

CONCLUSION

I

This study is essentially an attempt to view certain Anglo-Indian texts, normally used by historians for their factual contents, as literature. The informative content is definitely there. The heroic saga of the Rajput clans, the mysterious hinterland of India, the human comedy behind the facade of the British Raj, the colourful historical epochs and personages of India's past, these are the things that Tod, Heber, Miss Eden and Taylor wanted to convey to an appreciative audience in England. But the reality they presented was subjective, coloured by their own personality and imprinted upon by the colonial discourse of the day. Their intention was more to delight than to inform. The facts are certainly important but more so are the artefacts they used. The texts included in this study denote the very beginning of Anglo-Indian literature, the first fruits of the cultural encounter between India and England. As such they have their roots in the deep Indian experience. In a way this literature is born out of the Anglo-Indians' struggles to give form and shape to their personal and racial experience in the sub-continent. There were two options before them. They could have conveyed what they experienced and saw in a blank, matter of fact historical form. However, they chose

the other option and tried to give their experience a literary form, complex, deeply human and vital. They show the ability to transform experience into fictional structures without being too literary. In their writings one cannot fail to notice the qualities of literature such as the ability to capture the whole cultural ethos, to formulate human crises into universal considerations, to cut through the heap of misinformation about people and events and to clear the ground for future mutual appraisal. What transforms these texts, historical or otherwise, into literature is the presence of the constants of literature. We find deviations in them which makes social and historical facts the base of literature. Similarly the historical characters they describe are more than mere actors on a set stage and the aim behind their creation is more than historical authenticity. Each of the authors have adopted a particular form of narration, - fiction, travelogue, diary and history. Each shows a particular attitude towards India and each is conscious of the readership at home. They take into account the responses of people in England and try to create an India without letting the Indianess disappear.

The comparisons and perspectives adopted for the evaluation of these works are not only meant to determine the influences but also to identify through comparison and analysis the literary structures in works which barring those of Meadows Taylor, essentially belong to the non-literary genres.

The main points of reference are the works of Walter Scott, Anthony Trollope, Charles Dickens and Jane Austen.

In the course of this study a number of points of contact have been established between the works of these writers and ^{the} classics

of English literature and also a number of affinities among these authors themselves. There are similarities between Scott and Tod, Scott and Taylor and Austen and Miss Eden.

As far as Bishop Heber is concerned the literary influences are wider and more general. Chronologically Tod is the first among the four writers and he shows the romantic excitement in discovering a new culture. At the other end of the spectrum stands Meadows Taylor in whose latter works one hears the first discordant notes emerging from the clash of two cultures.

Between these two there is the whole panorama of India reflected by Miss Eden and Bishop Heber whose diary and journal present the land and its people shorn off the romantic veneer. Each writer confronts India as a living, throbbing culture and his or her literary venture strikes us as a dialogue between India and the western mind. Later on education and cultural contacts increased but barriers were erected between the two races. No future Bishop of Calcutta would meet a Shankaracharya. These British intellectuals did not certainly produce classics but their works are alive and vital because of the zest with which they gave themselves to India. They had not the ability to write classics but they did not miss the point and draw a stereotyped and faceless India that we come across in most

writings of the post mutiny era. They display the twin tendencies of great literary vigour and relatively unbiased view only to be found in Forster.

As hinted earlier the period under consideration forms a bright moment in the Indo-British relationship prior to the great racial divide of 1857. If the same attitudes both on the British and Indian sides ^{had} continued the history of colonialism in India would have been different and so too the history of India. The story of this relationship got vitiated when selfish motives gained the upperhand. Basically the English were decent colonialists and the Anglo-Indians included in this study are a symbol of the best among the English lot that came to India : Bishop Heber a liberal clergyman, Emily Eden an aristocratic memsahib, James Tod a farsighted administrator and Meadows Taylor a broad-minded humanist. Often the attitudes of the colonialists depended upon the background from which they came to India. The bourgeois and the lower middle class Englishmen and women were generally snobbish and overbearing. The educated gentry who took up handsome appointments were a class above. By a coincidence all these four were descendants of noble families with noble traditions. Naturally they did not share in the tendencies of exploiters, extortionists, womanizers, profligates and trigger happy adventurers who tarnished the British image in India. Fortunately these elements were a minority but unfortunately

