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British Raj in Works of Edward Thompson

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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Autorka se ve své práci zaměří na vybraná díla Edwarda Thompsona (1886-1946) - An Indian Day (1927), A Farewell to India (1931) a An End of the Hours (1938). Hlavním cílem bude analyzovat zobrazení situace v koloniální Británii na počátku 20. století, tedy před rozpadem impéria. Práce se zaměří na různorodost a povahu vztahů mezi kolonizátory a kolonizovanými v otázkách podřízenosti, kulturní odlišnosti a vlivu západní kultury na tradiční život místních. Pro svou analýzu autorka využije přístup postkoloniální literární kritiky. Práci uzavře kapitola shrnující výsledky předchozích úvah.

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ANNOTATION

This work focuses on a portrayal of European colonialism in British literature during the twentieth century. The main part of the paper is a detailed analysis of selected novels by Edward John Thompson. The main emphasis is placed on the author's depiction of assimilation of two different cultures and influences of new ideas on the way of life of native inhabitants with the relation of Thompson's personal experiences from India. The main aim of the paper is to acquaint Edward John Thompson as a colonial author.

KEY WORDS

Thompson; colonialism; colonies; assimilation

SOUHRN

Tato práce se zabývá zobrazením evropského kolonialismu v britské literatuře ve dvacátém století. Hlavní částí práce je detailní analýza vybraných románů Edwarda Johna Thompsona. Hlavní důraz je kladen na autorovo popsání asimilace dvou odlišných kultur s ohledem na Thompsonovy osobní zkušenosti z Indie. Hlavním cílem práce je přiblížit Edwarda Thompsona jako autora koloniální éry.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Thompson, kolonialismus, kolonie, asimilace

Table of contents:

Introduction	1
1. Defining colonialism and imperialism	3
2. Edward John Thompson as an author	6
2. 1 The Effect of personal experiences on Thompson's writing	8
3. Specific issues in Thompson's novels.....	9
3. 1 Education	9
3. 1. 1 The English Language	12
3. 2 The issue of self-government in India.....	15
3. 3 Missionary work	22
4. Portrayal of assimilation	24
4. 1 A Description of Thompson's characters.....	24
4. 2 Assimilation	26
4. 3 The position of British women in colonial society	30
Conclusion	32
Resumé	34
Bibliography.....	38

Introduction

The period of British colonialism is considered to be one of the most controversial but also one of the most influential periods in human history. This era greatly influenced many aspects of human world, ranging from geographical changes to political, economical or social innovations for millions of inhabitants of the affected countries. People can read about these changes in histories, encyclopaedias or chronicles, but there were other factors people are not allowed to read about. Emotions, attitudes, feelings of superiority or inferiority are not written in chronicles. These were experienced by the people involved in this multifarious time when two completely different worlds met and turned fixed orders upside down. The clash of two different cultures brought something that has never been seen before and established the powerful empire on which ‘the sun never sets’. The early beginnings of the empire were perceived enthusiastically by most people, but the end of this was unavoidable. No world power has the right to subjugate the different country and make its inhabitants slaves of new orders. India slowly gained the power to face the imperialism and by the end, she was able to fight for her independence. The mighty imperialism witnessed the decay of its powers. One thing is certain – without British colonialism the India would develop in a divergent way.

Some of the improvements the British brought to the newly gained country remained, such as the English language or the system of education, but other things remained the same as before the British’s colonization, such as religion or caste system. Thanks to the fact that India was allowed to see both sides – the powerful imperial and the poor India’s, she had the right to choose which one she will follow.

The first literary attempts during colonialism were written by the authors who identified themselves with the colonizing power. These literatures mostly preferred the colonizing culture, such as Kipling’s poems and stories. The second stage in colonial literature are the works by indigenous inhabitants writing under the supervision of the Empire.

Edward John himself was able to personally witness the situation in India from the point of view of an educational missionary. His books contain many autobiographical notes and he belongs to a group of authors who can serve as a source of knowledge for readers who want to see both sides of imperialism.

This paper is divided into two parts. The introductory, theoretical part provides a basic outlook on the terms colonialism and imperialism and approaches Edward John Thompson as a quite unknown author. At the very beginning of this work, the author will set in broader context influences of Thompson's life and his personal experiences on the storyline of his three novels – “An Indian Day”, “A Farewell to India” and “An End of the Hours”. Thompson differs from another authors in a way he depicts the relationships between the ‘rulers’ and ‘ruled’. His main characters are mainly from the higher social strata from both cultures – the Hindu one and the British one. Thompson doesn't typify a British settler as a person who is superordinate to the natives, but as a person who is aware of racial equality. They are capable of an equipollent friendship but the colonization era left a gap in their minds so major or minor clashes cannot be avoided. The prevailing idea of the upper class was that the British Government should spend money on more profitable purposes than on educating the natives, for instance.

The analytical, main part deals with how the direct and indirect effects of the new world affect the native inhabitants and their relationship towards the newcomers. Main interest will be put on the topics such as education, the English language, position of British women and also the government and missionary work. The authoress will present both positive and negative opinions on these changes and will try to find reasonable justification for them. This part is a detailed analysis of Thompson's portrayal of twentieth century India with the use of his three stories “An Indian Day”, “A Farewell to India” and “An End of the Hours”.

The main aim of this paper is to approach Edward John Thompson as an author with personal experiences with this double-sided era in consideration of real facts that accompanied this era.

By the end of the work, there will be a chapter dedicated to the summation of the previous thoughts.

