

Analysing the Anglo-Indian Identity: An Adolescent's Quest for Belonging in Ruskin Bond's *The Room on the Roof*

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Abstract: This paper aims at a critical reading of Ruskin Bond's first novel, *The Room on the Roof* (1956), in order to examine how an adolescent Anglo-Indian experiences cultural anxiety in a varying postcolonial Indian landscape. British Empire left an indelible mark in the geopolitical fabric of the subcontinent after two centuries of colonial rule. Anglo-Indians, being a product of miscegenation and cultural annexation, left at the mercy of independent India by the British, were culturally and politically forced to make voluntary adjustments in the new changing geopolitical landscape. The hyphenated being of the community awoke suspicion and antipathy among their compatriots forcing a feeling of insecurity and rootlessness among its members. Cultural markers which distinguished them from the public: language, religion, cuisine, and clothing, became indicators for marginalisation. Ruskin Bond, being an Anglo-Indian himself, reflects upon the issues of growing up in India and their changing lifestyle and ideals, in his first novel, *The Room on the Roof*. This paper analyses Bond's attempt at reproducing Anglo-Indian life in Indian landscape; their lifestyle, struggles, and changing attitudes of its new generation members. Bond believes in the adaptability of the community in a testing situation and offers a positive approach to overcome their immediate cultural anxieties. It also enquires how the culturally disillusioned Anglo-Indians adapt to the changing post-colonial world.

Keywords: Anglo-Indian, post-colonialism, cultural identity, third space, imago, hybridity

1. Introduction

While retracing the history of the Indian subcontinent, its European colonial intervention and transaction should be carefully analysed. The British Raj, in a period spanning over two centuries – from mid-eighteenth century to mid-twentieth century – ruled the subcontinent and played a central part in the emergence of an independent Indian nation. The European rule spawned colossal changes in the lives of Indians. Waves of changes in the form of Industrial Revolution, modern communication, and rail transport reached the shores of Indian Ocean from Europe, riding on high mast schooners and brigs. The modernisation of colonial India had begun as a utility to help the coloniser accumulate and transport resources, raw materials, and finished goods to an international market.

At the same time, British rule¹ in India divided the myriad socio-political cultures of the landscape along the lines of religion, language, geographical location, and social standing. Exposure to an alien culture from another geopolitical landscape for over two centuries precipitated changes, appropriations, subversions, and origins of new cultures among the native Indian population. The cultural differences that were produced as a result of this interaction gave rise to new races, classes, hybrid identities, geopolitical locale, and subsequently formed into new communities.

The Anglo-Indian community materialised in India owing to miscegenation between the Europeans and Indians, and was politically acknowledged and divided based on gender.² As noted historian, S. Muthiah rightly points out, “in the 1911 census [when] the government of Lord Hardinge officially termed those of mixed blood, children born of European fathers and Indian mothers and children born of their offspring, as *Anglo-Indians*.” Ruskin Bond, being a

member of the Anglo-Indian community, directly encountered and experienced the colonial and post-colonial India, which formulated a curious cultural position he found himself in during the dusk of Colonial India. Bond reflects his lived experiences as a teenager in his first novel, *The Room on The Roof*. The colonial inheritance he acquired by the virtue of his birth, the immediate social surroundings with which he interacted, and the type of education he received, places him perfectly to delineate the cultural atmosphere of colonial and post-colonial India. Rusty, the protagonist and a fictional twin of Bond, finds himself in a converging canvas of cultures: British, Anglo-Indian, and Indian simultaneously, which places him in a “Third Space.”

Homi K. Bhabha, a contemporary critical theorist, in his *Location of Culture* (1994), describes this cultural enclosure thus: “the non-synchronous temporality of global and national cultures opens up a cultural space – a third space – where the negotiation of incommensurable differences creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences.” Bhabha considers the third space as an important cultural zone where an identity is formed and reformed beyond the boundaries of different cultures habituating around it. The ‘in-between’ space formed between cultural locales facilitates transmission of cultures, generating hybrid cultures. Bhabha, in his *Location of Culture*, explains the construction of *hybridity* as: “interstitial passage between fixed identifications open up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.”

