

## Introduction

Philip Meadows Taylor (1808 – 1876) was a British colonial administrator who gained a substantial readership in nineteenth century Britain. An autodidact and polymath, Taylor wrote on a number of subjects including literature, history, politics, and even anthropology. However, it is mainly as a novelist that his fame survives today. These writings of Taylor occupy a distinct place in British colonial literature on India. Writing at a time when the British were consolidating their rule in India, Taylor sought to create a body of ‘authentic’ knowledge on India. As he writes in his autobiography *The Story of My Life*, “I wanted to bring India nearer to England – to bring its people nearer our people.”<sup>1</sup> Such endeavours were not motivated by a simple scholarly interest. Instead, Taylor’s aim was to facilitate the process of governing India. To put it more simply, Taylor wanted to assist the British government in ruling India.

The aim of this study is to examine Taylor’s peculiar contributions to knowledge formation, a knowledge that was shaped by nineteenth century British imperialism. One begins with the basic assumption that a writer is never detached from the society which he addresses in his works. The ideologies, beliefs, and practices of that society materially influence the writer’s production. Various scholars have demonstrated that nineteenth century British writings on India were determined by the peculiar political condition of that period. The nineteenth century marked the heydays of British imperialism, when Britain was consolidating its position in India. The dominant discourse of the period reflected this and constructed India as colonisable.

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Meadows Taylor, *The Story of My Life* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and sons, 1878), 461.

Colonial knowledge is intricately linked with colonial power. As Michel Foucault has shown, “there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.”<sup>2</sup> This fact needs to be mediated upon. Power and knowledge complement each other. Colonial knowledge, which is produced by colonial power relations, sustains, in its turn, those very power relations. It does so by applying various strategies through which certain facts about the colonies are privileged as ‘true’ and ‘authentic’ while other facts are relegated to the background. Thus, in a sense colonial knowledge ‘creates’ the colony. It constructs it as a place where the particular power relation becomes possible.

The function of colonial knowledge is, however, more complex than it appears. As Edward Said has demonstrated, such knowledge tells as much about the colonizers as about the colonized. Hegel shows that self-consciousness is born only through its recognition by another self-consciousness. That is, identity is formed only through the recognition by the Other.<sup>3</sup> For Europe to define itself there must be its other. Asia and Africa (particularly the colonies) served as the Other or the contrasting image of Europe. In recognising the Other, Europe’s “positional superiority” became important. “Positional superiority”, a term borrowed from Said,<sup>4</sup> refers primarily to the domination of Europe over non-European lands. This “positional superiority” allowed Europe to construct its identity as a superior one in comparison to Asia and Africa. The subservient position of Asia and Africa allowed such constructions to remain uncontested in the colonial period.

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<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 28.

<sup>3</sup> Hegel writes, “Self-consciousness exists in itself and for itself, in that, and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it is only by being acknowledged or ‘recognized’.” Georg W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. J. B. Baillie (n.p.: Digireads.com, 2009), 86.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2001), 7.

With these fact in mind one turns to the works of Philip Meadows Taylor. What one comes across is a rich body of texts on India. These texts are not passive conveyors of a pre-determined set of ideas. Rather they creatively participate in the dominant discourse – constructing, sustaining and even challenging it in the process. This point requires elaboration. In representing India, these texts enter into a dialogue with various other texts. Such texts do not necessarily come from a single field of knowledge but rather from divergent disciplines. More importantly, such texts sometimes come from beyond the limits of dominant discourse. Here one needs to widen his notion of ‘texts’ to include not only written works but also oral materials. For instance, Taylor mentions that his personal conversation with a Thug informer (“approver”) helped him to write the novel *Confessions of a Thug*.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, this novel can be, and has been, read as a product of competing discourses. In view of this fact, this study is particularly sensitive to the phenomena of intertextuality.

It has been argued, not without justice, that Taylor’s peculiar position within the colonial scheme of things affected his discourse on India. Indeed his proximity to the colonial “contact zone” lends a peculiar flavour to his works. Contact zone, as Mary Louise Pratt defines, is “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.”<sup>6</sup> Taylor’s position as a colonial administrator exposed him daily to competing discourses. It is natural that his representation of India would differ significantly from the metropolitan writers, who were separated by a wide gulf from the contact zone.

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<sup>5</sup> See chapter IV for details.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 6.

In his book *Orientalism*, Said distinguishes between two levels of Orientalism which he calls Latent and Manifest Orientalism. Said states, “Whatever change occurs in knowledge of the Orient is found almost exclusively in manifest Orientalism; the unanimity, stability, and durability of latent Orientalism are more or less constant.”<sup>7</sup> Latent Orientalism refers to certain basic assumptions which writers writing on the Orient took for granted, like the Orient’s backwardness and weakness. This, according to Said, never changes. What changes, are only style and form of expression. Said obviously privileges Latent Orientalism as the subject of his study. For us the difference in form and style, however, become as much important. It is true that Taylor’s basic contention is similar to any other colonial writer. He held that the Indians benefitted significantly from the British rule, and hence it should be perpetuated for an indefinite period. Where he differed from others is in his representations of the Indo-British encounter. Belonging to a school of thought which was becoming obsolete in the late nineteenth century, Taylor believed that close personal contact with the Indians was essential for British rule to succeed.<sup>8</sup> This was because only minute understanding of Indian culture and society would allow the British to develop effective strategies of governance. That is why his works escape the aloofness and isolation that characterize the writings of some of his contemporaries and descendants.

Philip Meadows Taylor has been called an “adventurer” by his cousin Henry Reeve. The word is not used in a pejorative sense. Reeve compares him to men like Robert Clive and Dupleix who became successful by dint of their indomitable spirit. It is true that Taylor displayed an extraordinary resourcefulness in carving out his own path. From a mere sales-boy, he rose to become the Deputy Commissioner of a district. In between he had been the British agent in a native State. This unusual trajectory of his career greatly added to his

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<sup>7</sup> Said, 206.

<sup>8</sup> For description of Taylor’s relationship with paternalist school see chapter I.

experience and gave him a rare insight into Indian affairs. This insight is reflected in his writings on India.

Taylor has been credited with making a unique contribution to colonial knowledge. This claim can be justified only by comparing and contrasting his works with those of his contemporaries. In order to do so, one must ascertain his place within the canon of British colonial writings on India. The attempt has been made in the next section to locate Taylor's position as a colonial writer

### **Philip Meadows Taylor and the Anglo-Indian Canon**

One's attempt to determine Philip Meadows Taylor's position as a writer immediately faces a challenge. From the very beginning of his literary career, Taylor has been classified as a novelist. All writers, critics, scholars, and commentators have hitherto stressed only on this side of his literary output. Except his autobiography, his non-fictional works remain largely neglected. This is so, despite the vast amount of non-fictional works he produced. Besides the three historical works, *Architecture at Beejapoor*, *Architecture in Dharwar and Mysore*, and *A Student's Manual of the History of India*, Taylor wrote a large number of essays and reviews. David Finkelstein has identified as many as twenty four articles and reviews published in different journals. This study adds a few more to the list, like "Our Indian Wars", "The Right of Property in India", *Memorandum on the Future Government of India* and "Leaves from My Indian Notebook" (I – VII). Taylor also wrote the letterpress for the illustrated volume *The People of India* and acted as the special correspondent to *The Times* from 1842 to 1853. He has therefore been an essayist, a reviewer, a political journalist, and an amateur historian, besides being a novelist. These aspects of his career have been relegated to the background by traditional scholarship.

In defence of scholars, it needs to be mentioned that the scope of Taylor's writing is too vast to be included in a single study. Taylor wrote on as diverse subjects as music and cotton culture, education and administration, history and anthropology. A researcher cannot do justice to his entire corpus. By necessity, he must select and omit. Judging by his thematic preoccupations, one may classify him either as an amateur historian or as a creative writer. These identities do not contradict, but complement each other. Taylor, one may remember, wrote historical novels, where his predilection for historiography aided his creative imagination.

In this study Taylor is considered both as an amateur historian and as a novelist. He certainly does not merit the designation of a professional historian. Nor did he presume to the title. He cannot be placed in company of men like Colonel Todd, James Grant Duff, or Mark Wilk's, whose works became classics for all times. He does not even rank among his illustrious contemporaries like John William Kaye and William Wilson Hunter. Despite his years of residence in Shorapoor, he could not produce an authoritative history of the native State. Taylor does mention that he had valuable materials at his disposal and that he intended "to complete a very interesting historical State paper."<sup>9</sup> But this work never saw daylight.

In his article "The Administrator and Historical Writings on India", Eric Stokes analyses the contributions of British administrator-historians. He divides them into two broad groups – "the popular historians" and "the philosophic historians". The philosophic historians were more academic and more liberal in their outlook. They wrote for well-educated readers, and their works were based upon systematic political philosophy. The popular historians, on the other hand, wrote for common Englishmen. Stokes writes,

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<sup>9</sup> Taylor, *The Story of My Life*, 405.

Most of the historical work of British administrators was written during their year of retirement in England, and as might be expected readily betrayed prejudices formed during a lifetime of official labour in the East. It was usually bluff, vigorous writing, meant only for home consumption, and avowedly intended to arouse public interest in Britain's Indian Empire or to defend it against the misrepresentations of sentimental liberalism.<sup>10</sup>

To this group belong G. B. Malleson and early Hunter. Taylor also fits in this group. The writings of the popular historians were didactic and tried to propagate some political lesson. These generally glorified British Empire in India. Taylor does the same thing, declaring in *A Student's Manual* that the Empire was a "strange romance, of which in the whole world's history there has been no parallel."<sup>11</sup>

Judging by the nature of his output, it is better to classify Taylor as a chronicler than as a proper historian. His autobiography, reviews, and letters record the progress and consolidation of British rule in India. Taylor's views are regrettably one-sided. He does not try to assess the events impartially. Taylor writes more in the vein of a journalist than an historian. His writings are vigorous but often lack depth. However, they do reflect what a section of the British people was thinking at the given time.

The decisive judgement on Taylor's career as an historian has been pronounced by G. S. Mansukhani who says, "Taylor's reputation must ultimately rest on his fiction, because his work as a historian is unequal and unsatisfactory."<sup>12</sup> One cannot but agree with this view. It must, however, be noted that as a writer of historical romances Taylor has left his mark. As

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<sup>10</sup> Eric Stokes, "The Administrators and Historical Writings on India", in *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, ed. C. H. Philips (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), 385.

<sup>11</sup> Philip Meadows Taylor, "Introduction", *A Student's Manual of the History of India* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1871), viii.

<sup>12</sup> Gobind Singh Mansukhani, *Philip Meadows Taylor: A Critical Study* (Bombay: New Book Co. Ltd, 1951), 199.

several writers have pointed out, Taylor was an emulator of Sir Walter Scott. The following comment of James C. Simmons is most significant; he states:

In his historical fictions Taylor follows the Scott formula with exactitude. Like his predecessor, he confined his chief attention to the fictional characters and their story, bringing the historical personages into the plot only at irregular intervals ... Furthermore, Taylor took over from Scott many of the conventions of plot. One Scott formula reappears throughout Taylor's romances: that is the use of a relatively unknown young man from a good background whose experience in life is limited but who suddenly finds himself in a position of importance at a crucial juncture in some historical happening. As in Scott, the elements of romance exist side by side with the realistic...<sup>13</sup>

Like Scott, Taylor took liberties with historical facts. He is sometimes inaccurate, the inaccuracy stemming from his failure to research into the original sources. However, one must excuse such flaws in a creative work. After all, Taylor himself generally admits that he is writing romances and not histories.

