

CHAPTER - II

AN INDIAN DAY (1927)

An Indian Day (1927) dramatizes the political turmoil of the disturbed decade of 1920-30. After the British enjoyed the hey-day of imperialism in the early period, doubt was created in their minds because of the shock of the Mutiny of 1857. After this event the British started distrusting the Indians. The Indians after receiving English education started questioning the propriety of the British rule in India. As Percival Spear puts it :

"Beneath the burnished cover of the British administration the mind of India was actually in ferment. Western ideas and ways of life had not been accepted or rejected but they were under serious examination all over the sub-continent. . . India was seriously considering an alternative philosophy."¹

Thus Indian nationalism struck its roots which went on weakening the edifice of the English Empire slowly but steadily. In the early years of 1880s the Indian National Congress made very little impact. Writers like Kipling were sure of the firmness of British Empire/^{but} after the partition of Bengal in 1905 atmosphere changed completely. There was agitation everywhere and the British became conscious of disturbance around them.

Indian nationalism started evolving. Before the First World War the Morley-Minto Reforms kept in the check. Then came the

Non-Cooperation Movement in the twenties alongwith the demand for the Dominion status for India. After this came the period of 'aggressive nationalism'. British attitudes changed continuously during these phases. Their earlier confidence and arrogance was punctured by the element of fear after Gandhi started his work of the Swadeshi Movement. The Anglo-Indian officers wanted the Empire to crush the movement. Both the Englishmen and Indians were experiencing strange waves of changes in their ways of thinking. The Englishmen faced by doubts and realization of the end of their Indian Empire, made a poor struggle to fight an already lost battle. The Indians, on the other hand, received impetus for pursuing their aim of independence along the twin lines of the Conservatives and Liberals.

It is this political reality and social and historical ethos that gets dramatized in significant fiction by Edward Thompson. An Indian Day (1927) could be read as a political novel which gives a moving picture of the uncertainty in the minds of the Englishmen living in India during the period of the rise of Indian nationalism.

There is not much by way of plot in this novel. The characters are neatly divided in two camps - Indians and Englishmen and Englishwomen. There are again sub-divisions among the English, such as military men, civil servants and educational missionaries and religious missionaries. The Indians are sub-divided in the categories such as the religious mystics, Indian officers - good and bad, the Rajhas who symbolize the past glory in the present ruins of royalty. There are corrupt officers also

and finally there are references to the activists, swarajists, seditionists. Actual Indian figures like Das, Gandhi and Andrews are referred to.

The story played out by these characters, concerns Vincent Hamar, an English judge, suffering for 'doing his job properly'. In the opening pages of the novel his journey from Suriganj to Vishnugram is described. He has acquitted some Indians involved in what is called Lambertgarh case for want of evidence against the accused. This action makes him unpopular in the eyes of his own people. He is transferred to Vishnugram, 'a rotten hole of a place'. As he reaches the place he comes into contact with the Anglo-Indian community there, which is divided into two groups - 1) pro-Indians, such as Alden and Findlay, and 2) anti-Indians, like - Major Henderson, Jacks, Nixon. He finds life in Vishnugram interesting but he is angry to see the corrupt Indians like Deogharia and dislikes the equally corrupt commissioner- Fergusson and a typically artificial government agent Tomlinson. Hamar comes across Hilda, Alden's sister-in-law and falls in love with her at the first sight but he is unsuccessful in making any advances to her. He is interested in a religious Englishman called Findlay and helps in his Campaign against the terrible famine which takes a heavy toll of the native life. Hamar has no particular religious beliefs but he is interested in the humanitarian work undertaken by Findlay. He doesn't like Indians very much and calls them 'a thankless race'. For him 'ahimsa is a failure'. There crops up another case in which ⁹some native extremists are arrested. The

English community thinks that Hamar will acquit them as he had done in the earlier case. And actually it happens like that. But all of a sudden two Indians are arrested against whom there is evidence and he sentences them to eight years. Now it is the Indians who accuse him. In the final pages of the novel he meets the Indian Sadhu, has a long talk with him and finally he is accepted by Hilda. Around this major movement all the episodes of the novel revolve.