1. Defining Colonialism and Imperialism

Imperial politics is attested in all important stages of the human history, ranging from the ancient Greek civilization to the British imperialism. The Industrial Revolution brought new form of imperialistic infiltration when the European countries competed in obtaining raw materials and expanding trade. In most cases, the imperialism was tightly connected with racial, intellectual or spiritual superiority over the local population. The native inhabitants could get certain benefits from the imperial government, but at high price for losing their national identity. In the early twenties of the twentieth century the rejection of imperial powers was strengthened. After the World War II many colonies get their ardently desired independence.

Many authors tried to describe what these two terms mean. As Dean Baldwin and Patrick Quinn quote Robert Young:

Imperialism is regarded by some theorists as a territorial expansion from a centre outwards, driven by ideology, and resulting in a coherent geographical entity. The Roman and Ottoman Empires are typical examples. The criterion of coherent geography as an essential aspect of the definition disappeared when European countries (Spain, for example) were able to conquer and communicate with distant territories via sailing ships. The primary distinguishing factors in imperialism, then, are its practice as a policy of state and its ideological motivation.

(Baldwin and Quinn, 2007a, 2)

On the other hand, colonialism tends to develop without a coherent plan or driving ideology. It is driven by commercial motives and a vision of profit. It also brought problems connected with centralized control for the government of the colonizing power. (Quinn and Baldwin, 2007, 2) Colonialism is concerned with the domination over the native inhabitants from various points of view – e.g. politics, cultural hegemony or social superiority.

There were two types of colonies, the territorial one and the settler one, both of them had different purposes.

A settler colony consisted of emigrants from their home country who occupied most land. They dominated politically and economically. Sometimes these countries dominated culturally, it happened when the newcomers tried to teach the indigenous population the newcomer's culture. All empires brought conquering nation's culture

with them, but Britain made cultural domination as an integral part of its colonial policy. The English came to India with their culture. They didn't subordinate to the eastern habits. Good examples of cultural domination could be Australia and Canada.

The second type is an administered colony. Its main goal was an economic exploitation. The newcomers dominated politically and economically but they did not settle a large area of a land. The example of an administered colony could be India. (Quinn and Baldwin, 2007, 2-3) In India, only a small number of English officers governed millions of the natives. This brought a new sense of a decentralized government, when the main seat of the executive power was set in Britain, but in India there were many local branches governed mainly by the British officers.

Why is British Colonialism so important? It is widely known that numerous colonizations influenced more than three-quarters of the people living in the world today. In Baldwin and Quinn, Edward W. Said points out:

Consider that in 1800 Western powers claimed 55 percent but actually held approximately 35 percent of earth's surface, and that by 1878 the proportion was 67 percent ... By 1914 ... Europe held a grand total of roughly 85 percent of the earth as colonies, protectorates, dependencies, dominions, and commonwealths. No other associated set of colonies in history was as large, none so totally dominated, none so unequal in power to the Western metropolis. As a result, says William McNeill in *The Pursuit of Power*, "the world was united into a single interacting whole as never before."

(Baldwin and Quinn, 2007a, 2)

The new system brought the sense of closeness in terms of unification many colonies in one interacting world power as a whole, but on the other hand, local municipalities acted sometimes as independent units where the control from Britain was almost impossible. Local branches were exclusively in the hands of local officers, because the vastness of the British colonies couldn't be in hands of only one person. Some of the Thompson's characters are part of the colonial authority, such as missionaries, lower clerks or major and/or minor functionaries from both countries. The British's superiority is in Thompson's books presented via social hegemony, the British hold office as major clerks or functionaries, whereas the natives functioned as servants of the system.

British colonization had far-reaching effects and its original intention was modified in the course of time.

By the late nineteenth century, then, Britain's colonizing impulse (based on trade and economic exploitation) had transformed into an imperial (ideologically motivated) one. In addition to its goal of conquering and exploiting other peoples, Britain added an attempt to "civilize" them, using education, Christian missionary work, technical and infrastructure improvements (like railroads, bridges, and telegraph systems), and even political and social reforms to do so. The idea was to bring to conquered peoples the advantages of "progress".

(Baldwin and Quinn, 2007a, 3)

But some effects are not so obvious. India's awareness of its history and culture was manipulated in the hands of colonial ideologues. Many authors of that time tried to depict these issues. Some of them agreed with the colonization, some of them not. The variety of the perceptions is very broad, because colonialism can be viewed from various perspectives. All these issues are reflected in literature. British colonization was a great source of ideas, stories, adventures that were extraordinary for the inhabitants of the British Empire so far. Colonial and post-colonial writing brought something new and unknown. Another important factor is its exoticism. British inhabitants were eager to read stories from the jungle, about unknown creatures, people, and myths. Probably the most known author of the colonial era was Rudyard Kipling. His stories exalted the imperial power and brought to the English readers sense of exoticism with romantic point of view. Kipling tried to attract the reader with the exotic setting of his books and also supported the idea of colonialism.

As P. Quinn suggests:

The height of British consciousness about its colonies and their political, economic, and military value coincided with the emergence of the British short story and one of its great practitioners, Rudyard Kipling. His stories of India, three collections of which were published in 1888, made the Empire – and the sacrifices and dangers of those who kept it – an everyday reality to Britons. Moreover, Kipling and many authors who followed him kept the question of Empire before the British public, sometimes extolling it, sometimes questioning it, but always romanticizing it as a locus of exotic adventure.

(Baldwin and Quinn, 2007a, 3)

The emergence of the literatures is important. Via the colonial writing, numerous types of texts could be transmitted to the world. These texts served many purposes, ranging from Kipling's romantic portrayal of the colonies to literatures written by the natives discovering the truthful depiction of the dark side of subjugating. Literature has been

with colonialism from its beginnings to its end and ensured its position between the readers.