As a British writer writing exclusively on India, Taylor occupies an important position within the English literary canon. To assess the uniqueness of his contributions, one must consider the whole tradition of English writings on India. Reference to India can be found in the writings of the Anglo-Saxon period. Robert Sencourt informs, "it is probable that King Alfred heard of India, for William of Malmesbury, writing it is true several centuries later, says that he sent presents to her kings."<sup>14</sup> Alcuin is the first Englishman to mention India. During the Renaissance, the writings of various travellers, particularly Marco Polo kept

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<sup>13</sup> James C Simmons, "Philip Meadows Taylor and the Anglo-Indian Novel With a check List of His Writings", *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 75 (1971): 157 - 158.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Sencourt, *India in English Literature* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1923), 33.

alive an interest in India. To the Elizabethans, India was a land of fabulous wealth. The growing interest in trade and commerce affected their perception. The first Englishman of note to set his foot in India was the Jesuit priest Father Stevens. He was followed by four Englishmen John Newbury, Ralph Fitch, Leedes and James Story. Queen Elizabeth sent a letter to the Mughal emperor Akbar requesting trading privileges. Since then India began to occupy a distinct place in the imagination of Englishmen.<sup>15</sup>

The early references to India in English literature were more imaginary than real. The notion of India was hazy and the writers liberally used their imagination to cover their ignorance. Dryden's *Aureng-zebe* (1675) may be considered as an example. With the turn of the century, the study of India became more systematic. This change affected the literary representation of India.

The late eighteenth century saw the birth of a new literary genre designated as the Anglo-Indian literature. The term 'Anglo-Indian' needs to be understood in its older sense. Today, it refers to a citizen of India, one of whose ancestors from the male line was a European. In the eighteenth and the nineteenth century the term had a different meaning. 'Anglo-Indian' then referred to Englishmen and women living in India for sometimes, whereas 'Eurasian' was the term used for people of mixed descent.

As a term used to define British colonial writings on India, Anglo-Indian literature is an unhappily ambiguous word. This is because it did not refer only to works written by Britons. Any work, written in English, from India was described in the nineteenth and the early twentieth century as Anglo-Indian. Thus the writings of Indians like Toru Dutt, H. C. Dutt, Shoshee Chunder Dutt and Michael Madhushudan Datta were regarded as Anglo-Indian writings. This confusion of terminology was clarified in the 1950s when the new term 'Indo-

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<sup>15</sup> The account given here is derived from Sencourt.

Anglian' was coined. Henceforth, Indo-Anglian was used to describe Indian writing in English.

There is also some confusion regarding the proper extent and scope of Anglo-Indian literature. Strictly speaking, Anglo-Indian literature refers only to the writings of those Englishmen who had first-hand experience of India. Some critics, however, include works by metropolitan writers like Scott, Southey and Moore in the Anglo-Indian canon. They reason that works like *The Curse of Kehama*, *Lalla Rookh*, and *The Surgeon's Daughter* are Anglo-Indian works by virtue of their subject matters. This is so, despite the fact that authors like Scott, Southey and Moore had never set their foot in India. This line of argument is certainly confusing. For the purpose of this study, the term Anglo-Indian literature is used in its narrow sense to refer to the writings of those authors who wrote from the colonial 'contact zone'. These works vary in tone from those of the writers who were located in the metropolis. However, as the politics of imperialism affected both colonial and metropolitan writers, it is essential to study them side by side. One needs to recognize not only their differences but also their similarities.

Anglo-Indian literature is the literature of the Empire – a product of British encounter with India. Edward Farley Oaten describes the origin of this literature in the following manner:

In India for the first time since the era of Asiatic Hellenism, the spirit of Western Literature came into vital contact with the imaginativeness, dreaminess, and mysticism of the Oriental temperament. There was no real union between them; and yet it was impossible that each should remain unaffected by the other. Such a meeting, though it was long sterile of result, could not remain permanently so. New conditions produced new emotions, and new emotions always call for new literary interpretation. And so

there grew up in British India a literature, English in form and language, which is unique among the literatures of the world.<sup>16</sup>

Characteristically Oaten associates the East with irrationality, imagination, and intuition. Anglo-Indian literature is therefore the amalgam of Western rationality and Eastern imaginativeness. One sees in this formulation of Oaten the typical colonial attitude. The main themes of Anglo-Indian literature, as recognized by him, are:

The first is the ever-present sense of exile; the second an unflagging interest in Asiatic religious speculation; the third consists of the humorous sides of Anglo-Indian official life; the fourth in Indian native life and scenery; the last and perhaps most important, in the ever-varying phases, comic, tragic, or colourless of Anglo-Indian social life.<sup>17</sup>

According to Oaten, Anglo-Indian literature had its proper beginning in 1783. This was the year when Sir William Jones (1746 – 1794) arrived in India. Though a few travelogues and letters were written before this period, they were devoid of any literary merit.<sup>18</sup> It was Jones, who with his “Hindu hymns” and translations of Indian works, successfully inaugurated the genre. The greatest Anglo-Indian author is no doubt Rudyard Kipling (1865 – 1936), who is also the first English author to receive the Noble Prize for Literature (1907). The first few decades of the twentieth century can be considered as the golden age of Anglo-Indian literature. Luminaries like E. M. Forster, George Orwell, and Edward Thompson enriched Anglo-Indian literature during this period. The genre died its natural death with the independence of India in 1947. Though a few authors like Philip Mason (1906 – 1999) and John Masters (1914 – 1983) continued to write after the independence of India, they were the last of their kind. Today, Anglo-Indian literature has

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<sup>16</sup> Edward Farley Oaten, *A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature* (London: Kegan Paul Trench Trubner & Co, 1908; Reprint: Miami: Hard Press, n.d), 4.

<sup>17</sup> Oaten, 194 – 195.

<sup>18</sup> Oaten, 16.

become a relic of the past. Works on India may still be written by British authors. But they can no longer be classified as Anglo-Indian literature.

As a product of colonialism, Anglo-Indian literature reflected the colonial power relations. Though there were a few exceptions<sup>19</sup>, Anglo-Indian literature generally took the superiority of the English for granted. In such works the Indians are shown to be deficient in certain qualities, particularly the traits of ‘maturity’, ‘self-control’, and ‘rationality’. Kipling refers to this when in his poem “The White Man’s Burden” he calls the natives “Half devil and half child”.<sup>20</sup> In short, the Indians are shown to be dependent on the British for their well-being. With the passage of time, the Anglo-Indian authors became increasingly insular and xenophobic. These feelings manifested themselves in Anglo-Indian literature. Thus while early Anglo-Indian authors like Taylor would promote the development of closer ties with the Indians, later authors like Kipling would advocate segregation. This aloofness of later Anglo-Indian authors made cultural integration impossible. Almost all twentieth century writers failed to draw anything substantial from Indian culture. In contrast, eighteenth and nineteenth century authors like Sir William Jones, Sir Edwin Arnold, and Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall were profoundly influenced by Indian ethos. This in turn enriched their writings.

Anglo-Indian authors have contributed to all branches of literature such as poetry, novels, short stories and essays, except drama. Though Taylor is remembered mainly for his prose fictions, he also wrote a number of essays. Anglo-Indian essays, Oaten points out, “tended to appear in one of two extreme and mutually antagonistic forms. The one extreme is the severely objective,; the other the extravagantly subjective.”<sup>21</sup> Taylor generally wrote essays of the first type. He wrote erudite essays on diverse subjects, the proper evaluation of

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<sup>19</sup> James H. Lawrence’s *The Empire of the Nairs*, Sydney Owenson’s *The Missionary*, and James Blythe Paton’s *Bijli the Dancer* may be taken as examples.

<sup>20</sup> Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden”, <[www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/poems\\_burden.htm](http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/poems_burden.htm), 21 December 2013>.

<sup>21</sup> Oaten, 116.

which can be done only by specialists in those fields. To a student of literature, the most interesting one is his enthusiastic appreciation of early Sanskrit literature entitled “The Native Literature of India”. Delivered as a public lecture in Dublin in 1864, this piece shows Taylor’s close familiarity with Sanskrit classics. He quotes extensively from *The Mahabharata*, *The Vedas*, *The Bhagavat Gita*, Kalidas’s *Meghaduta* and Sudraka’s *Mrichhakatika*. It is to be noted that Taylor did not read these texts in original. Yet he praises them vigorously saying:

The poetry and the drama of the Hindus, however, as emanations of intellect with which we can grow familiar, have interest for all ages. A beautiful thought, a subtle fancy happily expressed, as Keats wrote –

“A thing of beauty, is a joy for ever” –

and no matter if it be Pagan or Christian, and it touches the heart, it lives there. Thus a few specimens of these old poems and dramas may, I think, prove acceptable to you.<sup>22</sup>

Taylor’s appreciation of Indian literature is confined to Sanskrit classics alone. He finds Persian works by Muslim authors “inferior, conventional, and unreal”. He also has no regard for contemporary Indian literature. He says:

Literature no longer exists except in the past; it withered under the Mohammedan Conquest 700 years ago. The intellect, once so subtle and vigorous, is, like its contemporary, the Greek, dead, or sunk into impenetrable apathy.<sup>23</sup>

These views of Taylor correspond to the views of an earlier generation of Orientalist scholars. During his times, such views suffered a set-back. Under the influence of new

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<sup>22</sup> Philip Meadows Taylor, “The Native Literature of India”, in *Lectures on Literature and Art: The Afternoon Lectures on Literature and Art Delivered in the Theatre of the Museum of Industry St Stephen’s Green, Dublin in April and May 1864* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1864), 126.

<sup>23</sup> Taylor, “The Native Literature of India”, 149.

philosophical movements like Utilitarianism and Evangelicalism, the British public began to deride ancient Indian civilization. However, there was a revival of interest in Sanskrit literature in the later decades of the nineteenth century. This was mainly due to the works of the eminent scholar Max Muller. Taylor was evidently acquainted with Max Muller's works, for he names him in this lecture.

Though Taylor excelled in writing erudite essays, he was also capable of producing brilliant descriptive sketches. One sees his powers expressed in full in the series of articles entitled "Leaves from My Indian Note-book". Published in seven instalments in the journal *The Quiver*, these articles describe an Indian village. Taylor abandons the objective impersonal tone, and conveys his own impressions. The purpose of these sketches is to dispel British misconceptions regarding India. In the end Taylor makes a passionate appeal to the readers, stating,

Have I made anything about the Indian village intelligible to you, my reader? Can you understand that these people are reasonably intelligent, reasonably civilized, and have arts, employments, cares, and joys much like ourselves, and that they are not barbarians?<sup>24</sup>

These sketches are therefore influenced by the same pedagogic intentions which dominate his work as a whole.

Finally, one considers Philip Meadows Taylor's career as a writer of prose fictions. Taylor wrote three short stories and six novels. A knowledge of Anglo-Indian novel as a genre is necessary in order to understand Taylor's peculiar contributions to the field. The first Anglo-Indian novel appeared as early as 1785. Entitled *The Disinterested Nabob*, this novel was published anonymously. It was followed by *Hartley House* in 1789. These novels

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<sup>24</sup> Philip Meadows Taylor, "Leaves from My Indian Note-book. No VII", *Quiver* 2: 48 (October 1865): 505.

concentrate more on the Anglo-Indians than on the Indians. In the first decades of the nineteenth century three novels appeared in succession – James H. Lawrence’s *The Empire of the Nairs* (1811), Sydney Owenson’s (Lady Morgan) *The Missionary* (1811), and Sir Walter Scott’s *The Surgeon’s Daughter* (1827). All three novels were written by writers located in the metropolis. They present a romanticized view of India. *The Empire of the Nairs*<sup>25</sup> is a bizarre novel which depicts a feminine utopia, where sexual freedom is guaranteed to every citizen. Particularly the women enjoy such rights as they enjoy nowhere else. According to Nancy L. Paxton, “*The Empire of the Nairs* betrays Lawrence’s nostalgia for the “libertine” values of the eighteenth century English culture.”<sup>26</sup> India in this novel serves only as an exotic location. Same is the case with the other two novels. Sydney Owenson’s *The Missionary* narrates the tragic love affair between a Christian priest and a Hindu priestess. Owenson idealizes Hinduism as a form of European deism.<sup>27</sup> She gives “Camdeo” (Kamdev) a central place in Hindu pantheon which this minor god of sexual love certainly did not hold. Nevertheless, Owenson’s descriptions are more realistic than Lawrence’s. Scott’s *The Surgeon’s Daughter* is not an Oriental novel. Only the last part of the novel is set in India. Scott displays a fairly accurate knowledge of India.<sup>28</sup> These three novels are unique in that they are devoid of any superiority complex. Lawrence finds the treatment of women in Indian society more just than the British. Owenson’s mystic Hinduism is as noble a religion as European Christianity. Scott shows the possibility of real friendship existing between an Englishman and an Indian. His hero Adam Hartley develops a friendship with the Indian *fakir* Barak el Hadgi, despite their difference in age, rank and religion. More importantly his Hyder Ali is a better ruler than the English governor at Madras. The English governor is a puppet in

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<sup>25</sup> James Lawrence, *The Empire of the Nairs; or, the Rights of Women* 4 vols (London: T. Hookham, Jum and E. T. Hookham, 1811).