Hamar is not particularly interested in Indians, calls them black people but he has a deep sense of justice. He likes Kamalakanth Neogyi for his sincere work but he also has courage to insult a corrupt officer like Deogharia. He refuses to shake hands with him saying :-

"If you don't mind, I will keep my hand clean"²

He is indignant at Deogharia's attempt to force the natives arrange a shooting party for the visiting English dignitary and he goes to extent of saying "no decent man would touch you except the end of a boot!". (p.228) and further "If there's one thing that ought to keep us in this country, it's the necessity to protect Indians from blood-suckers of their own race such as you". (p.228). Such outbursts make Alden remark about Hamar that "He's an enigma. He'll do anything for these folk, yet he can't keep his temper". (p.231) In the second half of the novel Hamar is interested in Findlay's work for the Indians. He is also happy in Indian spring and has an ecstatic experience in the company of Indian nature. So that he asks himself "why should he, Vincent Hamar, ... be an official ? Or an Englishman?". (p.266)

In Hamar's character we see slight change coming over after he discovers Hilda but he remains a cold, honest, civil servant 'doing his job' rather too seriously. It is doubtful if ^{he} can be called the protagonist of the novel.

Robert Alden could be called the mouthpiece of Edward Thompson himself because of his friendly attitude to India and Indians. He knows that Indians have a different ethics. Indian nationalism does not scare him. On the contrary he likes it. He reproaches Hamar when the latter calls Indians black people. He warns Hamar with a characteristic note of honesty in his voice "Only do look with your own eyes, and not with the spectacles that have been handed down from one generation of Anglo-Indians to another. Do a course of history - honest history, if you can find it anywhere, and not the nauseating tripe that our people grind out". (p.178). He also advises Hamar to "continue being a decent chap, and not just an official" (p.179). Alden's attitude towards Indians is refreshingly free from the typical Anglo-Indian callousness. He is at a loss to understand how the English in India are so careless in the language used about Indians. "When our actions are also decent and so honourable, why-why-why-do we always talk as if we were half cad, half imbecile?" (p.180). He doesn't have any good opinion about the English civil servants.

Endorsing Hilda's remark about lack of intellectual interest among the services, Alden says - " ... intellectually the community was third-rate, and its mind was fed on starch and sawdust", (p.207). Alden tries to analyse the problem with the

British relations with India and Indians. On being asked by Jayanand Sadhu about what annoys him most in Indians - Alden's reply is - "Backbonelessness - they wash their hands and cringe, instead of behaving like men . . . they keep bragging. . . . never forget if a xxxx. foreigner praises you". (p.277)

It is through Alden that Thompson tries to analyse the problem of communication gap between the English and Indians.

It is the character of Findlay that strikes us as something original but strange. A religious missionary himself sacrifices his wife and daughter for his work for the poor Indians. He is absorbed in his work with such intensity that he forgets himself when he takes part in the famine relief measures. Finally he forgets the world and becomes a sannyasi. He begins to see vision of the demon-goddess in the Indian jungles. His long talks with Jayanand Sadhu neatly bring out the differences between the Indian idea of spirituality and the Englishman's concept of it. Whereas Englishmen care for the here and now and would help the Indians make life livable at the time of the famine, Jayanand Sadhu renounces all concerns with ^{the} Indians or foreigners. Things of this world do not matter for him. He is of this world and also not of it. Findlay asks the Sadhu how his mind can be calm when there is misery, sickness, poverty, anxiety, bitterness and cruelty. Jayanand's reply is characteristic - "Desire is dead in me. There is nothing within me . . . all longing is ended, all striving is finished". (p.157). Thompson comes very near to understand the Indian spirituality when he tells Findlay "Thou and I, O

missionary, are both flitting images in another's dream, even before the Sleeper wakes, we shall vanish into crannies of his mind where none will ever find us again". (p.153). It is very strange that Sadhu Jayanand not only salutes Findlay but bows and "took the dust of his feet". (p.299). Perhaps Thompson is unable to understand completely the meaning of the Sadhu's renunciation.

The group of characters who are anti-Indians (Major Henderson, Jacks, Mrs. Nixon, Fergusson and Tomlinson) have nothing original or new about them. They represent the well-known type who do not see any good in India or the Indians. They do not have either the sympathetic attitude of Alden or the genuine desire of Findlay, who "loved this country with a passion that was very near worship". (p.80). For a character like Jacks 'Indian minds are dark' because of the evil spirits, the 'bhuts' but for Findlay there is ". . . enthusiasm for wild life and wild flowers, his keenness ever increasing, on Hindu thought and customs, passion for others and their welfare, his busyness, deep religious faith. . .". (p.83) This contrast between the superficial reaction to Indian way of life and Findlay's genuine efforts to cross the barriers of aloofness and try to penetrate to the Indian philosophy are worth noting .