As Bill Ashcroft quotes Gauri Viswanathan's study "The Beginnings of English literary study in British India":

British colonial administrators, provoked by the missionaries on the one hand and fears of native insubordination on the other, discovered an ally in English literature to support them in maintaining control of the natives under the guise of a liberal education.
(Ashcroft, 2002, 3)

It doesn't matter whatever the function of a particular colony was. The main problem is that thanks to the colonization of different cultures these were encouraged to evolve in a different way with destabilizing effects on established orders.

2. Edward John Thompson as an Author

Edward John Thompson (1886 – 1946) was born as the eldest one of six children. His father, John Moses Thompson, worked as a missionary in south India. His mother hoped that small Edward will follow his father's footsteps. He was raised in a supportive environment for the missionary work.

Edward Thompson was almost self-educated. He attended Wesley's Kingwood School, but he had to quit because of the financial problems his family had to deal with. Then he worked for some time in a bank, but he didn't like the work. After some time, he enrolled at the Richmond Theological College and was ordained a Wesleyan minister. He also added an external Master of Arts degree from the University of London. In 1910, he went as a teacher of English literature to Bankura Wesleyan College, a missionary outpost on the remote western border of Bengal. This work did not satisfy him, as he wanted more encouraging environment and not only repeating the same, as it was in Bankura College. His dream was to become a successful writer. While teaching at a Bengali College, he made a lot of friends from the row or older mentors. Most of them disagreed with the system of education in India:

They refused to be reconciled to the soulless and unimaginative machinery that processed Indian young men through a literary curriculum that was designed originally for English gentlemen, which, however, as applied in India, steered the majority of Indian graduates to clerical jobs in Government of India offices. Too much of this

regime consisted of memorizing lecture notes and cram-book information to be parroted back on examinations.

(Lago, 2001, 3)

Thompson thought that the western type of education needed adjusting to the eastern needs. Both the countries had their own educational model that developed thorough centuries of changes so why to destroy something that worked well. What was suitable for the western cultures couldn't fit the India's needs.

Thompson and his friend Lyon shared a genuine belief in the empire as a potential force for good and stability – but only if those in charge underwent fundamental changes in attitude and policy. They believed that India should, like Canada, Australia, and New Zealand become a dominion within a British Commonwealth.

Thompson also tried to change the general view on India. Students from England were not familiar with the history or basic facts about India and via his work and writings he tried to correct the misconceptions. Via Robert Alden, Thompson showed the interest for India's culture and history. He was not afraid to use some words from the Bengali language while communication with the natives. Thompson also didn't try to boast over the indigenous population and acts as an eclectics who chooses the best for him.

Edward John Thompson was impulsive and impatient. His relation to India was often a love-hate relationship. He could be pessimist and optimist in quick succession, but he could admit his errors. He was always a humanist. His political journalism and Indian histories strive to keep advocacy and criticism in balance, although his sympathies are never in doubt. His novels tend to become disquisitions on contemporary issues and the poet in him sometimes allowed the lyrical to overload his narrative, but critics often noted the eloquence of his descriptions of landscape, of flora and fauna, whether in England or India or Mesopotamia. Nature's variations gave him intense satisfaction.

Thompson is often compared with E. M. Forster. Critics say that Forster's novel is better written, but Thompson's experience of India was much wider and deeper.

E. P. Thompson, writing in 1993 his father's sometimes erratic but deeply respectful relations with Rabindranath Tagore, describes Thompson as a man on 'the interface of two cultures' at a time when both cultures tried, often painfully, to redefine themselves, Thompson was an outspoken advocate of Indian self-realization. An explicator's role is

not always a happy one, and Thompson was not always happy in it, but, as Gandhi had said and as Thompson himself recognized, once committed to India there was no turning back.

(Lago, 2001, 6)

2.1 The Effect of Personal Experience on Thompson's Writing

Several autobiographical notes can be found in Thompson's writing. As Thompson eye witnessed the situation in India, his works can be perceived as a reliable source depicting these controversial times. Although his books contain several autobiographical comments, Thompson in preface to his book "An End of the Hours" disagrees with taking his books as an autobiography.

This book, the last novel I shall write with an Indian setting, completes "An Indian Day" and "A Farewell to India". It need not, and I hope will not, be taken to be autobiography (the common lot of fiction to-day), nor are opinions expressed in it necessarily mine. I think I have suffered from this misunderstanding more than most novelists, because of the passion which Indian questions arouse in India and in a restricted circle elsewhere. Nevertheless, into this book have passed some of the things seen and heard and thought in a thirty-years experience of the matters with which it deals. And so I make an end.

(Thompson, 1939)

According to Quinn and Baldwin, Thompson can be considered as a colonial author, because he witnessed their nation's empire as colonists. (2007, 5) In his books, Thompson tries to make the reader think about problems connected with colonialism, not only to entertain him.

Firstly, the most of Thompson's experiences from India can be found in the main character of the stories – Robert Alden. Robert works as an educational missionary, supports India's self-government, disagrees with the system of education in India and is not afraid to present his opinions on Indian politics. Both of them met politically significant personalities of that time, as Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore or Nehru. Thompson in reality, Alden in Thompson's fiction. Both of them do not have casual attitude towards the India's destiny. This was not quite common in that time, as the British perceived themselves as a superior race that has the right to subjugate and civilize the natives.

Another thing they both agreed on was the educational system of the Raj. It was not suitable for the Bengalis, only for the need of the British men. Both men were educational missionaries and were deeply acquainted with the problems of education. They knew that any change is needed, but they didn't have enough vigor to fight with it and what is more, they did not have the supportive environment that was needed.

But in one thing these two personalities differ. Robert Alden is very calm, good-tempered man who loves India. According to Mary Lago, Thompson was very energetic and impulsive person. On the contrary, Alden is a person who is staying in a background and doesn't want to actively participate in politics.