<sup>26</sup> Nancy L. Paxton, *Writing under the Raj: Gender, Race and rape in the British Colonial Imagination 1830 -1947* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 68.

<sup>27</sup> See chapter III for analysis.

<sup>28</sup> See chapter II for analysis.

the hands of his crafty Indian assistant Paupiah. He does not care for the safety and security of his own countrymen. Hyder in contrast is wise and just, whose compassion extends even to the Europeans. All three novels are therefore bereft of racial prejudices which inform the writings of subsequent Anglo-Indian authors.

The first Anglo-Indian novelist of note is William Browne Hockley (1792 – 1860). He is important as the immediate predecessor of Taylor. Writing from the colonial contact zone, Hockley used his first-hand knowledge to write on India. His description of the day to day life of the Indians is fairly accurate. However, he nurtured a deep seated hatred for the Indians in general. This animosity seems to have stemmed from his personal grievances. From the little that is recorded, we learn that Hockley served in a judicial station at Broach, and then under the Commissioner of the Deccan, before being sacked in 1821. He was tried for corruption in 1823 but was acquitted. In his first novel *Pandurang Hari* there is a reference to an English gentleman who became the victim of native conspiracy. This gentleman worked at the judge's court in Poona. He saw through the native tricks, for which the crafty natives had him framed and removed from office. One wonders whether Hockley here is obliquely referring to his own self.<sup>29</sup> In the "Introduction" to *Pandurang Hari* Hockley mentions;

The editor went amongst them prejudiced in their favour: a few years undeceived him. From the rajah to the ryot, with the intermediate grades, they are ungrateful, insidious, cowardly, unfaithful, and revengeful.<sup>30</sup>

Hockley is thus unabashedly anti-Indian, a fact which influences his writings.

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<sup>29</sup> William Browne Hockley, *Pandurang Hari or, Memoirs of a Hindoo*, vol. II (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1873), 172.

<sup>30</sup> Hockley, "Introduction", *Pandurang Hari or, the Memoirs of a Hindoo*, vol. I (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1873), xvi – xvii.

Hockley wrote five novels *Pandurang Hari* (1826), *Tales of the Zenana* (1827), *The English in India* (1828), *The Vizer's Son* (1831), and *The Memoirs of a Brahmin or the Fatal Jewels* (1843). Except *The English in India*, all four depict native life. Hockley's favourite device is ventriloquism. His Indian characters themselves condemn their countrymen. For instance, *Pandurang Hari* exposes the vices of the Marathas, though he is a Maratha himself. Similarly Bapoo Brahmin, the protagonist of *The Memoirs of a Brahmin or the Fatal Jewels*, hurls invectives at the Hindu religion in the very "Preface" of the novel. Sometimes Hockley's descriptions are deliberately disgusting. Bapoo mentions that at his betrothal he is made to spit water at the girl's face.<sup>31</sup> Such sickening details are meant to prejudice the readers against the Indians. It is to be noted that Hockley's protagonists themselves are no paragons of virtue. They are rogues; in the words of a reviewer of *Pandurang Hari* "worse than Marmion, 'quite a felon', and very little of a knight."<sup>32</sup>

Susanne Howe classifies Hockley's novels as "Blood and Thunder histories".<sup>33</sup> Hockley takes inspiration from the vogue of the criminal hero that was becoming popular in the early part of the nineteenth century. Howe points out that making the rogue the protagonist had added advantages:

Against an Indian background such a villain-hero need not be romanticized or sentimentalized ... His background absolves him at once of cheapness and sentimentality. He may hold the reader's interest and credulity without having to engage his sympathy, since all manner of villainy must obviously be possible in India, where it is at such a safe distance as to be inoffensive.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> William Browne Hockley, *The Memoirs of a Brahmin or, the Fatal Jewels*, vol. I (London: T. C. Newby, 1843), 12.

<sup>32</sup> Review of *Pandurang Hari*, by William Browne Hockley, *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art* 35: 918 (31 May 1873): 728.

<sup>33</sup> Susanne Howe, *Novels of Empire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), 62.

<sup>34</sup> Howe, 62 – 63.

Taylor too capitalizes on this fashion of writing in *Confessions of a Thug*. However, he is more sympathetic to his Ameer Ali than Hockley is to his Pandurang or Bapoo.

Among Taylor's other predecessors mention must be made of J. B. Fraser who wrote *The Kuzzilbash: A Tale of Khorasan* (1828), and T. H. Ottley who wrote *Rustum Khan* (1831). Short stories and sketches were written by Augustus Prinsep who wrote *The Baboo and Other Tales* (1834), and Mrs Sherwood who wrote *Little Henry and His Bearer* (1836). Taylor's immediate contemporaries include J. W. Kaye who wrote *Long Engagements: A Tale of the Afghan Rebellion* (1846), Captain Rafter who wrote *Savindroog, or, the Queen of the Jungle* (1848), W. D. Arnold who wrote *Oakfield, or Fellowship in the East* (1853), and Florence Marryat who wrote *Gup* (1868) and *Veronique* (1869). Except Arnold, these writers have failed to contribute anything significant in the field of Anglo-Indian literature. William Delafield Arnold (1828 – 1859) deserves consideration both as a member of a celebrated British family and as an author in his own right. He was the fourth son of Thomas Arnold and the brother of the poet Matthew Arnold. He had inherited the family's intellectual brilliance. Arnold came to India in 1848 and served in the East India Company's army for nearly eight years. *Oakfield* is considered as a veiled autobiographical novel. The novel is rated unique by many contemporary scholars, though in its own days it did not enjoy much popularity. This is because it contained a sweeping criticism of British conduct in India. A sensitive young man, Arnold was quick to see that the colonial mission of civilization was not sincere. He argued that the British must reform themselves before they try to reform the Indians. Arnold's novel is thus an important historical document; in the words of George D. Bearce, "more a tract than a work of fiction."<sup>35</sup> The work, however, solely concentrates on an Englishman's experience. India and its inhabitants play little role in the novel.

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<sup>35</sup> George D. Bearce, *British Attitudes towards India, 1784 – 1858* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 272.

Among Taylor's immediate descendants mention must be made of Itudus Prichard who wrote *The Chronicle of Budgepore* (1870), H. S. Cunningham who wrote *The Chronicle of Dustypore* (1875), George Tomkyns Chesney who wrote *The Dilemma* (1876) and Alexander Allardyce who wrote *The City of Sunshine* (1877). Following Kiran Nath Dhar, we can divide the whole gamut of nineteenth century Anglo-Indian novels into two broad types – the historical novels and the social. The former dealt with some important fact connected with the history of India; the latter concentrated on the lives of the Englishmen in India. Most of the novels by Hockley, all novels by Taylor, and the novels by Kaye, Chesney and Fraser belong to the first group. The novels by Arnold, Marryat, Prichard, and Cunningham are novels of the second kind. Dhar further believes that “the historical novel, again, may be treated under two periods, viz, the pre-British and British periods.”<sup>36</sup> Meadows Taylor's *Tara* and *A Noble Queen* belongs to the pre-British period. Rest of his novels belong to the British period. One minor type has escaped the attention of Dhar. This may be called Indian romance – works which are completely fictitious and deal with the experience of the Indians themselves. To this group belong the novels of Allardyce and Captain Rafter. James Blythe Patton's *Bijli the Dancer* (1898) is also this type of novel. These novels have few or no British characters. Love is their main theme. Taylor's *Tara* and *A Noble Queen* are similar in some respects to these novels. However, Taylor's novels are not completely fictitious and depict some interesting episodes from Indian history.

All this time, reference to India continued to appear in works by mainstream English writers. References to India can be found in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis*, and *The Newcomers*, though *The Tremendous Adventures of Major Gahagan* (1838) is the only work set in India.<sup>37</sup> The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 excited the imagination of both metropolitan

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<sup>36</sup> Kiran Nath Dhar, “Article V. Some Indian Novels”, *Calcutta Review*, no. CCLIV (October 1908): 561.

<sup>37</sup> Thackeray was born in Calcutta in 1811 but was sent to England at the age of six. He cannot be considered an Anglo-Indian author like Kipling.

and Anglo-Indian authors. Among the scores of Mutiny-novels written in the nineteenth century, the most important ones are George Lawrence's *Maurice Dering* (1864), James Grant's *First Love and Last Love; A Tale of the Indian Mutiny* (1868), Henry Kingsley's *Stretton* (1869), Taylor's *Seeta* (1873), George Chesney's *The Dilemma* (1876), Robert Armitage Sterndale's *The Afghan Knife* (1879), Gillean's *The Ranee: A Legend of the Indian Mutiny* (1887) and Hume Nisbet's *The Queen's Desire* (1893). Most of these novels belong to the genre called 'survival literature'. A few are pure romances. In the last decades of the nineteenth century George Alfred Henty wrote a number of novels set in India. He deserves remembrance as a metropolitan author to write on India.

The beginning of the twentieth century saw the rise of two great Anglo-Indian novelists who changed the tradition of writing on India. They are Flora Annie Steele (1847 – 1927) and Rudyard Kipling. Unlike the nineteenth century authors, these authors have received sufficient scholarly attention. Same is the case with their descendants among whom the most important ones are Maud Divers (1867 - 1945), Bithia May Croker (1849 – 1920), and Edmund Candler (1874 – 1926). E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924) is the last great Anglo-Indian classic. Though Greenberger considers George Orwell to be an Anglo-Indian writer, his *Burmese Days* (1935) does not focus on India but on Burma (modern Myanmar). Post-independence Anglo-Indian authors include Philip Mason and John Masters. As mentioned earlier, they were the last of their kind.

Allen J. Greenberger's *The British Image of India* remains the most authoritative work on twentieth century Anglo-Indian fictions. Greenberger identifies three periods of Anglo-Indian fictions which he calls the Era of Confidence (1880 – 1910), the Era of Doubt (1910 – 1935), and the Era of Melancholy (1935 – 1960). The novelists writing during the first period exhibited faith in themselves as the ruling race. They valued British civilization and thought that the Empire was meant to be permanent. The Era of Doubt marked a change

in mentality. The novelists of this period became increasingly less confident. Greenberger divides them into three groups. Some of them supported the Empire and reacted aggressively to Indian nationalism. Another group was critical of the Empire. The third group stood between the two extremes. During the Era of Melancholy, the writers became convinced that the Empire was at an end. Their writings are filled with nostalgia. Though the attitude of the writers changed with age, their writings had one thing in common. Greenberger explains. “The emphasis is always on England rather than on India. It is events in England and the West in general, which determine the image held of India at any particular time.”<sup>38</sup>

Greenberger’s classificatory approach is certainly helpful. However, his study does not take into consideration the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century novelists. Bhupal Singh provides his own system of classification. He divides Anglo-Indian fictions into three periods. The first period begins with the Governor-Generalship of Warren Hastings and ends with the Sepoy Mutiny. The second period begins with the Sepoy Mutiny and ends with the death of Queen Victoria and the publication of Kipling’s *Kim* in 1901. The third period begins with the partition of Bengal in 1905. Singh’s system of classification is arbitrary. Unlike Greenberger, he does not look for common features in the writings of a particular group of authors. Instead, he randomly chooses certain historical events as watershed moments. He does highlight certain common themes in the works belonging to a particular period. Singh says:

The novels of the first period are mainly romances of Indian history, or are descriptive sketches of English society in India; those of the second period are portraits of the

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<sup>38</sup> Allan J. Greenberger, *The British Image of India: A Study in the Literature of Imperialism 1880 -1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 6.

official life of Anglo-India, mainly satirical; those of the third period show a vaster range in the choice of subjects ...<sup>39</sup>

What Singh misses is the fact that many writers cross over these boundaries. The majority of Taylor's historical romances were written in the 1860s and 1870s, that is, during the second period. Same is the case with Allardyce, Patton and Hume Nisbet.

