



EDITORIAL

Robyn Andrews and Brent Howitt Otto

In this issue we are pleased to present a work of literary criticism on an Anglo-Indian autobiography, an assessment of new scholarship on the Anglo-Indian diaspora, reflections on Anglo-Indian origins and imagination, and a review of a recent Anglo-Indian anthology.

Shyamasri Maji presents new literary criticism on the Anglo-Indian memoir of Esther Mary Lyons, *Bitter Sweet Truth: Recollections of an Anglo-Indian Born During the Last Years of the Raj, An Autobiography* (2001). Maji explores Lyons' own quest for an identity, disrupted by both 'scandalous birth' and her own marital troubles, but worked out through a journey to reunite with her father and subsequent migration to Australia. Maji contends that Lyons extends the quest and resolves her identity in part through the writing of this memoir.

Anglo-Indian literary luminary, Irwin Allan Sealy, presents an essay that takes a journey through the Anglo-Indian imaginary from the earliest times of the Community. He argues that Anglo-Indians are the first 'modern' Indians, for their departure from prevailing cultural norms and prejudices to forge a distinct and sometimes exemplary model, marked and unified by the English language.

A young scholar who completed his D.Phil in History at Oxford University and recently published *Anglo-Indians and Minority Politics in South Asia: Race, Boundary Making and Communal Nationalism* (Routledge, 2017), Uther Charlton-Stevens presents an extensive review essay on Rochelle Almeida's recent book, *Britain's Anglo-Indians* (Lexington, 2017). He considers her work on first generation Anglo-Indians who migrated 'home' to Britain both important and heretofore understudied.

Finding Almeida's thesis persuasive, that these first generation migrants to Britain formed a hybrid sub-culture of British Anglo-Indianness in contrast to those who went Canada or Australia, Charlton-Stevens highlights possible intersection points with other scholarship and new areas for further inquiry.

Deborah Yadav reviews the recent Anglo-Indian anthology, *Curtain Call* (CTR, 2015), the final book in an eight book series from CTR since 2002. Impressively she traverses the contours of the multiple genres in the anthology – academic essays, short stories, poetry and reminiscences.

2017 has been a particularly productive year for Anglo-Indian Studies, with five conferences or workshops, and all of them in India. In January Jadavpur University hosted a researchers' workshop organized by Samita Sen, Dean of the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, Law and Management, and generously supported by Vice Chancellor Suranjan Das. Later that same month, Selvyn Jussy, associate professor in the Department of Linguistics at Calcutta University, organized another Anglo-Indian Studies conference. It included presentations by Anglo-Indian literary icon Irwin Allan Sealy, and the founder of Calcutta Tiljalah Relief and CTR's Anglo-Indian book series, Blair Williams. In August, Merin Simi Raj, assistant professor of humanities and social sciences at IIT Madras, and Robyn Andrews, senior lecturer in Anthropology at Massey University (New Zealand), hosted the largest Anglo-Indian conference to date. It spanned three days and included academic papers from over 30 scholars (more than 150 abstracts were submitted!) and a screening of a new documentary by Harry MacLure (AngloInk) and Richard O'Connor on Chennai's Anglo-Indians and their traditional neighborhoods. The event was honoured with the attendance of several prominent Community leaders—former MP Dr. Beatrice D'Souza, former MP Dr. Charles Dias, former MLA (Tamil Nadu) and current vice president of the All India Anglo-Indian Association, Dr. Oscar Nigli—and local Anglo-Indians as well. Later in August Dr. Dolores Chew, professor of history at Marianopolis University (Montreal), hosted an Anglo-Indian conference at Loreto College in Kolkata. It brought together Anglo-Indian scholars with Community leaders and organisations for a productive exercise in public scholarship. In October Dr. Charles Dias convened a seminar on "Anglo-Indians and their Future," with participation from Anglo-Indian community leaders and scholars from around India

and the world. Increasing numbers of such gatherings and the high level of interest and participation from new and emerging scholars surely bode well for this field of interdisciplinary inquiry, and the Anglo-Indian Community itself.

Dr. Robyn Andrews holds a Ph.D. in social anthropology from Massey University in New Zealand, where she is a senior lecturer in anthropology. Her Ph.D. thesis was on the Anglo-Indian Community (2005), about which she continues to research and write extensively in collaboration with other scholars in Anglo-Indian Studies who belong to various disciplines. Contactable via R.Andrews@massey.ac.nz

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