Although Thompson was an Englishman, he always wanted the best for India. He agreed with the improvements the British brought in, but he thought that they needed adapting to the needs of the Indian inhabitants. Some of the things that were brought there fitted only for the higher strata of the newcomers, such as the educational system, mentioned above. Thompson supported India's self-realization within the British Commonwealth and joined the not numerous groups of people who did so. The sense of Thompson's poetic style could be found in his works, especially in descriptions of the landscape. Here the love relationship to India appears most. Thompson is enchanted by the beauty of the Indian nature, with all her wilderness and fragile beauty. Passionate dialogues are intertwined with the lyrical description of nature.

Edward Thompson was certainly an outstanding personality. He did not agree with the enslavement of the natives and was not afraid to say his persuasion aloud. In comparison with Rudyard Kipling, Thompson didn't glamorize the imperial oppression and offered undistorted image of a small provincial town with all its inhabitants somewhere on the desolate part of Bengal.

One way or another, Thompson does not find his place in readers' favor so far and still remains quite unknown to readers.

3. Specific issues in Thompson's novels

3.1 Education

Another factor that the British newcomers used to subjugate the native inhabitants was the establishment of the western type of education.

The process of emergence of British way of teaching appeared in early 1820's, when the first schools started. Until the First World War, education was almost exclusively a mission preserve. The Church's aim in teaching native inhabitants English was to evangelize them, not to offer them better enforcement on the labor market.

An Indian would firstly go to a vernacular primary school because there were almost no funds for the lower-level education. After that, an Indian would pass to an Anglo-vernacular secondary school. The Indian education was not supported.

(Sanne, 2010, 12)

Only a few universities were available, such as in Madras or Calcutta. The condition for admission to the university was the knowledge of the English language. Universities had western style and content. The students at the university grew up learning about Shakespeare, Newton or Archimedes, but not about their country's scholars and history. India's awareness of its history and culture was manipulated in the hands of colonial ideologues. What was important to Western civilization was deemed universal, but everything Indian was dismissed as either backward and anachronistic, with no chance of progress, or at best tolerated as idiosyncratic oddity. (Whitehead, 2003, 172)

The reason for attending a British school was the admission to the Indian Civil Service and working there as officers, but this possibility was uncertain.

The education was tightly connected with the numerous religious groups in India. The different beliefs produced different opinions and approaches towards the education. As Sebastian Sanne in his study points out:

Furthermore, most of the students were Hindus and many of them Brahmins. The Muslims rejected the British educational programs for a long time and tried to revive their own traditions. This attitude and the fact, that the British rulers found the Muslims generally more suspicious – also because considering them more responsible for the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857-, led to an unbalanced distribution of British education.

(Sanne, 2010, 12)

Because of the fact that most of the educated social group were Brahmins, the British unintentionally supported the class division and strengthened the position of higher castes.

As Lord Macaulay in his Minute on Education asserts: “our native subjects” have more to learn from us than we do from them” (Macaulay in Said, 1994, 152). The British did not recognize the traditional system of education and this was on sufferance. They established their system without looking back on Indian’s needs or customs. The Indians became more and more dependant on the British and it was their race that had to subject.

The university in Vishnugram in Thompson’s books is such. There are both Indian and British teachers, but the content of education is strictly British and the students are taught only in English language. Although the first woman was allowed to study at Presidency College in 1897, at the University of Vishnugram there are only men.

Robert Alden, who works as a teacher of the English literature at the university, is discontented about the system and he feels unhappy about the destiny of the educated Bengalis.

Alden had spent over a quarter of century teaching what were nominally students of undergraduate status, and of these the vast majority after graduation became petty clerks – if they had the luck to obtain employment at all. Most of educated Bengal was unemployed, and swiftly followed that fate’s fulfillment. They became unemployable. In a large village may sit idle anything from a score upwards Calcutta graduates. Marrying, of course. Having children, of course. But starving.
(1938, 192-193)

These people did a lot for getting a better job, but the chance was very little. Although they were educated and had the same knowledge as a British inhabitant had, the measurement for both of them was not equal. Some of the students were successful but not many. Although they might have a university diploma, they almost could not reach for a better job. For many of them, the destiny after receiving a diploma did not change a lot. The expectations were probably higher than the result.

And what about the opinion of a British teacher? He considers his work as a mission, but on the other hand, he cannot compare himself with the teachers from bigger universities in England. In England, they are appreciated and have many successful students who can run their career on high posts. They have the semblance of importance and prominence. They are remembered and celebrated.

What memory can you expect to keep in the obscure railway clerk at some up-country station? Or the dull mechanic drudge in some jute-merchant’s office? Life drives them down, and makes them automata.
(1938, 193)

Robert Alden does not complain that he is not remembered by the students, he is remembered and he knows that he had done a lot of admirable work. The students did not blame Robert Alden for this situation. He is desperate about the fate of his educated Indian friends. High posted career waits only for a small number of them.

The negative opinion on educating of natives brings the opinion that the Government should spend money on more important issues than education of the natives. Such as opinion in Thompson: “A dissertation followed on the meanness of a Government which squandered money on the education of the natives and pampering them in every way, but left its officials without a stone wall to their compound.” (1940, 23) This statement reveals that a British officer acted selfishly and saw no reason for educating the Bengalis. The British would prefer their opportunistic intentions without looking back on Indians’ needs.

India’s educational system may be considered as one of the most important contributors to the economic rise of the country, but the education was still dependant on the politics. “Education was on sufferance, an imperious and reckless Nationalism ruled the stage, jerking his students back and forth like puppets.” (1931, 44) The influences of the politics of the Raj affected the schooling, because in the students’ groups many minor uprisings took place. At the university, there were many students with different political or religious preferences and this mixture of opinions formed the basic ground for these disturbances.