Susanne Howe calls the earlier part of the nineteenth century "The Happy Years" of Anglo-Indian novels.<sup>40</sup> She points out that in the twentieth century novels, homesickness became an obsession – "a prevailing disease, almost a neurosis."<sup>41</sup> This element of homesickness is absent in nineteenth century novels.

It is better to call the period from late eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century the Era of Romance. This is because the novelists of this period were fascinated with India, even with its so called seamier sides. They felt that everything was possible in India, which was a land of romance. Interesting is the absence of European characters from the writings of many authors of this period. As the British Empire became consolidated, the Anglo-Indian authors became more obsessed with themselves. This is reflected in the writings of the later periods.

Among the different branches of Anglo-Indian literature, it is the novel that has received the most critical attention. Interestingly, most critics have expressed their disappointment with the genre. Susanne Howe says, "Novels about India provide more vicarious discomfort than anyone is entitled to. They are among the unhappiest books in the language."<sup>42</sup> Various reasons have been put forward to account for the banality of Anglo-Indian novels. It has been pointed out that they are parochial in nature. Obsessed with

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<sup>39</sup> Bhupal Singh, *A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 1 – 10.

<sup>40</sup> Howe, 39.

<sup>41</sup> Howe, 34.

<sup>42</sup> Howe, 32.

depicting Indian experiences, the novelists neglected contemporary concerns. This estranged the common readers who could not find anything interesting in these novels. Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall points out:

For modern reader ... wants a tale that falls more or less within his ordinary experience, or that tallies with his preconceived notions. Accordingly, any close description of native Indian manners or people is apt to lose interest in proportion as it is exact...<sup>43</sup>

Oaten argues that in depicting native life, the Anglo-Indian novelists have described either too much or too little. There was a course running between “the Scylla of didactic dullness and the Charybdis of unintelligibility.”<sup>44</sup> Most Anglo-Indian novelists became prey to either of the two. Their works suffered as a result.

As an Anglo-Indian novelist, Taylor stands apart from the rest of his compatriots. Susanne Howe says, “Meadows Taylor was the first serious historical novelist about India ...”<sup>45</sup> Lyall lavishly praises Taylor’s *Tara* as an accurate description of Indian life. He finds Taylor a better writer than Hockley, and the best among his contemporaries. Only Oaten finds Hockley’s description of the Marathas better than Taylor’s. From a chauvinistic writer like Oaten, this is not unexpected. Nevertheless, even Oaten acknowledges, “Meadows Taylor was the first great name in the history of Anglo-Indian fiction. His fame rests ... upon the series of splendid historical tales which he subsequently wrote.”<sup>46</sup> From the comments of these scholars it becomes obvious that Taylor has made his place as a historical novelist. There are few Anglo-Indian novelists who can claim this distinction. Those who can, have

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<sup>43</sup> Alfred Comyn Lyall, “The Anglo-Indian Novelist”, *Studies in Literature and History* (London: John Murray, 1915).

<sup>44</sup> Oaten, 142.

<sup>45</sup> Howe, 63.

<sup>46</sup> Oaten, 146.

mostly written on the experiences of the Anglo-Indians. Taylor instead draws inspiration from Indian history itself. Herein lay his uniqueness.

It would be a mistake, however, if the praise of these critics makes us overrate Taylor's achievement as a novelist. It must be acknowledged that his genius was second-rate. His chief fault was pedantry and over-elaboration. From the very beginning of his career, reviewers have noted and deplored this trait. Thus the reviewer of *Tippoo Suldaun* for *The Spectator* notes:

His principal defect was a tendency to crudity. Striving to tell everything, he of necessity introduced things that, whether worth telling or not in themselves, marred the unity of the whole, and encumbered the progress of the story.<sup>47</sup>

The reviewer of *Tara* for *The Saturday Review* reiterates the same complaint two decades after:

But to these qualifications, which are admirably fitted for a descriptive writer on history or manners, it must be regretted that Captain Taylor adds so little of that in which lies the special power of fiction or romance – the art of constructing a plot to which the author's stores of observation and carefully acquired knowledge shall be subsidiary ... Edification is a quality of real but secondary value, and is all the more potent and efficacious for being infused, so to say, by stealth, instead of being openly forced upon the reader.<sup>48</sup>

As the reviewer of *A Noble Queen* for *The Examiner* puts it, Taylor's novels become "antiquarianism in the guise of fiction."<sup>49</sup> These critics are right in noting that Taylor was a

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<sup>47</sup> Review of *Tippoo Suldaun*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The Spectator* 14: 653 (2 January 1841): 14.

<sup>48</sup> Review of *Tara*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art* 16: 418 (31 October 1863): 587.

<sup>49</sup> Review of *A Noble Queen*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The Examiner* 3657 (2 March 1878): 279.

poor storyteller. It is in painting descriptive sketches that he excels. He has the photographer's eye for details. But this did not help him to maintain the rhythm and flow of the story. Added to this, his characters often lack depth. That is, their nature never changes during the course of the story. Even a more favourable reviewer of *Tara* observes, "Captain Taylor's novel has no claim to be called a novel of 'character'."<sup>50</sup> These faults prevent us from placing him in the company of such great Anglo-Indian novelists as Rudyard Kipling and E. M. Forster.

Judging by his overall contributions, Taylor cannot be assigned too high a place as a writer. He lacked the literary skills that make a great novelist or an interesting historian. However, these deficiencies are compensated by the profundity of his experience. As a colonial administrator he had first-hand contact with the country and its people. This fact allowed him to create a substantial body of knowledge on India.

### **Methodology and Source Materials**

In analysing Philip Meadows Taylor's writings on India this study does not aim to assess the truth-value of his discourse. That is it does not consider the extent to which Taylor was accurate in describing India. As a creative writer, he enjoyed the privilege of being inventive. Moreover, his writings often reflect the prevailing views of his times, views that were nothing more than constructions. For this reason, this study considers Taylor's writings, both his fictions and his non-fictions, not as arid descriptions but as creative representations. Following Foucault, many writers claim that colonial discourse created the reality it represented. Some even go to the extent of suggesting that colonial representations were not at all dependent on the historical or social reality. A paradigmatic expression of this idea is

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<sup>50</sup> Review of *Tara*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *Calcutta Review* 39: 77 (January 1864): 195.

found in the work of Amal Chatterjee who states, “During the period of military expansion, if Tipu had not existed, he would have been ‘found’ in some other ruler, and during the period of civilizing and administrative conquest if the Thugs been ‘unreal’, some other ‘police’ matter would have been ‘found’ ...”<sup>51</sup> Chatterjee seems to argue that British created the history they scripted. This study does not take this extreme view. Instead, it accepts the idea that colonial representations did portray prevailing social realities, albeit in an exaggerated or distorted form. But it is not the purpose of this study to dismantle the ‘fiction’ and arrive at the ‘fact’. Here both fact and fiction becomes the subject of analysis. To this end, the technique of discourse analysis is employed to both literary and non-literary texts.

This study is primarily based upon close readings of Taylor’s works. Most studies on Taylor conducted so far privileges his literary works at the expense of his non-literary works. While this approach may be sufficient to assess Taylor’s worth as a creative writer, it is inadequate for the purpose of evaluating his contributions to colonial discourse. Keeping this in mind, this study reads the literary texts in parallel with the non-literary texts. Following Said’s example, attempt has been made to study these texts in the largest possible contextual framework. Thus history and politics have been given as much importance as literature.

While studying colonial writings, it is necessary to acknowledge that colonial discourse was neither monolithic nor homogenous. Kate Teltscher points out, “writing about India is ...not monolithic or univocal. European and British texts create a network of intercepting and contending discourses about India.”<sup>52</sup> The same idea is expressed in a different form by Thomas R Metcalf, “at no time was the British Vision of India ever

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<sup>51</sup> Amal Chatterjee, *Representations of India 1740 – 1840: The Creation of India in the Colonial Imagination* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998), 5.

<sup>52</sup> Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed: European and British Writings on India, 1600 – 1800* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 2.

informed by a single coherent set of ideas. To the contrary, the ideals sustaining the imperial enterprise in India were always short through with contradiction and inconsistency.”<sup>53</sup> Sensitive to this fact, the study puts special emphasis on the phenomenon of inter-textuality. It examines not only how other texts shape Taylor’s writings, but also how his texts enter into a dialogue with other texts. Taylor does not impose on us a set of self-referential works. His texts actively engage with other texts, sustaining supporting and even refuting them in the process.

For reading these texts, a wide range of theories from various disciplines have been referred to. This was necessary because of the diverse range of materials that one has to deal with. Of course, this does not indicate that the theories are used eclectically without any regard to consistency. It was inevitable that my position as a twenty first century reader would affect the selection of theories in this study. On the one hand, it was certainly deemed necessary to understand Taylor in his own terms for the sake of objectivity. On the other hand, one’s location as a twenty first century post-colonial reader is bound to affect the way one approaches his works. A political and ideological critique of his representation of India and British rule therefore becomes inescapable in the end. The theories and tools used in this study are selected keeping this fact in mind.

In evaluating Taylor’s works, attention has been paid mainly to those texts which contribute something significant to colonial discourse on India. Purely descriptive accounts like his treatise on cotton culture, Indian textiles, and Indian musical instruments are kept outside the purview of this study. So also some of his historical works, except those dealing with the British period. The aim of this study is to examine the uniqueness of Taylor’s contributions to colonial knowledge. Naturally those works where he merely reiterates the

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<sup>53</sup> Thomas R Metcalf, *The New Cambridge History of India III.4: Ideologies of the Raj* (New Delhi: Foundation Books Pvt Ltd, 2005), x.

views of others are given less importance. Of Taylor's entire corpus, the novels deserve the most importance. Taylor wrote six novels – *Confessions of a Thug*, *Tippoo Sultaun*, *Tara*, *Ralph Darnell*, *Seeta*, and *A Noble Queen*. All of Taylor's novels are set in India. Unlike his articles, which address more erudite readers, these novels are written for the ordinary Englishmen. Taylor was well aware of the pedagogic potential of his novels. To impress upon his readers the 'authenticity' of his descriptions, Taylor again and again refers to his intimate association with the natives of India. In the "Introduction" to the 1839 edition of *Confessions of a Thug* Taylor says, "for the accuracy of the pictures of the manners and habits of the natives, and the descriptions of places and scenes, I can only pledge the experience of fifteen years' residence in India, and a constant and intimate association with its inhabitants."<sup>54</sup> Similarly, in the "Prologue" to *Tara* he writes, "such descriptions of scenery and character as may be found in these volumes, are the result of personal knowledge."<sup>55</sup> Taylor keenly felt that through his novels he was introducing India to his countrymen who were generally aloof and insular in their feelings. As a reviewer points out, "it is extremely hard to interest English people in characters and modes of life so different from our own."<sup>56</sup> Pure descriptive sketches would have little success with such readers. Hence Taylor used fiction as a means for educating his countrymen.

Taylor's novels may be examined briefly. His first novel *Confessions of a Thug* was published in 1839. A few words on the 'Thugs' are necessary here. The English word 'Thug' has come from Hindu *thag* (to deceive or cheat) which itself comes from Sanskrit *stha* which means to conceal. Thuggee was supposedly 'discovered' by the British during the early nineteenth century. As the British described, the Thugs were professional murderers

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<sup>54</sup> Philip Meadows Taylor, *Confessions of a Thug* (London: Richard Bentley, 1858; reprint, London: British Library, n.d.), viii.

<sup>55</sup> Philip Meadows Taylor, *Tara*, vol. I (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1863, reprint, London: British Library, n.d.), xi.

