buettner, E. 2004, *Empire Families: Britons in Late Imperial India*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Burgin, V. 1982, *In Different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture*, MacMillan, London.
- Burgin, V. 1996, *Thinking Photography*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Burrard, G. 1925, *Big Game Hunting in the Himalayas and Tibet*, Herbert Jenkins, London.
- Burton, A. 1998, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late Victorian Britain*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Buruma, I. 2013, *Year Zero: The History of 1945*, Penguin Press, New York.
- Butalia, U. 1998, *The Other Side of Silence*, Penguin Books, New Delhi.

- Butalia, U. 2007, Memory, Lived and Forgotten, Financial Express, April 1, viewed September 13th 2013, < <http://www.sacw.net/partition/Urvashi9April2007.html>>
- Campbell, C.H. (Major) 7th Gurkha Rifles, 1943, *Practical Elementary Gurkhali for British Officers*, The Civil Military gazette.
- Caplan, L. 1995a, 'Creole world, purist rhetoric: Anglo-Indian cultural debates in colonial and contemporary Madras', *The Journal of The Royal Anthropological Institute, University of London*, vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 743-62.
- Caplan, L. 1995b, *Warrior Gentlemen: 'Gurkhas' in the Western Imagination*, Berghahn Books, Oxford.
- Caplan, L. 1997, 'Colonial and contemporary transnationalisms: Traversing Anglo-Indian boundaries of the mind', *Transnationalism Conference*, University of Manchester, Department of Social Anthropology, 16-18 May 1997, viewed 20 June 2005, <www.alphalink.com.au/~agilbert/cap0399.html>
- Caplan, L. 2001, *Children of Colonialism: Anglo-Indians in a Postcolonial World*, Berg, Oxford.
- Carr, D. 2001, 'Place and time; On the interplay of historical points of view', *History and Theory*, vol. 40, no. 4, pp. 153-67.
- Carsten, J. ed., 2007, *Ghosts of Memory: Essays on Remembrance and Relatedness*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Carton, D. 2000, 'Beyond "Cotton Mary": Anglo-Indian categories and reclaiming the diverse past', *International Journal of Anglo-Indian Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 1-12.
- Caruth, C. ed., 1995, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD.
- Chakrabarty, D. 2008, *Provincializing Europe: Post-colonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Chaplin, E. 2006, 'The convention of captioning: W. G. Sebald and the release of the captive image', *Visual Studies*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 42-53.
- Chaudhury, Z. 2012, *Afterimage of Empire: Photography in Nineteenth-century India*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Cohen, S.P. 1971, *The Indian Army*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

- Cohn, B.S. 1996, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Collier, J. 1967, *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*, Holt Rinehart and Winston, New York, NY.
- Collingham, E.M. 2001, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj 1800-1947*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Cooper, F. & Stoler, A. eds, 1997, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Corbett, J. 1952, *My India*, Oxford University Press, London.
- Corbett, J. 1953, *Jungle Lore*, Oxford University Press, London.
- Craig, H.I. 1990, *Under the Old School Topee*, Author, Hertfordshire.
- Crawford I. & Turton, D. eds, 1992, *Film as Visual Ethnography*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.
- Cressey, P.F. 1935, 'The Anglo-Indians: A disorganized marginal group', *Social Forces*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 263-8.
- Cronin, O. 1998, 'Psychology and photographic theory', in J. Prosser, ed., *Image Based Research: a source book for qualitative researchers*, Falmer Press, London, pp. 61-74.
- Cross, J.P. & Gurung, B. eds, 2002, *Gurkhas at War in Their Own Words: The Gurkha Experience 1939 to the Present (1999)*, Greenhill Books, London.
- Cross, K. & Peck, J. 2010, 'Archive and memory', *Photographies*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 127-38, viewed 7 October 2013, <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17540763.2010.499631>>
- Dados, N. 2010, 'Liminal transformations: Folding the surface of the photograph', *Conserveries Memorielle (En Ligne)*, no. 7, viewed 17 August 2014, <<http://cm.revues.org/447>>
- Dane, K. 1996, *The Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British*, University of California, Berkeley.
- Das, V. 2007, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