Hilda's character is created just for the sake of variety because she does not play any significant role in the action of the novel. We could say that she comes to India to forget an unhappy engagement to a man who tries to dominate her. Initially she refuses to have anything to do with Hamar and his interest in her.

She calls herself a free woman and has had her own way in everything. She goes to ^{the} extent of retorting to Hamar - "I don't care for you like that". (p.128). when the latter confesses to her "you are not a woman, you are a Goddess" (p.127). But this attitude gives way to submission, later when Hilda's long evening walks to herself and solitude make India a presence comforting and friendly and at last she accepts Hamar with humility asking him - "Why did you take so long to come and claim me ?" (p.302). This change could be attributed to the healing touch that India has for whoever comes to her with trust and love.

From the Indian side Deogharia and the native Rajas are bad characters whereas Neogyi and Sadhu are friendly with the British. The Sadhu sympathises with Indian nationalism and tries to defend the extreme measures accepted by the extremists in dealing with the British.

A bullet is directed at Nixon and Hamar wonders what happened to the "grand old Hindu doctrine of ahimsa" (p.197). Thompson shows a genuine understanding of the Indian political reality when he refers to the Swadeshi press and makes Nixon discover arms and Ammunition in the temple. He makes Hamar imagine the feelings of an Indian; "how could he help feeling that the landscape was a living creature, appealing to her sons for liberation?" (p.200) Hamar calls himself one of the aliens to be thrown out. This imaginative sympathy for the Indian political cause is real on the part of Thompson and shows his inwardness towards Indian reality. It is again to be noted that the anti-

Indians are not given much value in the plot of the novel because they are kept at the status of minor characters only.

The minor Indian characters like the native Rajas and Deogharia are also faintly sketched and are never allowed to cross their limits. Indirectly Thompson suggests that bad men are bad anywhere in the world, regardless of the country to which they belong. Thus Deogharia is the Indian counter-part of Fergusson and the native Rajas are as petty as Jacks, Mrs. Nixon, and Major Henderson.

Thompson's real appreciation of India is found in his characterization of Sadhu Jayanand. Modelled on the biography of Sri Aurobindo, Jayanand Sadhu is also an ex-I.C.S. Officer who has resigned and become a sannyasi. During his discussions with Alden and Findlay he narrates how change had come over him after realising the vanity of active life. He realized that desire is the root of all miseries. He puts it very movingly when he says, "At last my eyes were opened, and I saw that all was passing, and that the English would be gone from the face of the land, and forgotten as Akbar and Allah-ud-din are forgotten, who also were great names in their day". (p.158) The Sadhu also has a great sense of humour. Praising Alden and Findlay for their work at the time of famines he elevates them almost ^{to} an incarnation of some Hindu God; "Vishnu has had many avatars - but some of us are expecting his next one to be as a football-playing, famine-relief-organising person in shorts, with a hockey stick for discus and a bicycle for vahan. That's the way you have corrupted our good old Hinduism".

(p.161). Jayanand has a sharp mind which realizes the value of the missionary work of Findlay who is "half a Vedantist, Tat Tvam asi - isn't that where you're finding the Kingdom of Heaven?".(p.161). Blessed with the English education and advantages of Indian spirituality, Jayanand can realize the value of both and he puts his finger on the cold, corrupt approach of the business-like Englishmen in India. Commenting on the uselessness of their approach he says to Alden and Findlay -

" . . . Countless Englishmen have shown us courage, honour, justice. . . . But hardly one, whether missionary or official, has shown - . . . the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And until you can show us your peace, we will not believe in your victory. It is not energy that proves holiness. A child or a mad dog can rush round and round".
(p.272).

Thus Jayanand Sadhu does not hesitate to point out the faults of the British attitude towards Indians. On being asked what vexed him most in the British, he does not hesitate to attack their faults in very plain language -

" Your nobly moral airs. The way you have persuaded yourselves that the Empire is just a magnificent philanthropic institution, disinterestedly run for the sake of an ungrateful world. That's where your brag comes in. You don't brag about poetry - or your men of science - or your martyrs

- or any of the things that really exist".