<sup>56</sup> Review of *Tara*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *Calcutta Review* 39: 77 (January 1864): 193.

who murdered people by strangulation and worshipped the Hindu goddess Kali. They were highly organized and even had a secret language known as ‘Ramasee’. The Thugs came from all sections of the society and even from the two distinct religious communities – the Hindus and the Muslims. They were also known as *phansigars*, and by various other local names such as *phanseeo* in Gujarat, *ari tulucar* in Tamil Nadu, and *tanti calleru* in Karnataka. The British officer William Henry Sleeman was credited with ‘discovering’ Thuggee in 1830, although it appears from evidences that the British knew about Thuggee even earlier. Sleeman’s *Ramaseeana* (1836) is the first work that introduced Thuggee to the ordinary Englishmen. However, it is Taylor who made it a popular subject of fiction. The success of his *Confessions of a Thug* inspired other writers like Eugene Sue and Edward Bulwer Lytton to write on the subject. Interestingly, Taylor tries to impress upon his readers that his tale is all too true, “The tale of crime which forms the subject of the following pages is, alas! Almost all true; what there is of fiction has been supplied only to connect the events ...”<sup>57</sup> He further adds:

The confessions I have recorded are not published to gratify a morbid taste in any one for tales of horror and of crime; they were written to expose, as fully as I was able, the practices of the Thugs, and to make the public of England more conversant with the subject than they can be at present ...<sup>58</sup>

Taylor clearly downplays the fictional aspect of his work to stress on its educative side. This strategy was necessary in an age when reading novels was discouraged. In this situation Taylor stressed on the factual aspect of his work to attract wider audience.

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<sup>57</sup> Taylor, “Introduction”, *Confessions of a Thug*, iv.

<sup>58</sup> Taylor, “Introduction”, *Confessions of a Thug*, viii.

*Confessions of a Thug* is supposed to be based upon the confessions of Ameer Ali, a renowned Thug. He is a convicted Thug who has turned into an approver.<sup>59</sup> He narrates the story of his life to an unnamed white narrator, who records it for the (white) readers. This white narrator does not participate in action. He merely listens to Ameer Ali and records his confessions with minimal interjections. Ameer Ali begins from his very childhood. He is not a Thug by birth. His father was a respectable Pathan, who along with his entire retinue, was murdered by a band of Thugs. Being a child, Ameer Ali was spared and a Thug named Ismail adopted him. Ameer Ali soon forgets his old family and settles down happily with his Thug foster father. As he grows up, Ameer Ali begins to display extraordinary courage and boldness. During a hunt, he single-handedly kills a wounded tigress. His courage earns him the admiration of the Thug gang, and he is soon initiated into its mysteries. Ameer Ali quickly establishes his reputation as a skilful Thug. The novel recounts his various ‘exploits’ – tales of grisly murders, which are narrated with graphic vividness. At one point he even unknowingly strangles his sister with his own hands. The readers alternate between pity and repugnance as they follow Ameer Ali in course of his murderous career.

Though Ameer Ali is a ferocious Thug, his character is tempered with heroic qualities. He is resourceful, bold and daring. The reviewer of the novel for *The Spectator* describes him as – “a gentleman in manners, an Adonis in form, and a hero in conduct.”<sup>60</sup> He is also a “dashing lover” as Finkelstein calls him.<sup>61</sup> The novel recounts his various romantic escapades. Ameer Ali’s first love interest is Zora, a dancing girl held captive by a native ruler. Ameer Ali whisks her away to Hyderabad, where she is reunited with her family. Their affair, however, ends unhappily. Zora is spirited away by her mother and is never heard of

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<sup>59</sup> The officers of the Thuggee and Dacoity Department often employed convicted Thugs to help them detect and implicate others. They were like the King’s witness. In return of their service, their sentence was lessened.

<sup>60</sup> Review of *Confessions of a Thug*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The Spectator* 12: 582 (24 August 1839): 805.

<sup>61</sup> David Finkelstein, “A Study of the Works of Philips Meadows Taylor” (Ph.D. diss, Edinburgh University, 1990), 55.

again. His second love interest is Azima, a discontented wife who flees from her abusive husband. Ameer Ali rescues her and marries her afterwards. They enjoy a happy married life till Ameer Ali is unmasked as a Thug. Ameer Ali also falls briefly in love with a traveller whom he meets on the road. This woman, Shurfun, divines the true nature of his profession. She tries to blackmail Ameer Ali into leaving his wife and running off with her. Ameer is forced to order her execution, as she had become a threat to the entire gang. These romantic interludes spice up the narrative. They also make the protagonist more recognizable as a human being. In the words of T. O. D. Dunn, Ameer is “no ghoul or demon begotten of Eastern romance, no such figure as *Vathek* provides, but a man moved by like passions with ourselves ...”<sup>62</sup>

*Confessions of a Thug* was immensely popular in its own days. Taylor records that Queen Victoria showed an interest in this novel. However, it is not so much the literary qualities of the novel which impressed the readers, as its supposed realism. To the nineteenth century reviewers the novel appeared not as a work of imagination but as a narration of ‘facts’. Even in the early twentieth century T. O. D. Dunn found the novel “a startling journalistic success.”<sup>63</sup> Likewise Michael Edwardes declares, “*Confessions of a Thug* is not really a novel but a piece of brilliant reportage.”<sup>64</sup> With the turn of century, there has been a change in the readers’ perspectives. Contemporary scholars generally concentrate on the fictional aspect of the novel, and make it their object of analysis. Despite this change in readers’ views, *Confessions of a Thug* continues to be the most popular work by Taylor.

*Confessions of a Thug* was immediately followed by *Tippoo Sultaun* (1840). This is a historical romance. T. O. D. Dunn believes that for this novel:

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<sup>62</sup> T. O. D. Dunn, “Meadows Taylor: His Autobiography and Novels”, *Calcutta Review* 291 (January 1918): 14.

<sup>63</sup> Dunn, 13.

<sup>64</sup> Michael Edwardes, “The Articulate Hero: Philip Meadows Taylor”, *The Twentieth Century* 154 (September 1953): 215.

Meadows Taylor had a different subject and a different method. In this venture he became a conscious literary artist working out a scheme suggested to him by his publisher; he was no longer the absorbed recorder of events that had come within his own observation.<sup>65</sup>

Dunn no doubt influenced Bhupal Singh who observes, “In the *Confessions* Meadows Taylor showed himself as a great realistic painter of Thuggee; in the novels that follow he is the chronicler of the romance of Indian history.”<sup>66</sup> As noted earlier, Taylor was greatly influenced by Sir Walter Scott and adopted many of his methods and techniques.

The action of the novel lies between the year 1782 and 1799. The novel thus depicts the Second, Third, and the Fourth Anglo-Mysore wars. These wars were fought between Tipu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore, and the British. Tipu Sultan remains a controversial figure even to this day. According to some scholars, he was the ablest ruler in India during the late eighteenth century. Others argue that he was nothing but a tyrant and a fanatic. It is certain that the majority of nineteenth century British historians portrayed Tipu in a darker light. Taylor could not escape the prejudice prevalent in his days. His novel thus presents a biased account of Tipu Sultan.<sup>67</sup>

The plot of *Tippoo Sultaun* is complex. There are two protagonists – one Indian and the other British. Tipu is seen through the eyes of these two characters. The Indian protagonist, Kasim Ali, is the son of a village headman. He saves the life of Ameena, the third wife of Abdool Rhyman Khan. Rhyman Khan is a commander in Tipu’s army. In gratitude, the Khan takes him to Mysore and finds him employment in Tipu’s army. Kasim soon distinguishes himself by his bravery and fighting skills. He saves Tipu’s life several

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<sup>65</sup> Dunn, 15.

<sup>66</sup> Singh, 45.

<sup>67</sup> For detailed assessment of the character of Tipu see chapter II.

times, thereby becoming a favourite of the Sultan. Kasim also falls in love with Ameena, who reciprocates his love. However, virtue and modesty make them restrain their passions. Jaffar Sahib, a villainous *Jemadar* in Khan's *Risala* (brigade), informs Khan of their mutual affection. The jealous Khan grievously wounds Ameena, and is himself killed in battlefield on the following day. Kasim leaves Tipu's service, disgusted with the Sultan's cruelty and aberrations. The peevish Sultan sends assassins to murder him. Kasim survives and defects to the English. He takes active part in British campaigns against Tipu and witnesses Tipu's death at the battle of Seringapatam in 1799. After the fall of Tipu, Kasim marries Ameena, who had survived, and lives a happy life.

The other protagonist of the novel is an Englishman named Herbert Compton. Having joined the East India Company's army, Herbert comes to India in 1781. He soon rises to become the aide-de-camp to Brigadier-General Matthews. Matthews is a historical figure who was captured with his entire army by Tipu sultan during the Second Anglo-Mysore war. Herbert becomes one of the captives. He refuses to join Tipu's side, and is forced to languish seventeen years in prison. Finally Tipu's death frees him and he returns to England to marry his faithful fiancée Amy Hayward. Herbert has little connection with Kasim's story.<sup>68</sup> He exists chiefly to show the Sultan's cruelty towards the English. Both Kasim and Herbert find Tipu to be a cruel and merciless ruler who enjoys tormenting others.

Like *Confessions of a Thug*, *Tippoo Sultaun* was a successful work. Bhupal Singh believes that it established Taylor's reputation as 'the Scott of India'.<sup>69</sup> M. Sarada goes to the extent of observing, "One may even claim that with *Tippoo* the Anglo-Indian novel had come of age."<sup>70</sup> In its own days, it attracted the attention of the reviewers. The reviewer for *The Caledonian Mercury* praises it, saying, "We think the author of "Confessions of a Thug"

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<sup>68</sup> Kasim only meets him twice. First, during the days of his imprisonment, and then, when he is finally freed.

<sup>69</sup> Singh, 45.

<sup>70</sup> M. Sarada, *Anglo-Indian Novel: Philip Meadows Taylor* (Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1995), 7.

has added considerably to his literary laurels by this production.”<sup>71</sup> The reviewer of *The Literary Gazette* echoes him, “The powerful interest with which Captain Taylor invested “The Confessions of a Thug” is hardly diminished in his present work ...”<sup>72</sup> The reviewer of *The Athenaeum* is reserved in his praise. Nevertheless, even he has to recognize Taylor’s descriptive powers. The reviewer for *The Spectator* is more balanced in his opinions. He is the first to point out that the principal defect of Taylor is over-elaboration. He also points out that the stories of Kasim and Herbert are not properly connected. However, despite these defects, he believes that, “*Tippoo Suldaun* is an improvement upon its predecessor; possessing greater varieties of character, and of a higher kind, with a judicious intermixture of historical and personal adventure.”<sup>73</sup> These reviews show that the novel became very popular in the nineteenth century. Its fame was, however, eclipsed by Taylor’s later works like *Tara* and *Seeta*.

*Tara* was published in 1863 after a gap of twenty three years. Taylor seems to have begun working on this novel in 1841. In a letter to his cousin Henry Reeve dated 24 August 1841 he mentions that he has started “a tale of the time of Sivajee (sic) the founder of the Mahratta power.”<sup>74</sup> Taylor’s letter to Reeve shows that he was engaged with it till late September. But he left it shortly afterwards. It was only after his retirement in 1860 that he was able to take it up again.

The novel is set in Deccan India in 1657. The period witnesses the rise of the Marathas under Shivaji. The Marathas are the inhabitants of Maharashtra. They have a rich political and cultural history. Till 1307, the Marathas lived independently under the Yadava kings of Devagiri. They lost their independence when the Yadava king Ramchandradeva was

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<sup>71</sup> Review of *Tippoo Suldaun*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The Caledonian Mercury* 18884 (25 January 1841)

<sup>72</sup> Review of *Tippoo Suldaun*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The Literary Gazette*, 1251 (9 January 1841): 24.

<sup>73</sup> Review of *Tippoo Suldaun*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The Spectator* 14: 653 (2 January 1841): 14.

<sup>74</sup> Taylor, *Letter of Philip Meadows Taylor to Henry Reeve*, 32.

defeated by the forces of the Delhi Sultan Ala-ud-din Khalji. The Marathas served the Bahamani kingdom and the Deccan Sultanates that succeeded. In the seventeenth century, the Sultanates of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar and Golkunda are prominent in the Deccan. These kingdoms fought with each other for supremacy. As a result they weakened themselves considerably. The invasion of the Mughals rang the death knell for these kingdoms. Ahmadnagar was annexed by the Moghuls in 1633. Bijapur and Golkunda lost their independence in 1686 and 1687 respectively. The weakness of these kingdoms allowed the Marathas to strengthen themselves. Finally, they emerged as a strong power under the charismatic leadership of Shivaji in the second half of the seventeenth century.