- Datta, N. 2009, *Violence, Martyrdom and Partition*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- D'Costa, A. 2006, 'Anglo-Indian nostalgia: Longing for India as homeland', *Second Annual Rhizomes: Re-Visioning Boundaries Conference of the School of Language and Comparative Studies*, University of Queensland, Brisbane.
- D'Cruz, G. 2001, "'Mixed feelings": Review of *The Jadu House*. Laura Roychaudhury' [review], *Jouvert: A Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, viewed 12 August 2011, <<http://english.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v5i2/con52.htm>>
- D'Cruz, G. 2006, *Midnight's Orphans: Anglo-Indians in Post/Colonial Literature*, P. Lang, New York, NY.
- de Certeau, M.1988, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Deefolts, M. 2003, *Haunting India: A Collection of Short Fiction, Poems, Travel Tales and Memoirs*, Calcutta Tijallah Relief, Madras.
- Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F.1987, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. B. Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Derbyshire, I. 1987, 'Economic change and the railways in north India 1860-1914', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 521-45.
- Dewan, D. 2011, 'John Falconer ed.,*The Waterhouse Album: Central Indian Provinces*', *Trans Asia Photography Review*, vol. 2 no.2, Fall , viewed 28 February 2015, <<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/t/tap/7977573.0002.112/--john-falconer-ed-the-waterhouse-albums-central-indian?rgn=main;view=fulltext>>
- Dirks, N.B. 2001, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Dubow, J. 2000, 'From a view on the world to a point of view in it: Rethinking sight space and the colonial subject', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 87-102.
- Dwyer, S.C. & Buckle, J.L. 2009, 'The space between: Being an insider-outsider in qualitative research', *International Journal of Qualitative Research*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 54-63.

- Edney, M.H. 1997, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India 1765-1843*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
- Eliot, T.S. 1963, *Collected Poems 1909-1962*, Faber and Faber, London.
- Fischer-Tine, H. & Mann, M. 2004, *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India*, Anthem South Asian Studies, Wimbledon.
- Fischer-Tine, H. 2009, *Low and Licentious Europeans: Race Class and 'White Subalternity' in Colonial India*, Orient Black Swan, New Delhi.
- Foucault, M. 1984, 'Of other spaces: Heterotopias ('Des Espace Autres')', *Architecture, Movement, Continuité*, vol. 5, pp. 46-49, viewed 12th August 2007, <foucault.info/documents/heterotopia/foucault.heterotopia.en.html> (original lecture given 1967)
- Four Lectures by a Commanding Officer for Officers Joining the Indian Army*, 1942, Manager, Government of India Press, Simla.
- Friedlander, P. 2002, *Religion, Race, Language and the Anglo-Indians: Eurasians in the Census of British India*, La Trobe University, viewed 12 November 2007, <www.chef.lib.latrobe.edu.au/dcd/Anglo-Indian>.
- Furuhata, Y. 2009, 'Indexicality as 'symptom': Photography and affect', *Semiotica: Journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies*, no. 174, pp. 181-202.
- Gantzer, C. 2013, 'A colony called home', in N. Thomas, ed., *Footprints on the Track: Anglo-Indian Railway Memories*, Anglo-Ink, Chennai, pp. 33-6.
- Garden, W. 2007, 'Photographic space: The Indian portrait studio', *Double Dialogues (On Space)*, no. 7, viewed 8 October 2010, <http://www.doubledialogues.com/archive/issue_seven/garden.html>
- Gergen, K. & Gergen, M. 1997, 'Narrative of the self', in L. Hinchman & S. Hinchman, eds, *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences*, State University Press, New York, NY, pp.161-180.
- Gibbs, H.R.K. 1944, *The Gurkha Soldier*, Thacker Spink, Calcutta.
- Giddens, A. 1990, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA.