(p.278)

And further he tells the Englishmen very bluntly, "our books and your talk are both wrong. Once you get among facts and people you never want to get back to the books or the clubs". (p.279). In the character of Jayanand Sadhu Thompson achieves two things. One - he shows his inwardness to Indian spirituality which has according to him certain lessons to be taught to the English missionaries, two - through his remarks, Thompson wants to attack the hollow religion of some of the Englishmen. The sadhu appeals to us because of his multifaceted personality. There have been pictures of Indian Sadhus in the Anglo-Indian novels. But nowhere do we come across such an active sadhu who talks politics, blames the Englishmen, accepts the short-comings of his own countrymen and yet keeps his sense of humour³. But in one respect Thompson errs when he makes his Sadhu bow down and take the dust of Findlay's feet, because a man like Jayanand would never stoop to this absurd action. Probably Thompson's subconscious instinct wanted the Indian spirituality to bow down before its Western counterpart.

Considered as a historical novel An Indian Day can be read as a sensitive comment on the Indian politics in the beginning of the twentieth century. Thompson was writing about a contemporary history when he dealt with the rise of the Indian nationalism. He has an admirable grasp of the nature of historical

past. The remote historical past is easier to recreate in historical novel because one can imagine many things and create illusion of reality. As A.T. Sheppeard puts -

"It is comparatively easy to write about the very remote past, to invent names. You may invent names, invent environments, even make your clock strike in Roman halls".⁴

Hence it is more difficult to write what G.M. Trevelyn calls - "contemporary historical fiction"⁵ Thompson writes such a novel and successfully selects historical facts. History has a number of events and personalities and it is for the novelist to select the appropriate ones and write a novel about them. Thompson here refers to the extremists who reacted towards the British atrocities such as the revenge of the 1857 Mutiny, the partition of Bengal, the punishments given to Indian nationalists. During the discussions between characters, he refers to the living figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Das, and many other Swarajists. In Jayanand Sadhu he recreates the personality of another Indian nationalist, Aurobindo Ghose. As we read the novel An Indian Day and as our imagination thinks of Thompson's fictitious characters, we also get to know some actual historical figures and historical events. This combination of fact and fiction adds to our enjoyment. What is more interesting is the fact that Thompson doesn't rest by stating the problem. He goes on to analyse it and suggests his own solution.

His linking of the historical facts is admirably correct because one should not forget that having written voluminously on

Indian history and culture, Thompson was rightly considered, 'an expert on Indian affairs'⁵.

Yet another special aspect of Thompson's greatness is his successful recreation of the socio-cultural ethos of the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the twentieth century in connection with the decadence of the British Raj and the inevitable rise of the Indian nationalism. This ethos is created by Thompson's firm grasp of the atmosphere and language of the time which he wants to recreate. As W.H. Hudson puts it,

"a good historical novelist combines the dramatic interest of plot and character with a more or less detailed picture of the varied features of the life of a particular age"⁷

Thompson gives us a correct feel of the restlessness of the time when the British and Indians viewed each other with profound distrust and were divided between two opposite camps. The ironical language used by the British to criticise the Indians and the terms of abuse hurled at the British by the Indians more than prove this point. The very language of his English characters breathes the gloom, the fear, the restlessness, experienced by the imperialists.

As far as historical accuracy is concerned Thompson succeeds in the recreation of the past. Doris Marston wants historical accuracy and says that -

"the novelist must be accurate in detail, in time and in location but at the same time must be aware

not to load his story down with too much information"⁸.

Thompson combines history and imagination as a complement to history. In his characterisation Thompson is imaginative as well as realistic. His characters do not appear card-board figures but living human beings. An Indian Day gives more justice to the Indian characters because we have a full length treatment of Sadhu Jayanand, who is responsible for many changes that come over in the way of the thinking of the important English characters like Hamar, Alden and Findlay. Even an indifferent woman like Hilda begins to like India and Indians. Thompson reveals his own point of view through the character of Alden and Thompson's own undecidedness is reflected in the comments of Alden.