they had more than their fair share in shaping the Indian attitude towards the British in India. This study reveals that there were Englishmen who were frank in admitting the British failures, bold in questioning the company's policies and who did not love England less but loved India more. These Anglo-Indians identified themselves with the imperial project in India but they did not adhere to the imperialist view of India. They were not blind to the actualities of this land but at the same time they were not blind to the glory that was India. James Tod and Meadows Taylor were uncovenanted servants of John Company but they showed uncommon largesse of heart and courage in questioning the political and economic policies of the Raj and in fighting just battles on behalf of the natives. In spite of their private misfortunes and disappointments, they spent their whole lives in the service of the people entrusted to their care. Both returned to England as sad men; one broken in health, the other broken in spirit at the wave of cruelty that the British and the Indians were capable of unleashing. Bishop Heber died a premature death but not before he wrote his travelogue, an accurate picture of the nineteenth century India, with a sympathetic appraisal of her peoples and his corrective advice to the British administration. Emily Eden felt like an exile in India but she drowned her sense of exile and boredom in her laughter at the eccentricities and oddities of the natives and the facade and showmanship of the Raj.

It will not be an exaggeration to say that their works also symbolizes the best among the Anglo-Indian literature barring the works of Kipling and Forster who were the products of a later age and who wrote from totally different standpoints. To read through Bishop Heber's travelogue is to embark upon a literary pilgrimage through the heart of the nineteenth century India with all its blemishes and all its glories, to go into a past which has been wiped out by the tide of history. It is certainly a fresh discovery of the past. Emily Eden's 'Up the Country' is totally a different kind of work. It is an intellectual's treat, a golden interlude on the funny side of the Raj and at the same time it is a revelation into the heart and mind of an aristocratic memsahib who had been given by destiny an opportunity to see India, her rulers and her people from a vantage point. Tod who penetrated the doctoral walls of prejudice and identified himself with the chivalrous Rajputs has left a historical monument which has become one of the most cherished legacies left to posterity by Anglo-Indian intellectuals. Meadows Taylor attempted nothing less in scope. His favourite was the great theme of East-West cultural dialogue. To go through his historical novels is to traverse through India's romantic past in the company of an English guide. There is no intention to class these works among flawless literary masterpieces. However since the judgement of literature is subjective and there are no

acid tests to prove something as literature, one can only conclude that the works under consideration do contain sufficient elements that please all and please always. That being so their kinship is with the family of literature. It is an irony of fate that such genuine works of literary merits should generate academic interest only among historians.

That Tod's Annals should be praised and over-praised as a historical document seems quite natural in retrospect. Literary historians and academicians have limited themselves to Kipling and Forster and occasionally to the Mutiny novelists and novelists of the imperial sunset, leaving the rest to the historians and sociologists. In this bargain Tod has become a prerogative of the historians. In fact Tod never considered himself a pure historian and classified his Annals as materials of history rather than a historical text. If we read his Annals and Travels in Western India at a stretch we will come to the conclusion that the Annals is not history according to modern standards of historiography and his Travels is not a travelogue, at least not like Heber's Narrative of a Journey. Tod's Scottish background and his sanguine temperament found an empathy with the then defeated yet chivalrous Rajputs. He fell in love with Rajputana, particularly Mewar and fell in love with the Rajput virtues and vices. Since love generates both understanding and admiration there is hardly any trace

of racial superiority in his writings. His ambition for the Rajputs was akin to that of Byron who wanted the Greeks to be a free nation. His sense of romanticism was that of people who discovered ancient civilizations and were fascinated by them.

In chapter two, "History as Fiction" an attempt has been made to pinpoint the fictional devices employed by Tod in re-telling the story of the Rajputs. He cast his Annals in the manner of re-telling history in the romantic vein quite similar to the bardistic traditions of Rajasthan. Though influenced by Gibbon's style Tod had not Gibbon's perspective on the flow of historical events. What he did was to invest a historical perspective into a mass of legend, folklore and myth. Like Scott he adopts the standpoint of a historical thinker, an ideologist recounting the saga of a heroic race through the vicissitudes of centuries. Special emphasis has been laid on his scheme of prefiguration, emplotment, characterization, dialogue and description. He remoulds his characters in the manner of the father of historical novel. Some of them like Rana Pratap, Krishna Kumari and Rani Padmini get imprinted in the minds of his readers for ever. Occasionally he makes use of dialogues and descriptions quite like a historical novelist with remarkable effects. One can very well ennumerate the various aspects of Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan but if one tries to define it he is bound to look like one of the characters in the story

of "the blindmen and the elephant". This monumental work does not lend itself for a neat definition just as Tod's genius lies beyond stereotyped identification. Apparently his masterpiece has all the characteristics of a scholarly historical document yet in its totality we cannot accept it as genuine history in the modern analytical sense. It is not mere history nor it is a collection of myths and folktales. Similarly though it has an underlying epic dimension and the vastness of an epic canvas it cannot be called a prose epic. And despite the fact that it exhibits certain characteristics of the historical romance it will be an injustice to limit it to the level of a historical novel.