British culture dominated the subcontinent when it was in power, and post-independence, an Indian national culture occupied the prime position, the remaining cultures which did not subscribe to a majoritarian culture had to find refuge in interstitial cultural planes. E. B. Taylor, a reputed cultural anthropologist, defines *culture* as, “a complex whole which include knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” When the British left India, Anglo-Indians, a religiously and linguistically bound ethnic community were forced to adapt to a new horizon without a colonial sun ruling over it. The hybrid nature of the community came under the cultural crosshairs of new India, resulting in a mass migration of members to English speaking Commonwealth countries. Members who stayed back in India, to ensure the survival of the community, were forced to interact, experience, and sustain cultural transactions with the native Indians. They reinvented and readjusted to the world around them and these cultural chameleons constantly adapted their skills for survival. Ruskin Bond reflects on the struggles of the community and their search for a place of belonging, in his novel *Room on The Roof*. His personal encounters lead the narrative as he experienced the society as an insider and an outsider simultaneously, resulting in the formation of an anxious cultural crevice from which the protagonist constantly tries to escape.

Bond portrays Rusty, his Anglo-Indian protagonist, a confused teenager in an alien cultural landscape, being tolerant and open to new cultural interactions and bond formations. Rusty undergoes a cultural transformation by escaping from the European community in Dehra. The time he invested in an Indian village in Dehra opens up a multicultural world in front of him: a multilingual, pluri-religious, and caste-ridden society which provokes his cultural identity. Colonial prejudice bound in an Anglo-Indian teenager by a strict British guardian and a tightly knit European community undoes itself with his interaction with the despised ‘other’. Rusty befriends Indians and earns his livelihood in an Indian society, leading to his wilful participation in the community and a formulation of hybrid cultural transactions. Bond’s cultural position and colonial heritage provide him insights about the synchronic subcontinental culture characterised by its distinct individuality and extreme adaptability and not by cultural predation, stasis or binarism.

Rusty throughout the novel is in a constant search for a place of belonging. Being the only Anglo-Indian in a European settlement, the sixteen-year-old orphan copied the culture of the British and immersed himself in it. As political scientist and historian Benedict Anderson opines in his seminal work, *Imagined Communities* (1983), “it was precisely the sharing with the metropole of a common language (and common religion and common culture) that had made the first national imaginings possible.” Rusty practised the religion of the British nation and spoke their

tongue, his education, manners, cuisine and clothing made him identify with the culture of his father as he unconsciously repressed the culture of his mother. By breaking away from the European settlement, Rusty participates and witnesses his British cultural identity being lost at the border of the “country district of blossoming cherry trees” (Bond 10). The fair skinned boy takes a cultural leap into India and breaks his binary connection between the culture of a majority and a minority. The ‘in-between’ cultural position provides him with an alternative perspective through which he experiences and analyse the complexity of the present post-colonial world.

From this alternative perspective, Bond portrays the cultural anxiety and identity crisis of an Anglo-Indian teenager and the gradual changes in his opinions and interactions with an alien Indian society and its culture. The author depicts a changing social mentality of the community post-independence and their need for making linguistic adjustments. English, the mother tongue of the community, being the ruling language of the colonial India had provided them with privileges in the societal hierarchy. English language became a cultural marker of the European masters and Anglo-Indians along with their Christian religion. But as Anglo-Indian leader and historian, Frank Anthony opined in *Britain's Betrayal in India* (1969), “their hyphenated designation, implying a community of mixed blood, [perhaps] conjures up a contemptuous vision” among the British and Indians. Anglo-Indians faced discrimination simultaneously from the coloniser and the colonised as they held one-half of the despised-other inside them. The identity crisis followed, forced the community to hold on to their culture and hybridise it at the same time. This paper aims to trace the Anglo-Indian identity recorded in *The Room on the Roof* by regarding the post-colonial interactions and interventions that hybridised the cultural identity of Anglo-Indians.

In order to equip the Anglo-Indian community to a post-colonial India, Bond stresses on the importance of avoiding reminiscing to a period of colonial superiority, and reiterates the necessity for the community to stride along with Indians, through his teenage protagonist Rusty. Rusty embraces his diverse encounters and experiences in the multicultural world of India, and contrasts it with his disciplined European back ground. The lived experiences of Rusty in an Indian village provide Bond with adequate evidence to construct an optimistic post-colonial cultural view for the new Anglo-Indian. Bond disturbs the created negative stereotyping of an Anglo-Indian in literature by presenting the community from the inside.³

This paper reflects the life of an Anglo-Indian adolescent brought up in a European settlement inside the subcontinent, his escape into post-colonial India, the resultant interactions and challenges he faced with his personal integration into the Indian cultural fabric, while retaining his Anglo-Indianness. It compares and contrasts the European and Indian attitude towards the deracinated protagonist in terms of his appearance, language, manners and food habits. It also analyses the formation of a third space between the contact zones of two different cultures and the formulation of a hybrid cultural existence. The paper concludes by depicting the cultural anxiety experienced by the protagonist and his ensuing search for home in the Indian social structure.