- Gilmartin D. 1998, 'Partition, Pakistan and South Asian history in search of a narrative', *The Journal Asian Studies*, vol. 57, no. 4, pp. 1068-96.
- Gilmour, D. 2007, *The Ruling Caste: Imperial Lives in the Victorian Raj*, Pimlico, London.
- Gould, T. 1999, *Imperial Warriors: Britain and the Gurkhas*, Granta, London.
- Government of India, 1921, *Census of India*, vol. 1, part 1, J T Marten, Calcutta.
- Government of India Act, 1935, Article 366.
- Greenberg, J.D. 2005, 'Generations of memory: Remembering partition in India/Pakistan and Israel/Palestine', *Comparative Studies of South East Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 89-110.
- Greenburg, J.D. 2008, 'Against silence and forgetting', in A.G. Roy & N. Bhatia, eds, *Partitioned Lives: Narratives of Home Displacement and Resettlement*, Pearson Longman, New Delhi, pp.250-273.
- Grieve, L.C.G. 1909, 'The Dasara Festival at Satara', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 72-6.
- Grieve, L.C.G. 1910, 'The Muharram in Western India', *The Open Court*, vol. 1910, no. 8, Article 3, pp. 469-75, viewed 16 March 2015, <<http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2454&context=ocj>>
- Gurkha Brigade Association n.d., *The Culture of the Gurkhas*, viewed 12 January 2015, <<http://www.gurkhabde.com/kaida/>>
- Hamilton, B. & Graneiro, P.A. 2012, 'Disruptive cartography in academic development', *International Journal for Academic Development*, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 243-58.
- Harper, D. 1988, 'Visual sociology: Expanding sociological vision', *The American Sociologist*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 54-70.
- Harper, D. 2002, 'Talking about pictures: A case for photo elicitation', *Visual Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 13-26.
- Hawes, C.J. 1996, *Poor Relations: The Making of a Eurasian Community in British India 1773-1883*, Curzon Press, Surrey, England.
- Headrick, D.R. 1988, *The Tentacles of Progress: Technology Transfer in the Age of Imperialism, 1850-1940*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

- Hearne, T. 2009, *Farewell Raj: Witness to End of Empire*, Tommies Guide, Eastbourne, UK.
- Hedin, E.L. 1934, 'The Anglo-Indian community', *The American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 40, no. 2, pp. 165-79.
- Hinchman, L.P. & Hinchman, S.K. 1997, *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences*, State University Press, New York, NY.
- Hirsch, M. 1997, *Family Frames: Photography Narrative and Post Memory*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts.
- Hirsch, M. 2008, 'The generation of memory', *Poetics Today*, vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 104-28.
- Hoffman, E. 2004, *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History and the Legacy of the Holocaust*, Public Affairs, New York, NY.
- Hurd, J. & Kerr, I. 2012, *Indian Railway History: A Research Handbook*, Brill, Boston.
- India Memory Project, 2010, *1947 Archive*, Berkeley, viewed 7 April 2012, <<http://www.1947partitionarchive.org/>>
- Inter-services Public Relations Directorate G.H.Q. New Delhi. n.d., *India's Fighting Men*, New Delhi.
- Jeffrey, R. 1974, 'The Punjab Boundary Force and the problem of order, August 1947', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 491-520.
- Jenkins K.N., Woodward, R. & Winter, T. 2008, 'The emergent production of analysis in photo elicitation: Pictures of military identity', *Forum: Qualitative Research*, vol. 9, no. 3, viewed 21 November 2009, <<http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1169/2582>>
- Jones, R. 2010, 'The spatiality of boundaries', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 263-7.
- Journal of 1st K.G.V.O. Gurkha Rifles: The Malaun Regiment*, April 1947, The Army Press Rawalpindi.
- Kamra, S. 2002, *Bearing Witness; Partition, Independence, End of the Raj*, University of Calgary, Canada.