Bishop Heber, the pastor and traveller was a different character from Tod, the indianised nabob. He was romantic in outlook, liberal in his views but devoted to his high Anglicanism. What more, this early nineteenth century British divine appears to be more understanding and tolerant towards India than twentieth century educated and alienated Indians like V.S. Naipaul, Nirad Chaudhri and their tribe of ivory tower intellectuals. Bishop Heber noticed the squalor and filth in India and was aware of her superstitious and revolting religious and social practices. However he did not pontificate like the lesser members of the High Church of England. He was humane and charitable even while condemning practices such as sati, infanticide, child-marriages and untouchability. The saintly Bishop could keep his good humour

inspite of the social decadence he noticed. In fact he could keep it much better than a later traveller, Mark-Twain, the anti-colonial humourist who was not at all amused by the sights he saw in India especially at Allahabad and Benaras. Barring his occassional missionary blindspot with regards to Hinduism, Bishop Heber's journal shows deep sympathy and admiration for the people of India. His journey across this land was a pastoral visit to the far flung posts of a religious empire. His diocese at that time extended from Madeira to Calcutta; in India from the Himalayas to the Nilgiris. The breadth of his vision is almost in proportion to the breadth of his religious empire, God's vast kingdom. He had the generosity to embrace the whole world as his parish.

Heber's Narrative of a Journey has another dimension to it. It is a literary pilgrim's progress through the heart of an alien culture. His own intimate responses, reactions, thoughts and ideas are recorded in it without any thought to the form or nuance of literature. Yet in it we notice the sublimity and simplicity associated with literature. The journal is also a reflection of his three-fold encounter with India, as a zealous Bishop, an observant traveller and a sensitive human being. Sensitized to multi-cultural experience, he was essentially an explorer, prepared to find what is there and not a discoverer who goes ahead with certain hypothesis of what is to be found. As a man of literature

what he finds is unity in diversity and the fundamental oneness of mankind. His encounter with India results in an intellectual growth, a broadening of his vision. His protestantism, his missionary angularity, his aversion to pagan customs, all these are subdued by his encounter with the East.

Apart from the sympathy it displays and the Christian cosmic vision it offers what makes this journal a work of literature is the presence of literary devices employed quite consciously. Heber does not strain at characterization but in a few bold strokes he leaves vivid picture of characters that attract him. The Maratha warrior Trimbukjee, Swami Narayan, the Kolees and the beggars at Benaras are particularly memorable. More important are his descriptions of the truly sublime in nature : the foot-hills of the Himalayas, the rice fields of Bengal and the lonely, sublimity and melancholic aura of Jaipur palaces. All along his journal we also find instances of genuine humour, wit and concealed irony. Moreover Heber shows the ability and humility to laugh at himself and at the trials and privations of an arduous journey across an alien land. Above all as an Oxford scholar Heber had at his disposal a chaste and apt literary language which was an advantage above the other British intellectuals under the purview of this study. The verbal felicity of Heber's style makes his journal a delightful reading.

Emily Eden's Up the Country can be considered as a serial journal but somehow it differs from Heber's Narrative of a Journey. Miss Eden, Lord Auckland's sister, never felt at home in India. She was always drawn to the whig aristocratic circle which had its headquarters at Holland House and more strongly to the Eden clan. Like the fashionable memsahibs of the time she kept writing letters to her kins at home, especially to her elder sister Eleanor. These letters were later published in a diary form. Miss Eden wrote long letters to drown her sense of exile, boredom and ennui in something more pleasant. Fortunately, unlike many other diaries, swept away in the tide of time, Emily's Up the Country remains a sunny landscape of humour, wit, irony and repartee. A part of it is characteristic of her class but much of it is individualistic. From the pages of her diary there emerges a remarkable woman. To Emily Eden and Fanny, her sister, India was a fabulous land of magnificence and nobility, poverty and barbarity. They never came close to this mixture of splendour and savagery but watched it from a distance and commented on it with detachment, with literary rather than personal interest. It is this quality that distinguishes Miss Eden from Heber, Tod and Taylor. In them the informative content dominates in her, the literary. What she saw, heard and felt was refracted through the prism of her refined and witty and feminine sensibility. Her reactions have a freshness of perception about them, quite individualistic and quite feminine.