2. Alien at Home

Ruskin Bond, an Anglo-Indian in post-colonial India, had witnessed the paradigmatic shift of a majoritarian culture, from British to Indian. The British position of power and social superiority faded away with Indian independence and a multicultural world of India awaited an Anglo-Indian who chose to stay back. Born in colonial India in 1934, Bond witnessed both the British Raj and post-colonial India. His English education in a colonial and post-colonial background, and exposure to different geopolitical ethos positively fashioned cultural hybridity in Bond. The multiplicity of cultures he encountered at different contact zones of India and abroad helped him to develop and understand the ambivalent cultural position of the Anglo-Indians in a global context. Bond empathised with the multiple cultures he encountered, and his adolescent anxieties are evidently reflected in his first novel, *The Room on the Roof*, which he completed during his teenage years in England.

Rusty, his fictional twin, harbours reservations about his appearance and compares his features with everyone else in his geographical locale. “His guardian was pink, and the missionary’s wife a bright red, but Rusty was white” (Bond 11). The question of racial comparison unconsciously infiltrated his inquisitive adolescent mind posing a question of belonging. Geographically placed in India, yet at the same time belonging to an alien culture, a European cultural prejudice saturated the inhabitants of the community who culturally located themselves outside India. As Edward Said opines in his seminal work *Orientalism* (1978), “no Westerner needed ever to see himself, mirrored in the eyes of the subject race, as anything but a vigorous, rational, ever-alert young Raj.” By voluntarily excluding themselves from a multicultural society and by refusing to intermingle with Indians, the European community of Dehra held on to a racial and cultural superiority stemmed from an obsolete colonial vanity.

Rusty identifies himself with the European community which raised him. In the beginning of the novel, Rusty regularly compares his reflection in the dressing table mirror with a European image he had in his mind. But the reflected image of a white boy, “who looked slightly Mongolian” (Bond 11), poses a racial question at him and his search for an answer destabilises his cultural heritage. The image he observes in the mirror turns into his imago by which his subconscious identifies a cultural bond with the community. Jacques Lacan defines *imago* as “an image that is seemingly predestined to have an effect.” The perceived imago of “a fair Mongolian” unsettles Rusty and the mystery surrounding his parents enhances his suspicion. Bond faced suspicions and anxieties about his identity in the subcontinent and later in England, dislocated away from his familiar cultural plane. It is important to note that, while completing the novel in England, far removed from home, his protagonist was searching for an identity and a home.

The geographical dislocation forced Bond to hold on to his homeland links and is subsequently reflected in the novel. Being an Anglo-Indian in England was culturally challenging as the ‘Indian’ inside him was looked on with suspicion bordering on revulsion by the British. Herbert Stark in his Anglo-Indian treatise, *Hostages to India* (1936), points out how British society considered it a political inconvenience to have Anglo-Indians in England because “the imperfections of the children, whether bodily or mental, would in process of time be communicated by intermarriage to the generality of people of Great Britain.” Placed inside the territory, yet outside its culture, Bond’s nostalgia for his homeland created new dimensions for Rusty.

Bond presents Rusty as the only adolescent in his community, but his manners and attire separated him from the rest of his peers. With his “flannel trousers, sandals, [and] the thick hide belt around his waist” (Bond 3), Rusty was an Englishman in costume, but to outsiders Rusty represented the European image of a white boy as Somi notes, “A European boy was no longer a common sight in Dehra” (Bond 1). After Indian Independence, most of the Europeans settled in Dehra left the country, for Britain, and the presence of a European raised curiosity in Indians. Somi, a turban-clad boy from Punjab, befriends Rusty, and his interactions with others from his village in Punjabi isolated Rusty from their cultural interactions due to his linguistic deficiency. English, the lingua franca of the Europeans became obsolete among the Indians. Somi conversed in English to Rusty while he mutely listened to a foreign tongue spoken by the Indians around him. The inability to communicate with the society around him or to connect with their culture burdened Rusty with cultural apprehension which he subconsciously blames on the insulate nature of his culture.