- Kenitson, D. 2007, 'Railways and famines in colonial India', viewed 21 August 2011, <<http://railwayengineering.in/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Railways-and-Famines-in-Colonial-India.pdf>>
- Kerr, I. 2001, 'Bombay and Lahore. Colonial railways and colonial cities: Some urban consequences of the development and operation of railways in India, c. 1850-c. 1947', viewed 14 June 2011, <<http://www.docutren.com/HistoriaFerroviaria/Aranjuez2001/pdf/07.pdf>>
- Kerr, I. 2003, 'Representation and representations of the railways of colonial and post colonial South Asia', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 287-326.
- Kerr, I. 2007, *Engines of Change: The Railroads that Made India*, Praegar, London.
- Khan, Y. 2007, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*, Viking, New Delhi.
- Khilnani, S. 1997, *The Idea of India*, Penguin Books, London.
- Kikumura, A.A. 1998, 'Family life histories: A collaborative venture', in R. Perks & A. Thomson, eds, *The Oral History Reader*, Routledge, London, pp. 140-4.
- Klein, K.L. 2000, 'On the emergence of memory in historical discourse', *Representations*, vol. 69, pp. 127-50.
- Kolsky, E. 2009, *Colonial Justice in British India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Lalvani, S. 1996, *Photography, Vision, and the Production of Modern Bodies*, State University of New York, New York.
- Langford, M. 2008, *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal.
- Lennon, J. 2004, 'Ridin' the rails: The place of the passenger and the space of the hobo', *Americana: The Journal of American Popular Culture (1900-present)*, vol. 3, no. 2, viewed 21 September 2013, <http://www.americanpopularculture.com/journal/articles/fall_2004/lennon.htm>
- Lethorn, W. 2008, *The Jewel Returned: A Narrative of One of the Last Children of the Raj*, Littlehorn Publishing, London.

- Liu, C. 2002, 'Getting to the photo finish: Photography, autobiography, modernity', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 101, no. 3, pp. 519-39.
- Llewellyn-Jones, R. 2007, *The Great Uprising in India 1857-58, Untold Stories, Indian and British*, Boydell Press, Woodbridge, UK.
- The Lost*, 2007, radio broadcast, *Australia Talks*, ABC Radio National, Sydney, June 13th.
- Luhrmann, T.M. 1994, 'The good Parsi: The postcolonial 'feminization' of a colonial elite', *Man, New Series*, vol. 29, no. 2, pp. 333-57.
- Lyall, A. 1919, *The Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion*, John Murray, London.
- MacDougall, D. 2006, *The Corporeal Image Film Ethnography and the Senses*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- MacMunn, G.F.M. 1911, *The Armies of India*, Adam and Charles Black, London.
- Maddison, A., 1971, *The Economic and Social Impact of Colonial Rule in India*, Allen and Unwin, London.
- Mahadevan, S. 2013, 'Archives and origins: The material and vernacular cultures of photography in India', *Trans-Asia Photography Review*, vol. 14, no. 1, viewed 15 January 2015, < <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.7977573.0004.103>>
- Manorite Association of St Georges College and St Fidelis High School Mussoorie, 2004, *Newsletter*, ed. Bill Lethorn, September, London.
- Mangan, J.A. & McKenzie, C. 2010, *Militarism, Hunting, Imperialism 'Blooding'; The Martial Male*, Routledge, London.
- Mann, S. 2011, 'A critical review of qualitative interviews in applied linguistics', *Applied Linguistics*, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 6-24.
- Marshall, P.J. 1997, 'British society in India under the East India Company', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 89-108.
- Marston, D. 2014, *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Marston, D. 2009, The Indian Army and the Punjab Boundary Force, *War in History*, vol. 16, issue 4 pp.469-505.

- Marston, D.P. & Sundaram, C.S. eds, 2007, *A Military History of India and South Asia: From the East India Company to the Nuclear Era*, Praegar Security International, Westport, CT.
- Martin, N.A. 2006, 'The madness at Deolali', viewed 1 August 2011, <<http://www.gaebler.info/2013/04/the-madness-at-deolali/>>
- Masters, J. 1956, *Bugles and a Tiger*, Michael Joseph, London.
- McGready-Buffard, P. 2006, *Hearts Divided by the Raj*, AuthorHouse, Bloomington, USA.
- McMenamin, D. 2001, 'Identifying domiciled Europeans in colonial India: Poor whites or privileged community?', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 106-27.
- McMenamin, D. 2005, 'The curious exclusion of Anglo-Indians from mass slaughter during the partition of India', *Journal of Anglo-Indian Studies*, no. 16, viewed 10 October 2007, <http://home.alphalink.com.au/~agilbert/jed_16.html>
- McMenamin, D. & Birch, S. eds, 2010, *Raj Days Downunder: Voices from Anglo India to New Zealand*, Author, Christchurch.
- Menon, R. & Bhasin, K. 1998, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*, Rutgers press, USA
- Memmi, A. 1974, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Souvenir Press, London.
- Metz, C. 1985, 'Photography as fetish', *October*, vol. 34, pp. 81-90.
- Military Handbook of General Information on India* 1908, Division of the Chief of Staff Intelligence Branch, Simla.
- Mizutani, S. 2002, 'Rethinking inclusion and exclusion: The question of mixed-race presence in late colonial India', *University of Sussex Journal of Contemporary History*, no. 5, pp. 1-16.
- Mizutani, S. 2005, 'Constitutions of the colonising self in late British India: Race, class and environment', *ZINBUN*, Annals of the Institute for Research in Humanities Kyoto University, vol.38, pp. 21-75.