Though a child of the romantic age her temperament was realistic and ironic like the Augustans. She had a sense of order, decorum and urbane wit so characteristic of the Age of Reason. She found the pomposity of the Victorian male dominated imperial scenario, the pack of Englishmen who kept up the theatrics of the Raj, the customs and manners of India and life itself with all its trials and triumphs worth laughing at. However in between her laughter and irony she has left little portraits of men and women who mattered then. Historically and aesthetically the most interesting descriptions that she has left are of Indian princelings and the sights and scenes along her progress through India. To this witty woman Raja Ranjitsingh was an old mouse and the Rani of Gwalior an over-dressed kitten. And if solely judged by Miss Eden's impressions, the average Englishmen and women in India during Lord Auckland's time, would invariably appear as a pack of eccentrics. She seems to have a fascination for strange personalities like the Skinner brothers, the nervous hunter Mr. P and the theatrical priest at Simla. Similarly the Anglo-Indians and the half-caste gave Miss Eden ample opportunities for her ironic shots. It is the fine touches of gentle humour, humane wit and irony that transform Up the Country into something more than a literature of self-revelation or emotional release. Eden was the mischievous memsahib who could see through the pomp and facade of the British. If Tod discovered the chivalry of India, Heber her

nobility, Taylor the romance of her history, Miss Eden was the first to notice the absurdity of the Raj. In view of her artistic merits it appears to be an irony of fate that Miss Eden's name is not found in any literary history but is confined to occasional mention in the histories of the Raj. She is a literary artist in her own right, an heir to the twin tendencies of the Romantic and Victorian ages, endowed with a comic-ironic vision, a predilection for the lighter side of life and a benevolently malicious eye for the ridiculous in persons and events, all of which are reflected in her inimitable work Up the Country .

Unlike Emily Eden, Meadows Taylor believed in total involvement with the natives. Probably no other Anglo-Indian writer knew and understood India better. In his responses, reactions and vision of life he tried to identify himself with the people he served. There were only a few like him who could appreciate the nuances of Indian folktales, ballads and even abuses, record the subtlety of eastern sensibility and attempt a cultural dialectic between this country and the West. During his service of two decades or more, he came to understand India, her people, her culture and really appreciate them. What is more, his mind took on an Indian colouring and he began to believe in astrological predictions and omens. He was particularly attracted by the idea of the historical crises in India at every hundredth year and depicted three such epoch making events in Tara , Ralph Darnell and Seeta . By the

time he wrote the last of the trilogy, his sense of the romance of the East and spiritual kinship with India had slowly suffered an erosion. That is why a sense of uneasiness - the thundering of hooves is heard in this novel. His other historical novels Tippoo Sultan and A Noble Queen are based upon the rise and fall of the Tiger of Mysore and Chandbibi of Beejapore. On the other hand his first novel The Confessions of a Thug has no historical theme and it reads like a crime thriller.

Taylor's novels are titled historical romances. As a matter of fact they are a mixture of history, auto-biographia and romance, the autobiographical elements subtly merged into the romantic. Unlike Tolstoy who at the expense of historical truth creates fictional structures from the local fables and local history, Taylor, invents fictional characters and places them against some well-known historical contexts. To an extent his novels are theme oriented rather than story oriented. Once Taylor had a theme in his mind, the plot built itself around in the form of stories within stories just like oriental tales. His fictional men and women neither weave histories nor force historical outcomes. Primarily they weave the web of their own romantic lives against the backdrop of historical crises. Taylor, in fact devotes more footage and care to tales of love and hence he can be legitimately called a chronicler of eastern romance. The one theme that is repeated in everyone of his novels is the power

of love to break down the barriers of caste, race and religion resulting in intercaste or inter-racial marriages. This becomes the invariable motif in his novels. Love is not the stuff of romance alone, it is a synthesizing force that brings about a sense of order in an otherwise chaotic social order. This synthesis operates at different levels; meeting of hearts in mixed marriages, meeting of minds at the cultural level and meeting of individuals at the inter-personal level.

