

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

This study with an exclusive focus on Indian women characters in Meadows Taylor's novels yield some very interesting conclusions - with regard to the two important issues involved. They are : the limitations of an Anglo-Indian writer in depicting the socio-political encounter between two cultures and posing moral issues implicit in such kind of encounter between the ruler and the ruled and the role that Indian women play in dramatizing the encounter between two cultures and posing moral issues implicit in such kind of encounter.

With regard to the limitations of an Anglo-Indian writer, it may be said that generally an Anglo-Indian writer is authentic with regard to the British characters, that their depiction of the Indian world is necessarily thin and uncertain. But because their view has always been influenced by the prevalent intellectual attitudes, the response towards India also kept on changing. Beginning with the Imperial and Conservative moods of the early nineteenth century, British attitude towards India passed through the Utilitarian-Evangelical phase upto the mid-Victorian period and were replaced by new-conservatism because of the events of the Mutiny. This was finally changed to Authoritarian-Liberalism of the eighties upholding the idea of 'the White Man's

Burden'. During each of these phases, Anglo-Indian Fiction has depicted the changes while reacting to the intellectual climate in England. Therefore, this is the common tradition which a Kipling shares with a Taylor. However, the attitudes prevalent when Taylor wrote were much different than when Paul Scott wrote, when perhaps the Britishers wrote much more confidently about themselves. But when Taylor wrote, the writers belonging to his period took pride in writing authentically about Indians. Therefore, we see that some Anglo-Indian novels do not have English characters. For example, Taylor's Confessions of a Thug (except the Scriber who makes notes), and Hockley's Pandurang Hari. However, Taylor's novels under study show two sets of Indian scenes. In one, like Tara and The Noble Queen there are no Englishmen. The earlier is on India of Mahratta period and the later is about sixteenth century Moghul India. Therefore, bringing the British and their Raj tactics is out of question. In the remaining two novels, Ralph Darnell and Seeta, the British are very much there as conquerors - once in Plassy and later in the Mutiny. Even then, the British he has portrayed are stiff and could not give them disciplined expression. Because of this, the encounter we have in these novels are of a different type. The internal religious, fundamental issues like a Muslim marrying a Hindu ( in Tara ) where the British are not the party at the encounter, are presented. His 'experiment' of this type gives an impression that Taylor is sympathetic to the Muslims. This attitude

changes after 1857 and sympathy turns into antagonism.

The second issue, with which this study is involved, is the role that Indian women play in dramatizing the encounter. Taylor, like all other Anglo-Indian male fiction writers, has a limited inward knowledge of Indian homes. Only women writers who were born here or who were missionaries, could write very good descriptions of Indian homes and the women at work. Taylor's description of Indian women who are confined to their outward beauty, their dress, and some superficial knowledge of culture and society in which they behave. But one thing must be said that Taylor's attempt to hold the positive sides up when two negative elements of a society are put together, he makes the woman more virtuous. Therefore, very poignantly (though with the exception of one i.e. Ralph Darnell) are titled in the name of their female characters. In Ralph Darnell, the situation ~~is British upheaval~~, he did not perhaps, dare to give the name of the Muslim girl, Noor-Ul-Nissa's name to his novel and aptly, like an Englishman, names it as Ralph Darnell.

Taylor's novels under study, are all necessarily historical romances with loose and leisurely characterizations idealized at the cost of truth. According to the famous historian of Anglo-Indian Fiction, Bhupal Singh, Tara's marriage to a Mohammedan gallant is like Scott were to marry Rebecca to Ivanhoe 'uncommon' improbable and Seeta's marriage to Cyril is 'impossible.'<sup>1</sup>

However, as a student of literature, one can study Taylor's Tara or Seeta as characters, who have entered into non-conventional marriage bonds. And Taylor is a trend-setter in this direction, to produce eminent writers like steel, E.W. Savi, Penny, Perrin, Markandaya etc. who have created much better Indian women characters.

#### REFERENCES

1. Bhupal Singh, A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction, (London : OUP, 1934), P. 52.