- Mizutani, S. 2006, Historicising whiteness: From the case of late colonial India, *ACRAWSA e-journal*, vol. 2, no.1 , viewed October 7th 2010, <<http://www.acrawsa.org.au/ejournal/?id=26>>
- Mizutani, S. 2011, *The Meaning of White: Race Class and the Domiciled Community in British India 1858-1930*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, viewed November 5th 2012, Oxford Scholarship Online, <www.oxfordscholarship.com >
- Moon, P. 1961, *Divide and Quit*, Chatto and Windus, Berkeley.
- The Mountbatten Papers: Papers of the Earl of Mountbatten of Burma*, University of Southampton, Level 4 Hartley Library, Highfield, Southampton, UK.
- Mukhopadhyay, A. 2013, 'Wheels of Change: impact of railways on colonial north India, 1855-1920', PhD Thesis , SOAS, University of London, London, viewed 12th October 2013, < http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/17363/1/Mukhopadhyay_3526.pdf>
- Museum of Sydney 1997, *Encountering India: Colonial photography 1850-1911*, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, Sydney.
- Nandy, A. 1983, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Nandy, A. 2005, 'The death of an empire', *Sarai Reader*, no. 2, pp. 14-21, viewed 15 December 2005, < http://www.sarai.net/journal/02PDF/03morphologies/04death_empire.pdf>
- Northey, W.B. 1937, *The Land of the Gurkhas or the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal*, Hefer and Sons, London.
- O'Leary, B. 2007, 'Analysing partition: Definition, classification and explanation' *Political Geography*, vol. 26, pp.886-908
- Orwell, G. 1944, 'As I please', *The Tribune*, October 20, p. x.
- Page, W. 2010, "*I Had to Do it My Way!*" *One Man's Journey through Life*, Author, Maharashtra, India.
- Pandey, G. 1992, 'In defense of the fragment: Writing about Hindu-Muslim riots in India today', *Representations*, vol. 37, pp. 27-55.
- Pandey, G. 2001, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

- Parker, J. 2005, *The Gurkhas: The Inside Story of the World's Most Feared Soldiers*, Headline, London.
- Pathu Panchali*, 2002, videorecording, Artificial Eye, London (original 1955).
- Pennycook, A. 2012, *Language and Mobility: Unexpected Places*, Multilingual Matters, Bristol.
- Petre, F.L. 1925, *The First King George The Fifth's Own Gurkha Regiment: The Malaun Regiment*, London Royal United Service Institution, London.
- Phillips, Z. 2004, *The Anglo-Indian Australian story: My Experience: A Collection of Anglo-Indian Migration Heritage Stories*, Zelphil Books, Madras, India.
- Pickles, J. 2004, *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping, and the Geo-coded World*, Routledge, New York, NY.
- Pink, S. 2013, *Doing Visual Ethnography*, Sage Publications, London.
- Pinney, C. 1997, *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
- Pinney, C. 2008a, *The Coming of Photography in India*, The British Library, London.
- Pinney, C. 2008b, 'The prosthetic eye: Photography as cure and poison', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. S33-S46, pp. 533-46.
- Pinney, C. 2011, *Photography and Anthropology*, Reaktion Books, London.
- Prakash, G. 1999, *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Prakash, G. 2012, 'Tracking modernity: India's railway culture and the culture of mobility', book review, *Technology and Culture*, vol. 53, no. 3, pp. 719-20.
- Prasad, R. 2009, 'Tracking modernity: Experience of railways in colonial India', PhD thesis, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Prasad, R. 2013, '"Time sense": Railways and temporality in colonial India', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 47, no. 4, pp. 1252-82.
- Procida, M. 2002a, 'The greater part of my life has been spent in India: Autobiography and the crisis of empire in the twentieth century', *Biography*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 138.