*Tara* describes the execution of Afzal Khan by Shivaji which marked the beginning of the Maratha dominance in the Deccan. Afzal Khan was a general of Bijapur who was sent to subdue Shivaji. Shivaji, however, killed him and dispersed his army. Interestingly, this event happened in 1659 and not in 1657 as Taylor shows. This error stems from his obsessive belief in the theory that major events in Indian history are separated by an interval of exactly hundred years. Thus the rise of the Hindus under Shivaji in 1657 was followed by the Battle of Plassey in 1757, which signaled the beginning of the East India Company's rule in India. Exactly a hundred years later the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 extinguished the Company's rule and ushered in the rule of the British crown. This theory is certainly erroneous and far-fetched. However, it allowed Taylor to discern a pattern in Indian history. His novels *Ralph Darnell* and *Seeta* describe the Battle of Plassey and the Sepoy Mutiny respectively.

Like its predecessor *Tippoo Sultaun*, the plot of *Tara* is complex. Finkelstein praises the plot structure, stating, "The plot of *Tara* is carefully planned ... Taylor employs a plot structure similar to that of his earlier work *Tippoo Sultaun*, interweaving seemingly

unconnected plot strands and mingling historical figures with minor fictional characters.”<sup>75</sup> Udayon Misra finds it “a well-executed work.”<sup>76</sup> However, nineteenth century readers were often baffled by the complexity of the plot. As the reviewer of the novel for the *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine* observes, “The story of “Tara” has ... many blunders in construction – for a bustling secondary plot of intrigue and treachery confuses the thread of individual narrative, which is the charm of the book.”<sup>77</sup> It is true that the story shifts randomly from Tara to Fazil before taking us back to her. The novel opens with the description of the household of Vyas Shastree, the chief priest at the temple of Bhabani in Tuljapur. Vyas Shastree is the father of Tara, a virgin widow. To escape the ignominies of widowhood, Tara becomes a priestess of the goddess. Trouble, however, follows her. Moro Trimmul, an agent of Shivaji, develops an obsession for Tara. He intrigues with Gunga, a priestess of the temple who is jealous of her. To gain access to her, Trimmul has his sister Radha married to Vyas Shastree. She, however, refuses to help her brother in his nefarious plans. Tara continues to reject Trimmul’s advances. The novel suddenly leaves them and takes the readers to Fazil, the son of the famous Afzal Khan (“Afzool Khan” in the novel). The courtly life at Bijapur is described in details. Fed up with Shivaji’s intrigues, Ali Adil Shah II, the monarch of Bijapur, sends Afzal Khan to subdue him. Fazil accompanies his father. During a raid on Tuljapur, Fazil rescues Tara who has been kidnapped by Moro Trimmul. It is wrongly assumed that her family perished in the raid. Having nowhere to go, she follows Afzal Khan and his family. Despite their religious differences, Fazil and Tara quickly fall in love. Unfortunately, events interfere with their developing romance. Afzal Khan is murdered by Shivaji and his army is dispersed. Tara once again finds herself threatened by Moro Trimmul. To save her honour, she declares herself a “Suttee” (*sati*). But before the rites could be carried out, she is once

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<sup>75</sup> Finkelstein, 95.

<sup>76</sup> Udayon Misra, *The Raj in Fiction* (Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1987), 84.

<sup>77</sup> [Margaret Oliphant], Review of *Tara*, *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine* 94: 577 (November 1863): 627.

again rescued by Fazil. Moro Trimmul, who tries to interfere, is killed by one of Fazil's men. Tara converts to Islam and the novel ends with the marriage of Tara and Fazil.

*Tara* has elicited mixed responses from critics. Nineteenth century reviewers generally praised the novel, even while discerning its faults. Geraldine Jewsbury advised Richard Bentley not to accept the novel for publication, stating, "It would not pay you to take the book so don't do it."<sup>78</sup> It was felt that the complete absence of European characters made the novel alien and unfamiliar to Englishmen. In the twentieth century, some readers favoured *Tara* more than his other works. Lyall for instance devotes his attention exclusively to *Tara*. Professor K. Viswanatham boldly declares, "Of all his novels 'Tara' is said to be the best. It is."<sup>79</sup> Most twenty-first century readers, however, prefer *Confessions of a Thug* and *Seeta to Tara*.

*Ralph Darnell* (1865), as Mansukhani points out, is "chronologically a successor to *Tara*."<sup>80</sup> In this novel Taylor describes the battle of Plassey (1757). The East India Company had originally come to India as a peaceful trading body. But its policy in India began to change from the mid seventeenth century. The political disorder in India and the rivalry of other European nations prompted it to transform itself into a military power. It began to acquire territorial possessions in India. In 1698 the East India Company was granted the *zamindari* of the three villages of Sutanuti, Kalikata, and Govindapur in Bengal. With the foundation of Calcutta in 1690 by Job Charnock and the establishment of Fort William, the English position in Bengal became secure. The rise of the British power in India coincided with the decline of Mughal influence. From 1717, Bengal was ruled by a *Subahdar* who owed a nominal allegiance to the Mughal emperor, but acted as an independent king to all intent and purposes. The East India Company maintained a more or less cordial relationship

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<sup>78</sup> Quoted in Finkelstein, Finkelstein, 19.

<sup>79</sup> K. Viswanatham, *India in English Fiction* (Waltair: Andhra University press, 1971), 37.

<sup>80</sup> Mansukhani, 150.

with the rulers of Bengal till Siraj-ud-daulah came to the throne in 1756. Siraj was not well disposed towards the English as they were friendly towards his rival Ghasiti Begam. The immediate cause of hostilities was the additional fortification of Calcutta, which was done without his permission. Siraj marched against the English, defeated them, and captured Fort William in June 1756. This was followed by the notorious “Black Hole” incident, where a large group of British prisoners were placed inside a small cell overnight. Out of 146, only 23 survived till the following day. Siraj left Calcutta in charge of his general Manikchand and returned to his capital at Murshidabad. The British under the leadership of Lord Clive and Admiral Watson recovered Calcutta on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1757. Thereafter, Clive entered into a conspiracy against Siraj. It was decided by the conspirators that Mir Jafar, Siraj’s general and relative, would be placed on the throne. The final battle between Siraj and the Company took place at Plassey on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1757. The treachery of Siraj’s generals like Mir Jafar and Rai Durlabh resulted in his defeat. Siraj fled from Murshidabad but was captured and assassinated. The British set up Mir Jafar as a puppet ruler. The British victory at the battle of Plassey is important, for it paved the way for their eventual conquest of Bengal and the rest of India.

*Ralph Darnell* is different from other novels by Taylor. Mansukhani calls it “an English romance with an Indian interlude.”<sup>81</sup> The focus of this novel is more on English life than on Indian life. Finkelstein correctly guesses the reason, “In *Ralph Darnell*, Taylor sought to meet some of the earlier criticism of *Tara* by writing a work more appealing to British tests.”<sup>82</sup> The result was disastrous for, as Finkelstein points out, “The weakest part of the work in fact is its English section, which is flatly and unconvincingly presented.”<sup>83</sup> The hero of the novel *Ralph Darnell* is illegitimate. He is the son of a Northumbrian gentleman, the

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<sup>81</sup> Mansukhani, 150.

<sup>82</sup> Finkelstein, 128.

<sup>83</sup> Finkelstein, 137.

brother of a local baronet. His father ran away to Amsterdam with a girl named Grace Smithson and returned after two years with a son. The child was left in care of Grace's mother. Soon after, both parents were drowned in an accident. Ralph's uncle Geoffrey Darnell takes him in, and raises him. His uncle having no son, Ralph becomes a claimant of the Baronetcy. He also falls in love with his cousin Constance. The uncertainty about his legitimacy, however, thwarts his prospects. Ralph is sent to London to work under the direction of another uncle Roger Darnell in the family business. He falls among bad company and assaults his uncle Sir Geoffrey Darnell. To avoid scandal the family ships him to India, where he assumes a new identity as Ralph Smithson. Ralph arrives in Calcutta in 1756 and participates in its defence against Siraj. He survives the Black Hole and joins Clive. Ralph is wounded in a skirmish between Indian and British forces. He is saved by Sozun, the Afghan mistress of *nawab* Siraj-ud-daulah. Sozun nurses him back to health and Ralph returns to the British forces in time to fight in the battle of Plassey. During the battle, he meets a dying British soldier who has papers that can prove his legitimacy. After the fall of Siraj, Ralph returns to England. But he is shocked to find that these papers are false, and that the supposed marriage was a cruel deception practiced on his mother. His illegitimacy prevents him from inheriting the baronetcy. Ralph therefore returns to India where he marries Noor-ool-Nissa the widow of Siraj. They live happily for twenty years till the death of the Begam. Ralph returns to Britain with the embalmed body of his wife. He lives till a ripe old age, and dies embracing the preserved body of his wife. The story, as Finkelstein and others point out, thus ends in a bizarre note.

*Ralph Darnell* was favourably reviewed though it was a commercial failure, as Finkelstein shows us. Most reviewers praised Taylor's graphic descriptions of 'native' life. The reviewers for *The Athenaeum*, *The British Quarterly Review* and *The Reader* gave him credit for making history more interesting. The reviewer for *The Reader* states that novels

like *Tara* and *Ralph Darnell* gives “pulsation” to Indian history.<sup>84</sup> The reviewer for *The Athenaeum* says that Taylor “disguises a branch of *dry* history” in “the pleasant garb” of a novel.<sup>85</sup> The reviewer for *The British Quarterly Review* is most enthusiastic in his praise and states:

To all, probably, his books will give more vivid impression of its [Indian] life and character than could be derived from even the most ample canonical history. This, indeed, is the function of the poet or the novelist. His reproductive imagination dramatizes where the historian only narrates, and, if like Captain Taylor, he is true to the life he represents, he is our best teacher concerning it.<sup>86</sup>

Only the reviewer for *The Pall Mall Gazette* feels that Taylor’s concern with history adversely affected his craft as a novelist. He correctly points out that Taylor gives more importance to historical incidents, neglecting the portrayal of characters. His novels suffered as a result.<sup>87</sup>

*Ralph Darnell* was followed by *Seeta*, published in 1873. This is the third and final novel of the series. It portrays the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. The Mutiny was a momentous event in the history of India. It was not the first uprising against British rule. But it certainly was the most severe one. The very foundation of the Empire was shaken by this event.

The first signs of unrest appeared in January 1857, when the soldiers at Dum Dum in Bengal refused to use the new cartridges for the Enfield Rifles. It was believed that these cartridges were greased with the fats of cows and pigs which were taboos to Hindus and Muslims. In March, an entire regiment at Barrackpore protested and was promptly

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<sup>84</sup> Review of *Ralph Darnell*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The Reader* 7: 158 (6 January 1866): 11.

<sup>85</sup> Review of *Ralph Darnell*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The Athenaeum* 1994 (13 January 1866): 47.

<sup>86</sup> Review of *Ralph Darnell*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The British Quarterly Review* 86 (April 1866): 578.

<sup>87</sup> Review of *Ralph Darnell*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The Pall Mall Gazette*, Issue 3.287 (9 January 1866): 10.

disbanded. At Berhampore in Bengal a young Sepoy named Mangal Pande fired at his commanding officer and called on his fellow Sepoys to mutiny. Mangal Pande was captured and hanged. But the event left a lasting impression in the minds of the Sepoys. The Revolt formally broke out on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1857 when the Sepoys at Meerut murdered a few European officers and set fire on their houses. They rode off to Delhi on the following day and brought the city under their control. The Europeans living in Delhi were massacred. The mutineers proclaimed the aged Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II as their leader. The Revolt spread quickly and soon the parts of North India and Central India were in flames. The mutineers were joined by disaffected landlords and princes, who sought to recover their lost power and influence. The mutineers had some initial success at Bihar, Cawnpore, Lucknow and Delhi. But the British quickly retaliated. The ill-organized mutineers fighting with defective equipment were no match for the trained and well-equipped British army. Delhi was recovered by the British after severe fighting in September 1857. After that, defeat of the rebels became inevitable. The rebellion was extinguished with the capture and execution of the rebel leader Tantia Topi in April 1859.