The results of this system are visible up to this very day. As Edward W. Said points out: “... universities in the Arab world are generally run according to some pattern inherited from, or once directly imposed by, a former colonial system. (1994, 322) The colonial system totally and irreversibly destroyed the traditional Indian system of education.

3. 1. 1The English Language

The English language played a vital role in civilizing and exploiting the Indian inhabitants. Thanks to the English language the new culture was transmitted.

English has been with India since the early 1600's, when the East India Company started trading and English missionaries first began their efforts. A large number of Christian schools imparting an English education were set up by the early 1800's.

The process of producing English-knowing bilinguals in India may be traced to the 1835 when Lord Macalay presented his Minute on Education where the importance of educating the native inhabitants the English was stressed. The Minute on Education started on 2 February 1835. English became the official and academic language of India by the early twentieth century. (Baldrige, 2002)

The medium through which the English language was transmitted to the native inhabitants were the Christian missionaries. They came to India from 1813 and established primary schools for Indians where the language of instruction was local language. But the prerequisite for studying on a secondary school was a good knowledge of English.

The intentions of the government and the intentions differed. The government wanted Indians to speak English because of the possibility of oppression and to westernize the Indians, while the Church's intentions were to evangelize them and to spread the Holy Word.

When the British started ruling India, they searched for Indian mediators who could help them to administer India. The British turned to high caste Indians to work for them. Many high caste Indians, especially the Brahmans worked for them. The British policy was to create an Indian class who should think like British, or as it was said then in Britain 'Indians in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions and morals and intellect'.

(Aharon, 1999-2000)

Nowadays, English in India is an official assistant language, but only about three percent of Indian population speaks English. Thanks to India's massive population, this three percent puts India among the top four countries in the world with the highest number of English speakers. In the era of colonialism, the English language became one of the areas of disagreement that both sides – British and Indian - had to deal with.

Language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order', and 'reality' become established. (Ashcroft, 2002a, 7) For British, their perceptions of inferiority and superiority depended not on the former Indian caste system, but on the Indians'

knowledge of the English language. Via English an Indian could move higher and break the strict rules concerning the class system. Indians, who were able to communicate in English, were considered as new 'elite' in India and they use this knowledge to show off their higher status. This 'eliteness' gave them more opportunities for work and chances to take part in politics, religion, or education.

In Thompson's books the importance of the English language is visible. The storyline of his books took place in a time when the Indians are somehow 'accustomed' to the compulsory use of the language. The typical example of this may be Kamalakanta Neogyi, an Indian of second generation of westernized Indians. Although he could consider himself as a victim of the British oppression, his attitudes towards British are different. He speaks very good English and does not know his vernacular language. He works for Indian Civil Service and has good relationship with his British friends. He is definitely an example of 'an Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions and morals and intellect'.

Although the natives tried to learn the language, some mistakes could not be avoided. Here is an example of students' use of language, typical for its incorrect use of words and spelling.

"Now, Jadu, I am glad to mitt with you again, my dear friend."

Many grittings to you al-so, my good Madu. I trust that by the bless-ing of God you are stout and strong."

"Thank you, I am bhery well. And you too, my dear Jadu?"

"Thank you, I al-so am stout and strong. And what have you sinn at Vishnugram lettly, that have interested you, my dear Madu?"

(Thompson, 1931, 10)

The difference between standard version of English and English that was used by less-educated inhabitants is evident. The Indians adapted the language to their needs, in terms of pronunciation, spelling and the use of vocabulary. The paragraph above shows how Indian students were taught to use the standard version and how did they adapted the language. They are using typical courtesy but with many mistakes. The standard version and the English used by the Indians differ. The imperial education system installed a 'standard' version of the metropolitan language as the norm and marginalizes all 'variants' as impurities. (Ashcroft, 2002, 7)

In Thompson's books, the British almost don't try to learn the local vernacular language. They insist on English. Thompson doesn't pay any attention to the lower

castes, so the representatives of the lower castes are only the students of the Vishnugram University. He depicts the situation from the point of view of the higher caste who adapted to the British needs.

The use of the English language had one more important far-reaching consequence. As Sebastian Sanne quotes Vohra:

English strengthened the feeling of unity between the Indians as well as because it gave the people of India the possibility to communicate with each other in a country that had “179 languages, 544 major dialects, and thousands of minor dialects”.

(Sanne, 2010, 13)

This could be seen as a basic turning point for the later struggle for independence.

3. 2 The Issue of Self-Government in India

Probably the most influential factor in subjugating the native inhabitants and a foreign country was the establishment of a new system of governance. The British came to India and without asking for approval installed their models to all spheres of politics, education or religion.

The system of governance lasted from 1858, when the dominance of British East India Company was transmitted to the Crown in the person of Queen Victoria, who became Empress of India in 1877, until 1947 when the British Indian Empire was partitioned into two sovereign states, the Dominion of India (later the Republic of India) and the Dominion of Pakistan (later the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the People’s Republic of Bangladesh).

In Thompson’s books, the issues of self-government are very often discussed by both sides and from different perspectives. Thompson’s characters from British origin are mostly pro-native and support India’s self-government. On the other hand, the characters of Indian origin are also pro-native, but they rather prefer violent solution. The difference between these two cultures in terms of opinions on India’s self-governance is in the way how the independence should be reached – whether in violent or non-violent way. Opinions of the British concerning Indian politics were not as violent as the Indians’. The Indians wanted India indivisible and sovereign, no matter what blood it costs. They held view of radical solutions and red revolutions.