- Procida, M. 2002b, *Married to the Empire: Gender Politics and Imperialism in India, 1883-1947*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.
- Rabe, M. 2003, 'Revisiting insiders and outsiders as social researchers', *African Sociological Review*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 149-61.
- Ramanathan, V. 2007, 'Photos as narratives, photos with narratives: Alternative textualities, minority histories and Indian historiography', *Journal of Contemporary Thought*, vol. 26, pp. 39-56.
- Ramanathan, V. & Pennycook, A. 2007, 'Talking across time: Postcolonial challenges to language, history, and difference', *Journal of Contemporary Thought*, vol. 25, pp. 25-53.
- Rand, G. 2006, "'Martial races" and "Imperial subjects": Violence and governance in colonial India, 1857-1914', *European Review of History*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 1-20.
- Rau, P. 2006, 'Beyond punctum and studium: Trauma and photography in Rachel Sieffert's "The Dark Room"', *Journal of European Studies*, vol. 36, no. 3, pp. 295-325, viewed 4 August 2013, <<http://jes.sagepub.com/content/36/3/295>>
- Read, A. & Fisher, D. 1997, *The Proudest Day: India's Long Road to Independence*, W.W. Norton and Company, New York, NY.
- Revill, G. 2012, *Railway*, Objekt Series, Reaktion Books, London.
- Richards, J. & MacKenzie J.M. 1996, *The Railway Station: A Social History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Robb, P. 1997, 'The colonial state and construction of Indian identities', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 245-83.
- Rose, G. 2010, *Doing Family Photography: The Domestic the Public and the Politics of Sentiment*, Ashgate, Farnham, UK.
- Roy, K. 1997, 'Recruitment doctrines of the colonial Indian Army: 1859-1913', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 321-45.
- Roy, K. 2001, 'The construction of regiments in the Indian army: 1859-1913', *War in History*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 127-48.

- Sakar, M. 2006, 'Difference in memory', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 48, no. 1, pp. 139-68, viewed 1 April 2015, <<http://bingweb.binghamton.edu/~msarkar/difference.cssh.pdf>>
- Sankaran, K. 1997, 'The Spaciality of States', in J. Agnew, ed., *Political Geography: A Reader*, Arnold, London, pp. 81-93.
- Schivelbusch, W. 1977, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century*, The University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Schivelbusch, W. 1978, 'Railroad space, railroad time', *New German Critique*, no. 14, pp. 31-40.
- Sekula, A. 1981, 'The traffic in photographs', *Art Journal Photography and the Scholar/Critic*, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 15-25.
- Sekula, A. 1984, *Photography Against the Grain: Essays and works 1973-1983*, Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax.
- Sekula, A. 1986, 'The body in the archive', *October*, vol. 39, pp. 3-64.
- Sen, K.C. 2001, *The Absolute Anglo-Indian*, New Millennium, London.
- Shurkus, M. 2014, 'Camera lucida and affect: Beyond representation', *Photographies*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 67-83.
- Singh, K. 2006, *Train to Pakistan*, 1956-2006 50th anniversary edition, Lotus Roli, New Delhi.
- Sinha, M. 1995, *Colonial Masculinity: The "Manly Englishmen" and the "Effeminate Bengali" in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.
- Sinha, N. 2008, 'The world of workers' politics: Railway workers in colonial India, 1918-1922', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 42, no. 5, pp. 999-1033.
- Smith, M.S. 2013, *At the Edge of Sight: Photography and the Unseen*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC.
- Solnit, R. 2004, *River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West*, Penguin Books, New York, N.Y.
- Sontag, S. 1977, *On Photography*, Penguin Books, London.