Thompson recreates the socio-cultural ethos by making use of correct Bengali (Indian) words in his novel. Michael Edwardes calling Thompson's books 'unjustly neglected' novels, observes that they

'reflect a changing and essentially political vocabulary . . . represent the new world of Indian nationalism"⁹

A number of expressions testify to the truth of this remark. One is surprised to see the long list of Indian words appearing in An Indian Day.¹⁰

Like many other Anglo-Indian novelists, Thompson also describes Indian Nature with great interest and relates his

descriptions with the mood of his character. He is sensitive to the existence of two types of landscape in Bengal. On the one hand he describes the experience of dirt, insects and on the other hand he takes delight in the liveliness of Indian spring. To the first category belong such passages as this one -

"The jungles were fragrant with sal, lifting its
green - white plumage of blossom . . . simul . .
. birds . . . palas . . . The Mahuas . . .
petals loveliness of season's few glories . . . "
(p.p.p. 72, 80, 81)

Thompson's delight in nature is noted by the T.L.S. reviewer also. He says -

"The book (An Indian Day) which is throughout
written in the tragic mode shows a certain delight
in Indian scenery".¹¹

This remark suggests that Thompson tries to lessen the burden of the seriousness of the novel by making the hero or heroine enjoy the Indian nature. It is significant that Findlay undertakes, "lonely journey through the woods, his enthusiasm for wild life and wild flowers", (p.83). This delight in nature is just like the ancient 'Rishis' of India because it made him exceptionally wealthy man". (p.83)

Thompson goes to the extent of saying that Findlay 'felt that exultant mood of which the Hindu mystic spoke' he 'felt faint with fragrance of wild rose and honeysuckle'. (p.p.89,90). It is also significant that the Englishmen see spirits, 'bhuts', in the

Indian jungle, because it is governed by the demon-Goddess and the Gods like 'Rudra'. In the initial stage Hilda sees India as 'arid land' but later when she takes interest in Indian affairs she begins to admire the Indian villagers' life. She thinks that 'the peasant and his beasts had become a symbol of the Indian age-long trudge along dusty ways', and '... patience and courage of the villagers who starved if rain failed and were ruined if it came in excess - of their uncomplaining heroism under disaster' (p. 124). Thus the nature is not appreciated by Thompson's character simply for its own sake. It is not seen only as a source of sensuous delight but it is related with the human life. It's extremes make the English think about the difficult and hard life of the Indian peasant, Nature acts as a healing touch for a character like Hilda who has long evening walks in the Indian jungles and who becomes a legend in the village. During her wandering in the jungle Hilda comes across the sati stones and it is near these stones that she receives fulfilment in the form of love. There is another nature of description that of the Trisunia Hills. Critics have pointed out that this description reminds us very strongly of Forster's 'Marabar Caves' in A Passage to India. But there is a slight difference, because unlike the caves in Forster's novel, Indian nature does not destroy anybody in Thompson's novel. Indian Nature does not act as a destructive force as happens in Kipling¹² or Forster. On the other hand Indian nature for Thompson acts as a balm to the troubled and tortured minds of the foreigners living in India. Thus nature becomes here a separate entity in itself and has a positive role to play in the lives of Englishmen and women.

In case of Findlay again after the loss of his wife and child, his visit to the jungle proves fateful because as he goes to the grove of the she-demon, Padalsini, he has a terrible experience after which he falls unconscious. That is the fear of the Goddess. This is actually a traumatic experience for Findlay because it is after this episode that he becomes free from all worries and decides to become a sannyasi and live a life of selflessness. Thus indirectly, Indian nature powerfully brings about the great change in Findlay.

Allen Greenberger commenting on Kipling and Forster's use of nature, says -

"In Kipling and Forster, the soul of India is thought of in negative rather than positive terms".¹³

Thus the two major Anglo-Indian novelists, Kipling and Forster are seen as presenters of the negative image of Indian nature, but in Thompson's An Indian Day, it plays a positive, significant part in the lives of the English men and women.

Hamar has a particularly wonderful experience at the time of Indian springs. He feels great happiness in this atmosphere and almost forgets himself and his narrow outlook as he goes on drinking deep into the delights of the Indian spring mountain. Look at this beautiful passage which successfully throws light on the mood of exultation experienced by Hamar.