Taylor's fame as an Anglo-Indian novelist largely rests on his ability in approximating the eastern idiom. His use of Indian words, idioms and proverbs is only one of its facets. It is subtler and deeper than the mere linguistic layer. It is rather the ability to think and feel like an Indian and if that is not always possible arrive at an approximation of the Indian mode of thinking. Both the graces and blemishes of his style can be traced to this source. He makes a judicious use of omens, dreams, horoscopes, prophecies and eastern religious and literary symbols quite in the manner of an Indian novelist. This is indeed commendable in a foreigner. On the other hand Taylor seems to have had a mistaken notion about oriental sentimentality. His heroines are generous with their sobs, tears, sighs, screams and fainting fits. Even his ironfisted men share in this weakness. The streak of sentimentality was a feature of the Victorian

novel which was certainly the real model before Taylor. He was directly or indirectly influenced by several novelists of the Romantic and Victorian eras. And it was rather difficult to break away from the prevailing traditions. Hence, in spite of the blemishes his achievements in the field of historical fiction entitle him to a rank as high as that of any of his able contemporaries.

In the final chapter, which in fact is an after thought, I have tried to point out the most obvious stylistic and linguistic features of Anglo-Indian writing. By no means it is an exhaustive study and the approach has been mainly from the view point of literature and not linguistics. When we evaluate Anglo-Indian writings, particularly fiction, from a literary point of view the linguistic manipulations they employed become interesting. The purpose of these writers was to bring India closer to the British reading public as well as to give expression to their creative urge which in a way helped them to surmount the boredom, the ennui and the sense of exile they felt in an alien land surrounded by an alien ethos. While transcribing this alien culture they were forced to use Indianisms for the sake of accuracy, expediency, economy of language or as a spill-over from their speech habits which included a good many native words and idioms.

In the light of semiotic theories, Indian cultural world view or the Indian "house of consciousness" cannot easily be

transcribed into the cultural and literary codes of the British. The principal reason behind the oddities of style and language that we notice in Anglo-Indian writings spring from this difference in the cultural perspectives. Due to their concern for exactness and the non-availability of equivalent literal codes in their own mother tongue, the British intellectuals made use of a variety of Indian expressions. In course of time on account of their exposure to Indian languages they acquired a sort of bilingualism. The writers considered here belong to a period before the Anglo-Indian language developed and got standardized by Hobson and Jonson. There were no dictionaries or glossaries to help them in the task. They adopted a variety of means to encode the rich tapestry of Indian culture and equally rich Indian expressions into codes of their own language and culture. They had recourse to circumlocutions, allusions to known referents, coinages and gestural language. They also opted for Indian words as well as the literal or meta-translations of Indian phrases, idioms and proverbs. An exhaustive study into the nature and practice of such linguistic innovations in Anglo-Indian as well as Indo-Anglian fiction will be worth undertaking.

In the final analysis, this group of writers and their literature stands somewhere between the two extremes of Anglo-Indian literature. On the one hand there are English men and women like Meyers who came into contact with Indian mysticism

and wrote in the manner of the mystics. On the other hand there are the writings of people like Macaulay with their unimaginative deductive approach. Between the two stands the sane and humane reaction to India as exemplified by these writers. This sort of literature can be linked with the writings of ancient travellers like Fa-hien and Huen-Tsang who gave something to India and took away something from her. Again this literature captures that vital moment of mutual discovery which held the promise of a dynamic and mutually fertilizing partnership and therefore displays an antebellum freshness which was lost once the poison of racism was generated during the mutiny. So except for a few deeply ingrained ethnocentric attitudes which prevent a completely dispassionate assessment of the record of their contact with India, their writings remain unsullied by racial or other prejudices. This relative absence of prejudices and biases accounts for a more spontaneous display of artistic talent which in a way compensates for the lack of great aesthetic sophistication, the presence of which does not in any way enhance their clarity of vision. One and a half centuries later, when mankind cannot get away from its racial, religious, caste and colour prejudices, the magnanimity and liberality of these colonialists strike us as extra-ordinary. Their paternalism within the frame work of colonialism appears to be a positive virtue when compared to the systems of oppression and suppression that have since emerged. Their particular

attitude to this land was the result of their mental stance to know and understand India and her people, their intellectual quest. The knowledge they gained through travel, through interaction and through literature broke down the barriers between the two races, if not completely, at least partially. Their literary efforts are thus an eye opener both to the Indians and the English. To the people of Britain this literature is important in a historical sense since it is a pointer to a glorious past, to a humane and rich cultural encounter between two races and two cultures seldom noticed in the history of colonialism. To the people of India it is more important since it is our own heritage, an epoch in our history seen through English eyes.

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