“The only thing that’ll set India right is Red Revolution. She has a right to have it. Every other country has had it. She ought to have it. It’s the only thing that can clear her up as she needs to be cleaned up. What’s the use of a few Hindu-Moslem riots, and the sacrificing of a few cows annually? What I want to see is millions of cows done in.”

(Thompson, 1931, 193)

The most radical opinions disagreed with Gandhi’s method of non-violence and wanted India sovereign and indivisible, no matter what blood it cost. This opinion did not put up with the idea of Dominion status. For some people full independence became their religion and they were determined to do almost everything for it. The main argument for this opinion was a claim, that if India was subjugated by blood, she shall win freedom by blood.

The Indian resistance was not always the same as it was in the last decades of European presence. At the beginning of the colonialism, the Indians were not so determined to gain independence. The struggle for the autonomy was a long-lasting process, developing from serving the Raj to realizing the importance of their own nationality. The reason for initial inertia was the fragmentation of Indian kingdoms. India suffered by incessant replacements of several governments, ranging from the original rulers to England’s rule.

For there was always India, where, after Portugal pioneered the first bases of European presence in the early sixteenth century, Europe, and primarily England after a long period (from 1600 to 1758) of essentially commercial activity, dominated politically as an occupying force. Yet Indian itself never provided an indigenous threat to Europe. Rather it was because native authority crumbled there and opened the land to inter-European rivalry and to outright European political control that the Indian Orient could be treated by Europe with such proprietary hauteur – never with the sense of danger reserved for Islam.

(Said, 1994, 75)

The inertia in gaining the independence was followed by the conscious effort to create an independent country with its own laws and orders.

The image of a British colonizer in the mind of an Indian was the unflattering one. A ruler represented the world that ‘does not care and is interested only in his profits’. A ruled’s beloved country was thronged with white man’s inventions that only destroyed the naturalness of the land. But the country was awakening and started to call her inhabitants to fight for her.

And, if an Indian once were caught in the wide web of intrigue and left for ever the shallow, dishonest folly that we called education and the bitter struggle for the tiny prizes of official service, and if he came to some waste place as the sun was setting – or in the glory of the passionate dawn – how could he help feeling that the landscape was a living creature, appealing to her sons for liberation? Aliens were “civilizing” her beauty, they had brought in mills and factories and heavy, squat, white buildings, they had no homes here, they merely ruled and criticized and had their pleasure and went away. They did not care to understand, they did not love or praise or feel happiness.

(Thompson, 1940, 200-201)

The main character of Thompson’s books, Robert Alden, is definitely a supporter of India’s independence on the British rule. He encourages all the non-violent and peaceful opinions for India’s sovereignty. He, as a British inhabitant, is disposed to make sacrifices - if Indians will do so.

“What sacrifices is England proposing to make?” he (Dinabandhu Babu) sneered. “The giving up of booty is not sacrifice. It is a measure demanded by the police, when a thief is run to ground. And why,” he shouted angrily, “is any other than a peaceful solution unthinkable? It is very thinkable to us. India has been subjugated by blood; she shall win freedom by blood. Do you think we are afraid of being shot down by your machine-guns?”

(Thompson, 1931, 83)

This opinion reveals that the British didn’t make any sacrifice. The giving up of India’s wealth was by Indians perceived as a natural and reasoned process following the British’ exploitation and seizure of their land. The Indians refused to be grateful for the pillage of their solemn country. Newcomers were expected to leave the country.

Most of the British inhabitants from the lower step of the social ladder would make India fully in the hand of the Empire’s Government which sometimes had some signs of autocracy. They would govern India without Indian officers and subjugate the Indian inhabitants with all the possible means. A good example may be the right to vote. These people though that if an Indian had the right to vote, he would demand more and more. This opinion was rooted in their experience from England.

“Why, look at the way it’s played the deuce at home,” cried the soldier. “Ever since every Tom, Dick and Harry had the vote, we’ve had nothing but strikes! Half the chaps in England wouldn’t take work if you went on your bended knees to offer it to them. They prefer to loaf round football matches, with a fag stuck in their mouths, and to hang out on the dole.”

(1931, 173)

People, who were working in the sphere of politics as minor or major clerks, did not do anything to support the sovereignty. As John Findlay, Alden's friend and a missionary, comments: "I know, I know. We've evolved a method of selecting you (Indians) which picks out all your swabs and sets them over you." (1940, 147) The British chose Indian inhabitants who were willing to cooperate with the British, despite the fact that they undermined the possibility of self-government.

Although opinions in British circles were different, people from lower caste wanted India fully in the hand of the Empire whereas people from higher caste supported India's sovereignty, the opinion of the native inhabitants was the same. They wanted India very India. But both of them believed that after some time India will be capable of self-government.

Although British tried to provide Indians with the possibility of self-government during the British rule, the only thing they offered the Indians was many Indian officials and absolutely unlimited opportunities for graft. British politics was a deep disappointment for both sides. As Hamar, Vishnugram judge of British origin thinks: "Indian politics were a deep sorrow to him, as to most people of his sort. It was all so simple, a dozen round for machine-gun, a few executions, and everyone would be happy again." (Thompson, 1940, 15) The British tried to maintain their power not through elaborate politics advantageous for both sides, but through power represented by guns and restrictions. The British solved problems very simply – they showed power with a sense of bullying. They showed what will happen if a bad example occurs.

Robert Alden admits that it is possible that India will be capable of self-government: "Well, he says that when we say Indians are incapable of self-government we forget that once for practically a solid week a good third of India was in the hands of Indian clerks, and nothing went wrong." (1931, 38) Alden believed that the Indians had the right to participate on leading their country.