For Alison Blunt, in her *Domicile and Diaspora* (2005), British domesticity in India meant “reproducing an empire within as well as beyond home”. The country born Anglo-Indians, more European than the Indian, imagined Britain as their homeland and thought of themselves as part of an imperial diaspora in British India. Rusty, follows this imaginary identification with his fatherland and becomes a victim of de-colonisation in due process. The constructed imago of an Englishman is shattered when Rusty observes his imperfect reflection in the dressing table mirror and he faces the question of racial purity on the day of Holi, the Indian festival of colours. Rusty breaches his societal contract and secretly participates in Holi, a religious festival, in the

Indian village by spraying himself in colours. The boys in the village accept Rusty and when Ranbir states: "Now you are one of us" (Bond 26), Rusty sheds his European outfit. His participation in the ritual provides him with a newfound understanding towards Indian culture and a sense of belonging among his peers and in his motherland.

In contrast to what Rusty experiences in a day, his guardian, Mr. John Harrison, an Englishman in India, who embodies the colonial prejudice and superiority of his culture believes in what Edward Said later detailed in his *Orientalism* (1978), "no Oriental was ever allowed to see a Westerner as he aged and degenerated". A European who socialized with Indians and their culture was considered as an outcast by the racially proud European. When Harrison catches a glimpse of Rusty soaked in colours, his rage is justified by the cultural superiority he represents. By throwing Rusty out of his home and labelling him "filth", Harrison punishes the boy for crossing the inherited cultural boundaries and questions his identity by uttering the words: "How can you call yourself an Englishman?" (Bond 29). Rusty, sealed inside the ethnic boundary of Britishness, receives his ultimate cultural shock when Harrison unravels his heritage and humiliates him for not restraining his hunger for the barbaric Indian culture. The revelation by Harrison, "You look like the Mongrel that you are" (Bond 29) reduces Rusty to a nobody and he instantly becomes a traitor and an outsider to the cultural identity he owed allegiance to.

Rusty reacts violently to the situation by exerting force on his guardian. The shattered imago of his English identity persuades him to raise his voice against European authority for the first time in his life. Rusty slaps Harrison and pushes him out of his home. Rusty's realisation that "he could inflict pain" (Bond 30), attests to his ruthless expression of cultural disinheritance. Rusty becomes a stranger in his spatial setting, physically alienated from India and Europe overnight, as his ethnicity constantly questions his cultural allegiance. He faces the question of definition in a society, and being uprooted from his cultural plain, the adolescent escapes into India to search for a place of belonging.

Bond won the John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize for his first novel, *Room on the Roof*, in 1957. Being an Anglo-Indian, and writing in English about life in India, he represented the dilemmas he faced when he discovered the real 'India'. Although being kindly received by the Western readership and critics and awarded a prestigious honour for a Commonwealth writer under thirty for 'an outstanding literary achievement', Bond was criticised by John Wain for writing in "*babu* English". *Babu* English and *chee chee* English are pejorative colonial terms reserved for an Anglo-Indian and his limited linguistic capability in English. Bond's hybrid culture becomes a negative marker in the eyes of a European when the language he speaks is illegitimated by the British linguistic pride. John Spencer, a sociolinguist, evaluates the regional attitudes towards the English language spoken by Anglo-Indians in colonial India thus:

Predictably, the British in India provided [the Anglo-Indians] and their accent with a pejorative name, *chee-chee*; British attitudes towards the accent also appear to have been absorbed by many middle-class Indians.

Of all the cultural markers that create a collective identity for a community, its lingua franca holds a vital position. The English of the Anglo-Indian fashioned familial and societal bonds between the members as well as made interactions with the outside world possible. By delegitimizing a language as subpar, the expression of a community is irreverently questioned and their position in the social pyramid challenged. Bond formulated all these uncertainties and angst of an Anglo-Indian adolescent into Rusty while conceiving and reproducing him in letters.