*Seeta* revolves around the Mutiny of 1857. Azrael Pannde, the villain of the novel, is the uncle of the famous Mangal Pande (Mungul Pande in the novel). A Sepoy discharged for rebellious behaviour, Azrael takes up dacoity as a profession. He also preaches sedition against the English to the Sepoys. Ram Das, a merchant of Gokulpoore, commissions Azrael to rob the house of his cousin Huree Das whom he bitterly hates. Huree Das is married to Seeta Bye, who is the granddaughter of Narendra a wealthy goldsmith banker of Shah Gunje. During the raid to his house, Huree Das is killed, and Seeta and her child are wounded by the dacoits. Azrael, along with his gang, is subsequently arrested for the dacoity. Cyril Brandon, the Acting Deputy Commissioner of Noorpoor, arrives at Shah Gunje to try the case. He is impressed by Seeta who abandons her usual reserve to give her testimony. Azrael

is convicted, but escapes from prison. Desperate for revenge, Azrael attacks Seeta's house. However, Cyril comes to know about his plans and rushes to protect her family. In the fight which ensues, Cyril is wounded and is forced to rest in Seeta's house for some time. He and Seeta fall in love with each other. After the death of Seeta's child, Cyril formally asks for her hand and marries her accordingly to Hindu rites. This marriage isolates both of them from their respective communities. However, the couple lives happily till the arrival of Grace Mostyn, a young woman from England. Cyril is inwardly drawn towards Grace. But his virtue prevents him from abandoning Seeta. Seeta is at first apprehensive, but soon becomes a good friend of Grace. She begins to learn about the English culture from her husband and his English friends. Just when things were starting to look brighter, the Mutiny breaks out with full force. The Europeans are forced to take refuge in a fort. Azrael, who has become infatuated with Seeta, tries to take advantage of the situation to carry her away. His plan fails when he unintentionally wounds Seeta. Azrael is killed by the English. Seeta succumbs to her wounds and dies happily with the satisfaction of saving her husband's life. Cyril leaves India after years of service. He marries Grace and settles down in England to live a happy life. The novel thus ends in a conventional note.

Among the works by Taylor, only *Seeta* has gained as much fame as *Confessions of a Thug*. Early critics generally praised the novel, though some found it too lengthy. The reviewer for the *Pall Mall Gazette* says, "if 'Seeta' had been written for the sake of Seeta, and not with a view to the requirements of the circulating library, it would ... have gained largely as a work of art."<sup>88</sup> Interestingly modern scholars praise the novel for depicting a successful inter-racial romance. Taylor's treatment of the Sepoy Mutiny has also

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<sup>88</sup> Review of *Seeta*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *Pall Mall Gazette* 17.2542 (8 April 1873): 1316.

drawn approbation. Some critics feel that Taylor was sympathetic to the Mutineers. This, however, remains a contentious issue.<sup>89</sup>

Taylor's last novel is *A Nobel Queen: A Romance of Indian History*. This novel was published in serialized form in both *The Week's News* and *The Overland Mail* between February and December 1875. It appeared in book form in 1878. In this novel Taylor once again returns to pre-colonial Indian history, and depicts the sixteenth century Deccan.

During the fifteenth century there existed five independent Sultanates in the Deccan. These were Berar, Bidar, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, and Golkunda. These States fought with each other for supremacy. They also fought with the neighbouring Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar. In 1564 four of these States – Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Golkunda, and Bidar – joined in a coalition against Vijayanagar. To cement their friendship Hussain Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar gave his daughter Chand Bibi in marriage to Ali Adil Shah I of Bijapur. At the battle of Talikota in 1565 the army of Vijayanagar was defeated and the kingdom was completely destroyed. With the disappearance of the common enemy, the bond between these States began to break. Berar was annexed by Ahmadnagar in 1574 and Bidar was absorbed by Bijapur in 1618-19. The remaining States Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, and Golkunda continued to fight with each other till they were conquered by the Mughals in the late seventeenth century.

For Chand Bibi, the life in Bijapur soon became hard. In 1580 her husband Ali Adil Shah I was assassinated by a favourite eunuch. As he had no sons, he had nominated his nephew Ibrahim Adil Shah as his successor. Ibrahim, a nine year old boy, ascended the throne under the guardianship of Chand Bibi. For the next few years, the dowager queen had to face stiff opposition from succeeding ministers. All of them tried to usurp the power of the State. In 1584 the queen returned to Ahmadnagar after securing the position of her ward

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<sup>89</sup> See Chapter IV for details.

Ibrahim Adil Shah II. For Chand Bibi, the life in Ahmadnagar did not prove any less troublesome. Her brother Murtaza Nizam Shah I was murdered in 1588. His successors continued quarrelling with other Deccan Sultanates. This considerably weakened their strength. Dissatisfied with the situation in Ahmadnagar, Chand Bibi again returned to Bijapur. However, an emergency caused her to be recalled back. In 1595 the Mughal emperor Akbar sent a large army against Ahmadnagar. The ruler of Ahmadnagar at that time was a young boy. Chand Bibi assumed the office of the Regent at this hour of crisis and organized a defence against the Mughal army. She successfully defended her position. In 1596 she concluded a treaty with the Mughals whereby she ceded Berar. This dearly bought peace did not last for long. After the departure of the Mughal army, a faction at the Ahmadnagar court renewed war with the Mughals. Chand Bibi opposed this breach of treaty but her warnings and advices fell into deaf ears. In 1599 the Mughal army once again besieged Ahmadnagar. Chand Bibi tried her best to defend the capital. But this time she was thwarted by internal dissensions. In July 1600 Chand Bibi was murdered by her own soldiers at the instigation of Humeed Khan. The city fell soon after. However, the kingdom continued to resist the Mughals till the reign of Shah Jahan.

Taylor was fascinated by the figure of Chand Bibi. In *A Student's Manual of the History of India* he pays his tribute to her stating, "Her valour was unquestionable, and was put to the severest proof on many occasions; and her sad fate excited a feeling of universal commiseration, which has survived to the present time."<sup>90</sup> An even more glowing tribute is paid to her in *A Noble Queen* where Taylor writes:

Few in England know that the contemporary of our Queen Elizabeth in the Dekhan (sic) kingdoms was a woman of equal ability, of equal political talent, of equal, though

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<sup>90</sup> Taylor, *A Student's Manual of the History of India* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1871), 315 – 316.

in a different sense, education and accomplishments who ruled over a realm as large, a population as large, and as intelligent, and as rich as England.<sup>91</sup>

Given the depth of Taylor's admiration for her, it is natural that he would choose her as a fit subject for a historical romance.

*A Noble Queen* depicts the latter part of Chand Bibi's life when she was staying in Bijapur. Like *Tippoo Suldaun*, this novel depicts the experiences of two groups – one pair consisting of the beautiful Zora and her blind grandfather Syud Ahmud Ali, and the other consisting of the Portuguese priest Francis D' Almedia and his sister Maria. Ahmud Ali, a blind *fakir*, is in reality a disgraced physician. He was blinded and banished to Juldrug by Ibrahim Adil Shah I of Bijapur. Except for his granddaughter Zora, he has no one left in the world. The *fakir* and his granddaughter live in obscurity till a wounded Bijapur nobleman Abbas Khan is brought to him for recovery. The *fakir* and Zora nurses Abbas back to health. Abbas and Zora fall in love with each other. But her status as the granddaughter of a lowly *fakir* stands as an impediment to their marriage. Zora is also plagued by Osman Beg, the cousin of Abbas and the governor of Juldrug. Osman abducts Zora and threatens to marry her by force. She is rescued by the Beydur chief Runga Naik, who is a loyal follower of Abbas. Zora and her grandfather find temporary shelter in the Beydur kingdom. However, Ahmud Ali decides to dedicate his life in the service of God. Accompanied by Zora, he travels throughout the Deccan, begging alms. Eventually they reach Gulburgh where the *fakir's* preaching is heard with awe and reverence. He is declared a "Wallee" or saint. They return in triumph to Bijapur where the new king receives the saint with honour and returns his former possessions. Zora is married to Abbas and Osman is banished for treachery. After the death of her grandfather Zora and Abbas accompanies Chand Bibi to Ahmadnagar. They witness the assassination of the noble queen and the fall of the capital. Osman, who had joined the

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<sup>91</sup> Philip Meadows Taylor, *A Noble Queen: A Romance of Indian History* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1986), 133.

Mughals, perishes in the fight. Abbas returns with Zora to Bijapur where they live happily ever after.

The other protagonist Francis D'Almedia is a Christian priest. He along with his sister Maria lives at Moodgul. Their peace is disturbed by Francis' superior Dom Diego de Fonseca. Dom Diego lusts for Maria and threatens to punish his brother unless Maria satisfies his desire. Maria and her brother escape from Moodgul and takes refuge at Juldrug where they are looked after by Zora and her grandfather. Francis and Maria are eventually sent to the court of Chand Bibi. They are received with honour by the noble queen. With the help of his friend, Francis is able to defend himself before the Inquisition. Dom Diego flies and joins the Mughals. Like Osman, he dies during the siege of Ahmadnagar. Francis is elevated in rank. The brother and sister return to their parish. After serving for many years, they finally return to Portugal. David Finkelstein rightly observes, "Taylor does not spend as much time detailing the travails of Francis and his sister as he does with Zora and her grandfather; the material is sufficiently conventional perhaps as even to persuade its author to avoid the tedium of repetition."<sup>92</sup>

*A Noble Queen* drew varied responses from nineteenth century reviewers. While the remarks of some reviewers were rather caustic, the praises of others were sometimes too extravagant. The reviewers for *The Pall Mall Gazette*, *Dublin University Magazine*, *The Athenaeum*, *The Spectator* and *The Examiner* point out the limitations of the work. The plot is found to be too simple and the portrayal of characters to be superficial. The reviewer for *The Spectator* believes that Taylor's imagination lost its creative force when he wrote this novel. As a result, "There is a coldness and artificiality in these pages."<sup>93</sup> The reviewer of *The Pall Mall Gazette* correctly observes, "The chief fault we have to find with

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<sup>92</sup> Finkelstein, 195.

<sup>93</sup> "Colonel Meadows Taylor's Last Story", review of *A Noble Queen*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The Spectator* 51: 2599 (20 April 1878): 504.

‘A Noble Queen’ is its discursiveness. The author attempts to wield together into coherence two distinct romances and the history of the Dekhan (sic) at the height of its glory, and naturally and almost necessarily fails.”<sup>94</sup> The reviewer for *The Athenaeum* feels that “from the author of ‘Tara’ and ‘The Story of My Life’ it is a disappointment.”<sup>95</sup> On the other hand, the reviewers for *The British Quarterly Review*, *Liverpool Mercury*, *Saturday Review* and *The Times* praise the novel. They find the novel instructive. The reviewer for *The Times* for instance says, “it is well worth reading for the information to be gathered from it.”<sup>96</sup> The greatest tribute is paid by the reviewer for *The British Quarterly Review* who says, “We do not think that in the romance and pathos of the story that he tells, or in the skilful blending of historic events and dynastic changes with incidents of fictitious personal adventure, even ‘Tara’ surpasses ‘A Noble Queen’.”<sup>97</sup>

Most twentieth century critics have neglected *A Noble Queen*. Those who studied the novel found it an inferior work. David Finkelstein recognizes it as the weakest novel. He states, “The dialogue is poor and the description of scenery, usually Taylor’s strongpoint, are on the whole extremely flat, with the exception of the descriptions of the Krishna falls.”<sup>98</sup> Mansukhani also feels, “*A Noble Queen* shows the decline of Taylor’s art and genius.”<sup>99</sup> Besides these novels, Taylor also wrote three short stories. They are “The Great Cat and Dog Question”, “Legends of the Dekhan: the Fatal Armlet” and “The Midnight Search”. These are entertaining sketches of Indian life and manners. But as artwork they are poor.

Among the non-fictional works examined, mention must be made of Taylor’s historical works. *Architecture at Beejapoor* and *Architecture in Dharwar and*

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<sup>94</sup> Review of *A Noble Queen*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 27. 4104 (16 April 1878): 12.