The Indians saw models in other countries, such as Canada or Japan. Indians pointed out that: "If Canada got self-government, they can't possibly be in a worse mess than Canada was then, when French and British were ready to fly at each other". (1931, 71) The Japanese were more important model for Indians than Canada. The Indians saw that people who are also Asiatic origin and who have similar way of living were able to get independence for their country and Indians believed they can do so. Although they

were Asiatic, they were able to jump up into first-class politics. These models gave Indians more and more strength to fight for their independence.

Indians' opinion was that it was their country and the British just came to India to profit from her. England was highly dependent on India's raw materials. Thanks to India the Empire became one of the biggest and most influential countries of that time.

We've been here for – three hundred years, isn't it? – and out of Indian we drained more of prestige and sheer material strength than anyone can ever compute. Our mere possession of it has been a purple robe which the world has envied us.”

(1938, 132)

But all the British living in India in that time admit that British-Indian system is dying out. “Our own British-Indian system, so carefully, tightly wrapped about with ‘safeguards’ and ‘regulations’, an equilibrium of check and countercheck, this was also dying out from the land” (1938, 109). This fact can be traced to the time when the Indian began to fight for and think about their self-government. “We've never governed since we brought in all this rot about self-government.” (1931, 173) The sense of non-inferiority to foreign government wakes up in Indians the eagerness to fight for their independence.

The India's autonomy is possible and even wanted, but she does not have experience with leading the country in a western style, because the kingdom won't return. She will have to teach herself how to run the country.

Adolescence is the impression which the outside world gathers from the face which India's rulers present, whether British or native, adolescence queerly runs through all their systems. It was adolescence that Alden saw and felt – in an India pulsating with a thousand streams of new life drawn from many lands, from Japan to America.

(Thompson, 1938, 215)

All the India needs it to get rid of the presence of the British and to stand up on her own feet. The post-war time connected with the fall of the Empire is a suitable time for minor states to emerge.

But I have learnt now that others have seen it! have seen that all Indian need do is quietly to shake herself presently, and we shall disappear! Oh, not all at once, John! We both of us know that! But it's begun to happen, and it is going to happen steadily more

and more! India after millenniums is finding her own path again, and that path is one which is going to sidestep the British Empire.

(1938, 133)

India's beginning will be very difficult because of the mixture of different religious groups, races and political ideologies. "She's (India) waterlogged debris of Princes and Congress, of Muslims and Sikhs and Hindus and Christians and British, of Marxists and ultraorthodox, all trying to plug-in together somehow or other." (1938, 135) Several divergent groups of ideals and ideas will form a very unstable ground for a new state to emerge.

The books by Edward Thompson deals with the time when India was on her way to self-government. England became loosing her power since the time when minor or major strikes and disorders broke out. As Thompson mentions: "England has given up Empire already. She has finished within herself, and wants only to be allowed to linger out her days in coma. And of course everyone else knows it." (1938, 127) The thing that troubled the British was how should Empire leave with dignity. The British were proud enough to admit guilt. They would admit minor faults, but they wouldn't say that the whole colonization was one big flaw. For them, the subjugation of such a vast country was a fulfilled dream confirming the right to govern less civilized country.

But what will happen with India after the departure of British? Is it really possible for the Indians to forget this part of their history? The British came to the country to become rich out of the India's sources of wealth. There has been a pillage, but on the other hand, the British showed the Indians a variety of new techniques how to improve their land to fertilize her. India is a vast picturesque desert where nothing grew before but now there grows tea and jute. The Indians had the possibility to see wealth and strength of other country which could give them ideas how to run or not to run their country after independence.

"In fact, if I were an Indian, I should see no reason for wishing to remain in the Empire except the sordid one of sheer practical advantage. (...) They talk about exploitation, about hordes of officials, about our debauching and drugging India against her will, about the heaviest taxation in the world – when they must know, unless they are as half-witted as they seem to be dishonest and disreputable, that India is mainly a vast picturesque desert, and that her revenues are too trivial to be worth pillage."

"Nevertheless, there has been pillage."

"Oh, I know. I know. Don't I know the real Indian case, the one that is never put? I wonder if anyone will ever bother to calculate how much of the prosperity of our good old South of England has its roots, if you only go back a century or so, in some Ganges

mud. We owe you chaps of settlement, if only to make for the past. But the whole thing is the damnedest dishonesty the world has ever seen – the India screaming about injustice of our growing tea and jute, where nothing grew before, and the British diehard puffing about our great gifts to the country.”

(Thompson, 1931, 242-3)

The British admit that after some time, the trace of their presence will disappear. Their presence will be like a sea wave which came and left to bathe the bank of India’s history. They also confess that their systems they established were not all good, but on the contrary, thanks to these systems a new land can emerge.

The systems we have placed upon her are every day becoming like leaves whose sap is dying out in the twig that joins them to the tree. It used to trouble me, until I saw that a new life was forming within. That new life will show when it is ready to slough off the old altogether.

(1938, 263)

The British tried to maintain the vision of superiority even when it came to the natural processes as the aging is. As Edward W. Said comments on:

When it became common practice during the nineteenth century for Britain to retire its administrators from India and elsewhere once they had reached the age of fifty-five, then a further refinement in Orientalism had been achieved, no Oriental was ever allowed to see a Westerner as he aged and degenerated, just as no Westerner needed ever to see himself, mirrored in the eyes of the subject race, as anything but a vigorous, rational, ever – alert young Raj.

(Said, 1994, 42)

The British colonialism in India can be viewed from several perspectives. Firstly, it could represent the evil subjugating the native inhabitants for the purpose of profit and not looking back on Indians’ needs. Here the British acted cruelly and India represented for them only a country which is thanks to its material wealth predestined for pillage.