"The exultation of that spring dawn lit his veins to dancing fire. This endless procession of people going by, to market and to their day's work, filled him with bliss. The earth was spinning onward on her course, interchanging hot and cold days, summer and autumn and winter and spring, rains and dewy season; and she was spinning away, as on a never-pausing loom, his own fleeting days, and the days of these countless unknown men and women, his brothers and sisters. But these days, while they raced to their finish, were scattering beauty and happiness and most precious of all, comradeship. Why should he Vincent Hamar, who had known the perils of boredom of Sannaiyat trenches and of the desert where man's spirit is naked, be an official? Or an Englishman? Damn it all, because God had placed him on an island in the midst of the seas, he wasn't bound to keep an insular soul and a ragged, ugly, beastly little mind. Look at these people on the road! They were his own flesh and blood - he repeated it in ecstasy, and he longed that somehow his love and good will might reach them and make them also happy. The same Mind - he was sure this morning that it was Mind that had blossomed into the courage and beauty of man - that had flung its passion for loveliness into the poise and glory of

Hilda Mannering, had expressed its patience and heroic endurance in that withered woman going past, her shrivelled breast and the taut spare body beneath her whitened, meagre hair witnessing to the record of struggle and motherhood and semi-starvation that was nearly finished." (p.p.265,266)

An analysis of this passage reveals many interesting things about Thompson's involvement with Indian nature and his concern for the betterment of the Indians. To begin with, the words chosen in this passage have suggestions of a religious experience in which some type of epiphany is being described. The expressions such as 'exultation', 'lit his veins', 'filled him with bliss', 'beauty and happiness', 'ecstasy' etc. clearly indicate Hamar's successful crossing of the usual bars felt by every Englishman in his dealings with Indians. Secondly Hamar wishes to forget his insular outlook which is official or that of an Englishman. He goes out of himself and identifies himself with the ordinary men and women on the Indian roads. He feels a unique oneness with them as he would feel with the people of his own flesh and blood. He wishes to make them happy by giving them his love and good will. Surprisingly, he compares the loveliness and glory of Hilda Mannering with an ordinary Indian woman's dull and dry figure realising the struggles of motherhood and starvation undergone by her.

Thus India does not act as a confusing force over him. It has positive role to play in his life. His happiness is noted by

Alden too who remarks, 'just look at Hamar; he is treading on air', & ^ v. In this way nature does not remain something used for decorative detail in An Indian Day. It has a positive function to perform.

Thompson's inwardness to Indian culture can be judged, yet from another source and that is, the many references to Indian way of life, manners and mores that are scattered throughout the novel. As a novel about India and the East, An Indian Day compares fairly well with Kim and A Passage to India. Thompson makes here an impression of an Englishman with genuine sympathy for all things Indian which he likes. His understanding of the native Indian outlook and point of view is admirably correct and free from prejudice. Generally an Anglo-Indian novelist is known for his exotic image of India. But in Thompson we come across subtle touches which throw light on his extra-ordinary observation of things Indian. His reference to the custom of 'Sati' in this novel speaks volumes for his understanding of the ancient Indian way of life during Aryan days. He does not exploit the existence of Sati for ridiculing the Indians. Instead, he allows his heroine to be impressed by the extra-ordinary fidelity manifested by the ancient Satis who gave their lives for the sake of their lords. An English woman like Hilda is forced to think about her own way of life in comparison with that of the Indian women. It is significant that this free woman who does not accept Hamar in the beginning, later on says to him that he should have claimed her earlier. As she wanders in the old city of Vishnugram fort, she is interested in the ancient way of life which is no more and she can sit and

dream past men and women. Her ruminations on the forgotten Indian civilization does good to her psychologically because it gives release to her pent up feelings as a European.

Thompson knows that there is a religious custom of 'prayaschitta' (atonement) by which you try to make up or atone for the wrong done to others. In fact Thompson has written earlier a play called Atonement. It is to be noted that Thompson could appreciate the feelings of remorse and religious concern behind the idea of atonement and thought that the English should atone for the wrongs spoken and done to the Indians. There are references to 'bhuts', 'the demon Goddess', 'Kali', 'Rudra', 'Puja' and such other religious matters. His Sadhu Jayanand quotes 'Āt tvam asi' and can talk of ahimsa. There is talk of 'darshan', 'maya' and 'samadhi'. His description of Jayanand Sadhu is accurate but rather artificial because it gives the usual paraphernalia of 'mat of tiger-skin', 'naked body', 'smear of ashes', 'impression of impersonal and timeless man'. The Sadhu uses idiomatic and slangy language. He also has a subtle sense of humour. The talk between Jayanand and Alden and Findlay shows Thompson's deep knowledge of and interest in the Indian philosophy of non-attachment which asks one to be in the world but not of it. Thompson's knowledge of Indian customs and cultural ways is notable because he tries to transcend his own culture and would bridge the great gap that exists because of ignorance of each other's language. It is a measure of Thompson's inwardness that he can easily quote Indian 'flora' by referring to 'Simul', 'Dhak', 'Mohur', 'Pipal',