- Spivak, G. 1994, 'Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow Sacrifice' in P. Williams & L. Chrisman, eds, *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, New York, NY, pp. 66-111.
- Spradley J.P. 1980, *Participant Observation*, Holt Rhinehart & Winston, New York, NY.
- Spurr, D. 1993, *Rhetoric of Empire Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, Imperial Administration*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC.
- Staines, J.R. 1986, *Country Born: One Man's Life in India*, Croscombe Press, London.
- Stoler, A.L. 1989, 'Rethinking colonial categories: European communities and the boundaries of rule', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 134-60.
- Stoler A.L. 1995, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC.
- Stoler, A.L. 2002a, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Stoler, A.L. 2002b, 'Colonial archives and the arts of governance', *Archival Science*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 87-109.
- Stracey, E. 2000, *Growing up in Anglo-India*, East West Books, Chennai, India.
- Strassler, K. 2003, *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and the Indonesian Culture of Documentation in Post-colonial Java*, PhD Thesis, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
- Strassler, K. 2010, *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC.
- Streets, H. 2004, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.
- Strettell, D. 1948, 'The Indian army before and after 1947', *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 116-30.
- Sweetman, P. 2009, 'Revealing habitus, illuminating practice: Bourdieu, photography and visual methods', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 57, no. 3, pp. 492-511.

- Sydney Writers' Festival*, 2012, radio broadcast, *Books and Arts Daily*, ABC Radio National, Sydney, 21 May.
- Talbot, I. 1995, 'Literature and the Human Drama of the 1947 Partition', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian studies*, Routledge, vol.18, pp. 37-56.
- Talbot, I. 2000, *India and Pakistan: Inventing the Nation*, Arnold, London.
- Talbot, I. 2006, *Divided Cities: Partition and its Aftermath in Lahore and Amritsar 1947-1957*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, Pakistan.
- Talbot, I. & Singh, G. eds, 1999, *Region and Partition: Bengal, Punjab and the Partition of the Subcontinent*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Talbot, I. & Singh, G. eds, 2009, *The Partition of India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Talbot, I. & Tatla, D.S. eds, 2006, *Epicentre of Violence: Partition Voices and Memories from Amritsar*, Permanent Black, New Delhi.
- Tarlo, E.1996. *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India*, Hirst & Company, London.
- The Bugle and Kukri, 2005, *The Journal of the 10TH Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association*, UK.
- Thomas, N. ed., 2013, *Footprints on the Track: Anglo-Indian Railway Memories*, Anglo-Ink, Chennai, India.
- Tosh, J. 1999a "'A fresh access of dignity'": Masculinity and imperial commitment in Britain, 1815-1914', *History and African Studies Seminar*, The University of Kwa Zulu – Natal, Durban, viewed 7th October 2014, <<http://www.kznhas-history.net/files/seminars/Tosh.pdf>>
- Tosh, J. 1999b, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-class Home in Victorian England*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT.
- Tosh, J. 2005. *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire*, Pearson, Harlow, UK.
- Tuker, F. 1950, *While Memory Serves*, Cassell, London.
- Tumarkin, M. 2012, 'I, witness', *The Australian (Weekend Australian)*, 23-24 June, pp. 23-4.

- Walker, R.B.J. & Krishna, S. 2002, 'Partition: On the discriminations of modernity', *Alternatives: Global Local Political*, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 143-6.
- West, L. 2004, *From Darjeeling to Down Under: A Journey through the Years to the End of an Era*, Author, Australia.
- Westwood, T.N. 1974, *Railways of India*, David and Charles, London.
- Williams, B.R. 2002, *Anglo-Indians: Vanishing Remnants of a Bygone Era*, Calcutta Tijallah Relief, Madras.
- Winter, A. 2012, *Memory: Fragments of a Modern History*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Wood I.L., D. & Fels, J. 1992, *The Power of Maps*, The Guilford Press, New York, NY.
- Woodward, R. & Jenkins, K.N. 2011, 'Military identities in the situated accounts of British military personnel', *Sociology*, vol. 45, no. 2, pp. 252-68.
- Yadav, A. 2010, *Indian Memory Project : Visual and Oral history of the Indian subcontinent via family archives*, India, viewed 16 July 2011, <<http://www.indianmemoryproject.com/>>
- Younger, C. 1984, *Anglo-Indians from 1919-1983: Images of a Community in Transition*, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, Sydney.
- Zhang, Y. & Wildemuth, B.M. 2009, 'Unstructured interviews', in B. Wildemuth, ed., *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*, Libraries Unlimited, Westport, CT, pp. 222-31.