Salman Rushdie remarks about being an Indian English writer outside India in *Imaginary Homelands* (1992) as, "to be an Indian writer in this society is to face, every day, problems of definition. What does it mean to be 'Indian' outside India?" An adolescent Bond resisted his physical alienation from India while writing as an outsider in England by holding on to the experiences of his homeland. Intersections of culture Bond came into contact with equipped him

to tackle the changing post-colonial world and to appreciate the multicultural nature of his community in a global perspective.

Rusty restructures his identity at the intersection of cultures he finds himself in and gradually adapts to an Indian life. On the night of his escape, he survives his mortifying existential crisis by seeking shelter in the village of Dehra. "It was a vast empty space" (Bond 33), thought Rusty when he finds the village ground, as it symbolises the anxious liminal space he occupied between British and India. The rainy night he spent alone on a "hollow under the bench" (Bond 33), provided Rusty with an independent space of his own: one which is neither English or Indian. The formation of a spatial crevice at the intersection of cultural boundaries ensured sanctuary and a hope for survival to the colonial refugee.

Later, Rusty becomes his own master by earning employment at the Kapoor household and lodging himself at the room on the roof. The room provides Rusty with an open view into the Indian landscape. "In his room, Rusty was a king. His domain was the sky and everything he could see" (Bond 66). The village water tank outside the room, where the village came daily to bathe, educates Rusty about the rustic Indian lifestyle as he interacts with Indians. By being independent and earning a position in the society, Rusty acclimatises himself to an Indian setting without colonial prejudices or reservations. He forms jovial ties with his peers: Somi, Ranbir, and Kishan, and each of them becomes a window for Rusty to understand the new cultural space he inhabits.

Rusty redefines his cultural identity to belong in his new home. Stuart Hall, a noted cultural theorist, describes *cultural identity* in his essay, *Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation* (1989) as, "a collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves'" and in the case of Rusty, finding a 'true self' was next to impossible. He severs his British roots to find meaning from a post-colonial India without ruminating on the cultural narratives of his past. In the spectrum of cultures, Rusty fluxes between the paradoxical polarities of British and India. What determines his identity surfaces from his response to the contradicting cultural contexts he interacts with and how the experiences harmoniously co-exists inside him, thereby, transforming him into a modern heir of multiculturalism. Hall also stresses on the importance of the uniqueness of a culture⁴ by analysing cultural overlaps that provide meanings to the existence of a new cultural identity. Hall further clarifies: "Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of *becoming* as well as *being*. It belongs to the future as to the past." The duality of the cultural roots identified and retained inside Rusty, reinforces his ability to adapt into a cosmopolitan society.

3. Adopting the 'Indian' while adapting to the Indian

Rusty opens his senses to the cultural synthesis of India by living in the village of Dehra. He interacts with diverse religions, experiences various cuisines, practices new customs, and clothes himself in different outfits. The Indianisation of the adolescent Anglo-Indian nurtures in him a newfound respect and familiarity to his motherland. Somi, a turbaned Sikh, befriends Rusty and takes him under his wing in the beginning of the novel. As a displaced Punjabi and a witness of religious persecution following the Partition of India, Somi and his family shelters Rusty. Rusty's outfit, borrowed from Somi consists of a "long white shirt" with "high collar and broad sleeves" and "a pair of white pajamas" (Bond 38), contrasted with his familiar fashion of clothing and promptly converts him into an Indian youth. The life in the village helps him comprehend his cultural multiplicity and seek answers to his ethnic angst.

Bond focuses on the integration of his protagonist into the cultural fibre of India. By appreciating the local smells and flavours, Rusty cultivates a palate for Indian food and his frequenting the *chaat-wallah* with his friends attests to his approval of the societal eating habits in his locale. Bond describes the chaat shop owner as a "shining god" as "with his deft, practised fingers, he moulded and flipped potato cakes in and out of the pan" and served "it in plates made out of banana leaves" (Bond 15). Rusty's time in the village of Dehra begins with him donning Somi's clothes and

eating a meal “consisted of curry and curd and chapattis⁶⁷” (Bond 39), which are evidently Indian. Rusty becomes a regular visitor at the chaat-shop consuming *tikkees*, *alu-cholle* and *gol-guppas*, while socializing with Indians and their culture. His voluntary adoption of an Indian lifestyle provides him emotional and cultural respite, as he discovers a place he belongs in.