<sup>95</sup> Review of *A Noble Queen*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The Athenaeum* 2630 (25 March 1878): 378.

<sup>96</sup> Review of *A Noble Queen*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The Times*, issue 29205 (18 March 1878): 4.

<sup>97</sup> Review of *A Noble Queen*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The British Quarterly Review* 134 (April 1878): 591.

<sup>98</sup> Finkelstein, 193.

<sup>99</sup> Mansukhani, 183.

*Mysore* describe the history of the Deccan. *A Student's Manual of the History of India* is wider in scope and attempts to present the history of India from the earliest times. Taylor did not carry out original research and merely reiterated the popular views. Book V to Book IX of *A Student's Manual* are, however, important. These sections focus on the colonial period and highlight the consolidation and progress of British rule in India. As one reviewer observes, "In the British period it gives much valuable information regarding administrative details (although the constitutional changes are alluded to with an excess of brevity), and one can obtain a good insight into the policy of this country towards India by reading the sketch and criticism of the administration from Lord William Bentinck's to Lord Mayo's."<sup>100</sup> Taylor's autobiography *The Story of My Life* and his letters are also important for the same reason. In all these works he evaluates the policies and praxis of British rule in India.

From the time of their publication, Taylor's novels have generated a considerable amount of critical discussion. His non-fictional works, on the other hand, have not been so fortunate. In his own days, his novels were widely reviewed in contemporary journals and newspapers. Major 19<sup>th</sup> century English journals like *The Examiner*, *The Spectator*, *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine*, *Edinburgh Review*, *The Athenaeum*, and *The Times* reviewed his works. These were the earliest critical works on Taylor. They brought out the merits and defects of his works, although their views were sometimes distorted by the reviewers personal prejudices.

The systematic study of Taylor's works began only in the twentieth century. Given Taylor's uniqueness as an Anglo-Indian writer, it is surprising that only three full length studies on Taylor has been conducted till date. Gobind Singh Mansukhani's pioneering work *Philip Meadows Taylor: A Critical Study* was published in 1951. This work is important because it resurrects Taylor from oblivion. Mansukhani mainly concentrates on Taylor's

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<sup>100</sup> Review of *A Student's Manual of the History of India*, by Philip Meadows Taylor, *The Examiner* 3285 (14 January 1871): 47.

novels; but he also takes into account some of his non-fictional works like his letters, autobiography, and history books. Mansukhani's work, however, suffers from several defects. He is at times wrong with facts. Also, his study is not exhaustive. He leaves out many of his works including Taylor's articles and reviews.

David Finkelstein's unpublished PhD dissertation "A Study of the Works of Philip Meadows Taylor" appeared in 1990. This remains the most authoritative work on Taylor till date. Finkelstein makes extensive use of archival materials available in the United Kingdom. He studies in details Taylor's letters to his publishers Richard Bentley and William Blackwood, and provides us with valuable publication data. With the help of this data, one can easily assess the extent of Taylor's popularity in his own days. Taylor's letters to William Blackwood and Sons are appended to the end of Finkelstein's thesis. Finkelstein also attempts to give a complete bibliography of Taylor's works. The discovery of hitherto unknown materials, however, proves that more requires to be done in this area.

Finkelstein's thesis is ground-breaking in many ways. He does not confine himself strictly to literary analysis. Recognizing the importance given to history in Taylor's novels, he studies the historical background as well. Finkelstein's thesis thus borders on the interdisciplinary. His analysis of Taylor's presentation of Indian landscape is also pioneering. The only drawback of Finkelstein's work is that he concentrates solely on the novels, ignoring his other writings. He is thus able to give only a partial account of Taylor's discourse on India.

M. Sarada's *Anglo-Indian Novel: Philip Meadows Taylor* was published in 1995. This work is based on her PhD dissertation "Philip Meadows Taylor: Fiction, History, Romance" (1992). Like her predecessors, Sarada studies Taylor's novels, paying attention to his themes, style and techniques. She uses the methodology provided by the colonial discourse analysts to read his novels. She is particularly sensitive to the influence of other

nineteenth century novelists on Taylor. However, like previous researchers, Sarada leaves out most of his non-fictional works, except *The Story of My Life* and *Letters of Philip Meadows Taylor to Henry Reeve*. This limits the scope of her study.

Another study on Taylor which deserves mention is N. H. Kulkarnee's unpublished PhD dissertation "British Relations with the Principality of Surapur" (1973). This is a historical study. Kulkarnee concentrates on the actual work done by Taylor as an administrator. This study provides us with valuable background materials. Kulkarnee's main theme is, however, Surapur and not Taylor. Hence, he does not focus on the earlier and later part of Taylor's career in India.

Besides these, Taylor has sometimes been considered in sections of larger studies. Edward Farley Oaten in *A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature* (1908), Robert Sencourt in *India in English Literature* (1923), Susanne Howe in *Novels of the Empire* (1949) and Bhupal Singh in *A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction* (1934) evaluate Taylor's contributions as an Anglo-Indian author. Professor K. Viswanatham in *India in English Fiction* (1971) studies *Tara*. More recent works which focus on Taylor's novel includes Udayon Misra's *The Raj in Fiction* (1987), Nancy L. Paxton's *Writing under the Raj* (1999), B. J. Moore-Gilbert's *Kipling and Orientalism* (1986), Patrick Brantlinger's *Rule of Darkness* (1988), Rashna B. Singh's *The Imperishable Empire* (1988), Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee's *Crime and Empire* (2003), and Indrani Sen's *Woman and Empire* (2009). *Confessions of a Thug* and *Seeta* have drawn the attention of scholars studying Thuggee and Sepoy Mutiny. Among those scholars who have focused specifically on *Confessions of a Thug* mention may be made of Martine Van Woerkens, Amal Chatterjee, Caroline Reitz, Matthew Kaiser, and Alex Tickell. Scholars focusing on *Seeta* include Shailendra Dhari Singh, Gautam Chakravarty and Shuchi Kapila. Sundry articles on Taylor's novels continue to appear in journals and anthologies from time to time.

While Taylor's novels have received adequate attention, his non-fictional works remain neglected till date. This fact, adversely affects one's understanding of his works. Scholars have applied their resources to the utmost to understand his views and assumptions, even when they are clearly stated in his non-fictional works. This study differs from its predecessors in the emphasis it gives to Taylor's non-fictional works. It is assumed that these works are essential to understand Taylor's discourse on India.

Since this study draws upon a wide variety of materials, it was felt that a simple chapter by chapter analysis of Taylor's works would not be adequate. Instead, certain aspects of Taylor's representation of India have been taken up as objects of analysis. The following chapter summaries highlight the areas selected for study.

Chapter I attempts to reconstruct Taylor's life with the help of available resources. It has been argued that Meadows Taylor's personal experiences shaped his writings on India. The ground for such an assumption has been provided by Taylor himself, who writes in his autobiography,

... my long residence in an entirely native State, and my intimate acquaintance with the people, their manners, habits, and social organization, gave me opportunities, which I think few Englishmen have ever enjoyed, of thoroughly understanding native life.<sup>101</sup>

Hence the study of his life becomes an imperative. Interestingly, the reconstruction of his life cannot skip over the methods of literary analysis. This is because one's major source of information on Taylor is Taylor himself. His autobiography and personal letters provide the bedrock on which one's knowledge rests. Archival materials – official letters, despatches, etc. – can supplement these materials but cannot supplant them. Therefore the reconstruction of

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<sup>101</sup> Taylor, *The Story of My Life*, 456.

Taylor's life involves close reading of his works. In this way, the first chapter becomes a commentary not only on his life but also on his autobiographical works.

The first chapter demonstrates that Taylor was a paternalist by temperament. Paternalism was an ideology which constructed the ruling British as the father-figure to the Indians. Concomitantly, the Indians were depicted as dependent children. Chapter II shows how Taylor's paternalism influenced his representation of the Indians. Whenever the Indians accepted British authority, they were shown as lovable and childlike. However, when they resisted British rule they were shown to be immature and childish. Taylor's novels portray both sides of Indian character. The Beydurs, a tribe whom he ruled, were shown to be both childlike and childish. It becomes apparent that whenever Taylor comes across resistance to colonial rule, he presented it as an act of childish insubordination. This chapter examines his portrayal of the famous Indian rulers who resisted foreign rule like Shivaji, Siraj-ud-daulah and Tipu Sultan. Taylor's paternalism makes him depict these rulers as childish and immature. This was a strategy by which the threat embodied by these rulers to British rule was attenuated. Taylor's villains are also childish and irrational in their obsession for the Indian heroines. The chapter ends with the study of Taylor's infantilization of the feminine Other. Taylor's novels generally present strong independent women as heroine. There is no trace of immaturity in them. The only exception is Seeta. Though she has the boldness and courage of the other heroines, she is also docile and timid before the British characters, particularly her husband Cyril. Taylor's infantilization of Seeta is strategic; it allows him to construct her as the ideal native subject. Through her Taylor highlights the success of paternalism as a ruling strategy.

Chapter II shows how Taylor dealt with the threat posed by the individual native subjects. Chapter III shows how he represented what he perceived as confronting ideologies. Taylor saw popular Hinduism as a subversive force which threatened the peace

and stability of British Empire in India. Popular Hinduism, which fostered a ‘childish’ faith, was deemed as irrational and counter-progressive. Taylor was particularly suspicious of the worship of the goddess, which was linked with subversive activities. He was probably the first English writer to associate goddess worship with Hindu nationalism. In Taylor’s novels the Hindu heroines Tara and Seeta are not only rescued from native (Hindu) villains but also from the Hindu religion. The chapter ends by comparing Taylor’s treatment of Hinduism with his predecessor Sydney Owenson’s. Owenson finds Hinduism to be a romantic religion unlike Taylor who finds it to be a superstition.

Chapter IV studies Taylor’s views on colonial administration. As a colonial administrator of the paternalist school, Taylor had particular views on the system of governance. He criticized the British government when it failed to satisfy his expectations. This of course was neither very unique nor very unusual. Other British writers of the time also attacked the government in their writings. Taylor’s critique of the government was, however, systematic. Being an administrator, he was concerned with the administrative problems. He identifies three moments of crisis in colonial administration. These are the Thug Scare, the wars of British expansion in India, and the Sepoy Mutiny. He studies how the government dealt with these administrative problems. He tries to discern what went wrong and suggests remedial measures. This critique of colonial government is important, for it ultimately reveals the way Taylor perceived India. It was the consideration of the particular needs of the people that urged him to find faults with the administration.

The last chapter summarizes the findings of the study. Being an administrator, Taylor saw India through the administrator’s eye. This study makes it evident that his peculiar status as a paternalist administrator influenced his discourse on India.

As a colonial writer, Philip Meadows Taylor could not go beyond the signifying practices of colonialism. The India he represented in his works was largely an India of his own making. This was an India which validated British rule. The study of his works thereby highlights how the politics of imperialism informed knowledge formation.

Among those Indian rulers who challenged British rule in India, few enjoyed as much notoriety as Tipu Sultan, "the Tiger of Mysore". Tipu contested with the English East India Company for supremacy over South India, and kept its progress in check for several years. His proverbial hatred for the British made him their national enemy. Hyder Ali was originally an adventurer in the service of the Hindu rulers of Mysore. Taking advantage of the ruler's weakness, he usurped the throne. Among the three novels described in this article, Philip Meadows Taylor's *Tippoo Suldaun: A Tale of the Mysore War* (1840) is the only one that qualifies as a historical novel. The novel closely follows the history of Tipu Sultan, interweaving the main plot with various events of his life. Jeff Taylor, who launched Monster.com, Chapter 4 (continued) 1. Does Monster.com make a profit? 2. What two advantages does Monster.com offer to job-seekers? The best way is to set up operations in other countries like India. It has over a billion people and could be the biggest market in the world in the future. But how many people there have access to the internet? After each question the hiring manager will enter an evaluation of the quality of the candidate's response directly into a computer. The HR team's. Chapter 37 Dilemma: The Golden Couple of Hollywood's golden couple, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Michael Douglas, sold the exclusive rights to their wedding photographs to the celebrity magazine OK!