'Mahua', 'bel' (fruit), 'Neem' and such details. He knows about the 'holi festival' and 'darbars'. He does not forget 'Hanuman' and 'Hara Deva' and 'Ban-Laxmi' and 'melas', 'vahan', etc. This close and intimate contact with India places him above many Anglo-Indian writers. Kipling knew India intimately and his knowledge of the Indian culture as found in his stories makes him an impressive novelist. But his imperialistic viewpoint vitiates this fund of knowledge. Thompson, on the other hand reproduces the characteristic nuances of oriental thought and feelings.

The final message of An Indian Day is that of mutual understanding. Of course there are the typical Anglo-Indians in this novel also, characters like Major Henderson, Jacks, Mrs. Nixon, who always see India in bad light. They think that every Indian is a Swarajist or a seditionist. They talk of politics and ridicule an Indian like Neogyi who is fond of making flowery speeches. Jacks has narrow religious views according to which Christianity is better than other religions. These people think that Indian minds are dark, because they fear evil spirits'. The Major says, "there isn't an honest man in the whole gang (of Swarajsts)". We could buy Gandhi tomorrow with a couple of hundred rupees". (p.108) The narrator ironically says, "He felt he had assessed the Mahatmaji's price generously". (p.108) All these traditional views of the United English Nation are not those of either Thompson himself or his major characters who are refreshingly free from cant. If we compare An Indian Day with A Passage to India there are some similarities as well as some contrasts. Both the books have pro-Indian and anti-Indian

characters, both refer to the mystic aspect of Indian religion, both have an admirable grasp of Indian reality. Traditionally Forster's novel has been considered a great work of art because of his achievement in the novelistic technique. But in certain respects Thompson scores over Forster. For example Thompson's hero exhaustively deals with the true religion of India - Hinduism. Unlike Forster, Thompson shows a convincing knowledge of Hinduism through the character of Sadhu Jayanand. An Indian Day may be artistically less impressive but it is more convincing as a real picture of India. More-over Thompson writes about a very difficult period in Indian history - the Rise of Nationalism. The technique of his novel is different from that of Forster's classic.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Percival, Spear, A History of India, Vol.II, Penguin Books, Calcutta, 1990, p.158.
2. Edward Thompson, An Indian Day, Macmillan and Company Limited, London 1933. Reprinted 1940. All the quotations are from this edition.
3.
 1. I remember here two spiritual personalities from two famous Anglo-Indian writers. Rudyard Kipling's story entitled, 'The Miracle of Puran Bhagat' shows us the holy man sacrificing his own life to save the natives from natural calamity. See Rudyard Kipling, 'The Miracle of Puran Bhagat'.
 2. There is another sannyasi in Rumer Godden's novel Black Narcissus. But he appears a wooden figure as he sits cross-legged without moving his head or eyes. With the conventional paraphernalia of the deer-skin, beads, bowls, flowers, etc., he looks a very artificial figure. See - Rumer Godden's Black Narcissus.
4. A.T. Sheppard , The Art and Practice of Historical Fiction, p.116.
5. G.M. Trevelyan, 'History and Fiction' in Clio.
6. See the Bibliography for the list of Thompson's expository writing.

7. W.H. Hudson, An Introduction to the Study of Literature, Ludhiyana, Kalyan publishers, 1975, p.154.
8. Doris Marston, A Guide to Writing History, Cincinatti, Writer Digest Division, 1976, p.103.
9. Michael Edwardes, (1967), p.317.
10. See the list of Indian words used in An Indian Day.
11. The Times Literary Supplement, a Review of An Indian Day, Thursday, 9 June 1927.
12. See W.Y. Tindall's comment about Rumer Godden's use of mountains in her novel Black Narcissus, "Like Kipling's 'The Shrine of Cow's Mouth' and Forster's 'Caves', the mountains reduce everything to a meaningless void". See William Y. Tindall's 'Rumer Godden - Public Symbolist', College English, vol.13, No.5, Mark, 1952, p.300.
13. Allen J. Greenberger, (1969), p.197.