The daily routines of the Anglo-Indian changes with his arrival in the village. Like all the villagers, he fetches water for himself in a *bhisti* (water carrier) and bathes at the village tank. He travels around the village with Somi in his bicycle and immerses himself in the hustle and bustle of India. Rusty experiments with regional remedies to alleviate the effects of tropical climate, pest problems, and for his personal care. He participates in local gatherings and interacts with his peer group by playing local sports like cricket, football and hockey. Bicultural existence of Rusty at a cultural interface is reflected in the way he converses to his friends. Martin Nakata defines *Cultural Interface* as, “the intersection of the Western and Indigenous domains.” When Rusty exclaims, “So, *bhai* no chaat shop!” (Bond 81) to Kishen in the novel, it depicts the linguistic influence of the cultural milieu he locates himself at. By integrating Hindi into his mother-tongue English, Rusty transmutes himself into a synchronic multicultural existence through his linguistic adaptability. Nakata delineates the convergence and overlapping of multiple cultures at a spatial zone by stating:

“It is not strictly about the replacement of one with the other, nor the undermining of one by the other. It is about maintaining the continuity of one when having to harness another and working the interaction in ways that serve Indigenous interests.”

Bond's portrayal of a cultural crevice formed by the intersection of conflicting cultures creates what Homi K. Bhabha terms as a “Third Space” in the novel *Room on the Roof*. Rusty, positioned at the cultural juncture gains an accommodating perspective on the multiplicity of cultures and benefits from it through his personal interaction. His search for an identity and a place for belonging rewards the adolescent with a temporary answer during his life in the village which prepares him for a life in post-colonial India.

4. Conclusion

By placing Rusty at a cultural interface, Ruskin Bond represents the lived realities and societal hierarchies existing in post-colonial India. Central to the constructed *imago* and image of Rusty being an outsider were the factors that: 1) he was a product of miscegenation and 2) he possessed a hybrid cultural identity. This dual quality was viewed with apprehension, which in turn delegitimised and questioned his existence in India and England. The demands of identifying himself with a specific nationality compels Rusty into leading a hybrid cultural life which he gradually eases himself into. The challenges that arise out of Rusty's life point towards the problems of ethnicity, language, religion and nationality that it becomes particularly important to give attention to such issues which are excessively in vogue.

Writing from the inside of the Anglo-Indian community, Bond not only challenges the negative stereotypes that are in place, but effectively breaks them when he finds answers to the questions regarding his search for a place to belong in his motherland by formulating Rusty, an heir to a multicultural post-colonial world, as being fully aware of his identity through his real, cultural transactions. As he occupies the “Third Space” in the room on the roof and becomes a part of India which moves forward, his assimilation into the social fabric of the country is complete. Rusty emerges as an individual who comes into terms with his identity and matures into a confident human being aware of his bicultural existence.

Bond unmistakably discloses his own trepidations as Rusty's ambitions and anxieties, which are presented openly when Rusty responds to Kishen in the novel by stating, “I'm going to be a writer. I'll write books. You'll read them.” (Bond 59). As the prophetic words of the author materialize in the future, the existential question he pondered over in his adolescence provides

him with a clearer answer which he states in the introduction of the novel, 37 years after its first publication, thus: “I have since answered these questions for myself, certain that I am Indian as the dust of the plains or the grass on the meadow.”

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Notes

- ¹ Shashi Tharoor, in his *Inglorious Empire* (2017), isolates the legacy of the British Raj by examining the impact of the imperial enterprise on the subcontinent thus: “with the shattering of age-old barriers and the erection of new ones within India, [through] the resultant mongrelization of language and culture; the tug of conflicting loyalties to family, caste, religion, country and Empire; and, above all, the irresistible lure of lucre, the most profound animating spirit of the colonial project.”
- ² According to the Constitution of India, Article 366(2), to be considered as an Anglo-Indian, a person’s ancestry must be tracked back to a European forefather and not to a European maternal line.
- ³ Bryan Peppin, in his critical work *Black and White* (2012), places Ruskin Bond, Allan Sealy, and Frank Anthony together as ‘the Insiders.’ For, they provided, through their works, the reader with an inside picture of the community without reducing the characters into stereotypical tropes.
- ⁴ Stuart Hall, in his essay, *Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation* (1989), remarks that the constructed cultural binaries of ‘one experience, one identity’ should be challenged. He emphasises on the importance of ‘a second view of cultural identity’ by acknowledging ‘its other side’ through disruption and discontinuities, constitute a unique cultural identity for a community.

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