The other view is concerned with the improvements the British brought to the country which, in terms of technical, agricultural or economical progress, several steps fell behind.

As H. Stuart Hughes in his study *Consciousness and Society: The Reconstruction of European social Thought, 1890-1930*, suggests:

England has to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating – the annihilation of the Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia.

(Said, 1994, 154)

3.3 Missionary work

The term of missionary work is in Thompson's books very important. It doesn't matter whether there were educational or religion missionaries, both types are involved in numerous discussions between the native inhabitants and the newcomers. Thompson himself worked as an educational missionary in India, so his notes can serve as a reliable source depicting the missionary work during the last few decades before the fall of the Empire.

Although the original intention of the religion missionaries was to evangelize the native inhabitants, there were also additional intentions.

He shared the general conviction that missionary work was, at best, a well-meant waste of time – at worst, humbug. Some officials – and Hamar was liberal enough to be inclined to agree with them – conceded an unreligious kind of usefulness to certain aspects of missionary work, so called. Medical missions were good, leper asylums were a genuine philanthropy. That was fine work which was being done at Gnarratong, where Europeans might send their half-caste children, to be taught trades that would save them from beggary in later years. Or individual missionaries were singled out for strong approval.

(Thompson, 1940, 60)

Missionaries functioned not only as religious institutions that offered salvation to everybody who is a devoted follower of God, but also as an educational institution. Children there were taught basic knowledge about religion and at the same time they were given knowledge from the curriculum. This had far-reaching effects. The more the education the children received, the more successful on the labor market they should become and less beggars were present in the streets.

But the Vishnugram missionaries were educational missionaries. About these there was a division of opinion. Average European judgment condemned them more decidedly, if that were possible, than evangelical missionaries. If the latter were fools, the educational missionaries came very close to being knaves. Opinion did not hold with educating native and making them above themselves. All this sedition was due to education, especially to missionary education. But the official world did not see things in quite the same way. A certain number of Indians had to be educated by someone – apart from any other necessity; there was that for an adequate supply of English-

speaking subordinates. Missionary institutions, on the whole, provided these as well as any. Their students were less discontented, and were often tinged with Western morality.

(Thompson, 1940, 61)

The common opinion on the educational missionaries in Thompson books is that spending money on educating the natives is a waste of money. Educational missionaries were despised by most of the newcomers, although they did a lot of admirable work for the natives.

On the other hand, the British were somehow afraid of the educated Indians, because they could show more power being educated than non-educated, so their access to the education was somehow limited. The British government would never admit that the Indians would take over from them. A certain number of Indians were educated just only to serve their British masters.

Medical missionaries functioned as trustees during epidemics or as a helpful hand for people in need. In Thompson's books, they were mostly important during the droughts that hit the country and when other people escaped to the hills.

The opinion of British people in Thompson's books on missionaries was not so positive. Most of them thought that it was unnecessary to offer a new religion to people who already have their belief and which fits them best. The British also thought that it was a waste of money for evangelizing the native inhabitants. This negative opinion of the newcomers concerned almost all the things or improvements that they brought to the new country. Spending money on native inhabitants was worthless. They do not need education – it is pointless, they do not need religion – they already have one, they do not need self-government – the British' is established. Although the British government tried to improve the life of both nations, the improvements the British sponsored and paid on native inhabitants were by the newcomers perceived as a waste of money with no need and necessity.

Jacks, who with Douglas and Alden made up the European staff of the College, was new from England. He was a thoroughly good fellow, earnest in evangelical mission. The minds of the heathen, which he understood imperfectly, distressed him, and he had at his fingers' ends the various points of superiority of Christianity to Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Mohammedanism. He got across his students from time to time, by the frankness of his annoyance with their beliefs. Alden's tolerance he regarded as almost disloyalty, and his interest in Indian

thought, philosophy, and literature as apostasy. Worst of all, Alden had infected Findlay, who was in directly in evangelical work, Findlay now read Indian books other than Christian tracts, and found Hindu reform movements deserving of sympathy.

(Thompson, 1940, 58)

Common opinion concerning the Christian religion was that it was the most important religion and other religions functioned as inferior one. The British tried to make their religion the only one that should be followed, but in a difficult situation, the Indians, though evangelized, turned to their primal religion. As John Findlay, Alden's friend and a Christian missionary confess: "You know that I've baptized no one but jungly folk, in seven years. You know that no student who leaves the College ever becomes a Christian." (Thompson, 1940, 160-161) The traditional religion – Hinduism - becomes very deeply rooted in the minds of the native inhabitants.

But if an Indian decided to become a Christian, he expected the newcomers to behave in a way they preach about. It was not sufficient to preach the Holy Bible, the British had to identify with it and then they could expect the Indians to follow them.

"Through these three centuries, countless Englishmen have shown us courage, honor, justice. We are not forgetful of this, though we will not acknowledge it now. But hardly one, whether missionary or official has shown –" the Vairagi hesitated, then continued with a gentleness amazing to his hearers – "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And until you show us your peace, we will not believe in your victory."

(Thompson, 1940, 272)

4. Portrayal of Assimilation

4.1 A Description of Thompson's characters

The main characters in Edward Thompson's books are more-or-less parts of the colonial authority: British educational missionaries, Bengali or British politicians, judges, and clerks. Thompson doesn't pay any attention to the opinions of the native inhabitants who are on the lower step of the imaginary ladder. This social class is represented only by the students of the Vishnugram University. Thompson presents ideas and opinions of the representatives of the higher Indian classes. His British characters do not misapply

the artificially made hierarchy. The sense of equality in his books is very strong. There are no racial comments.

The major dominance over the indigenous population is manifested via political and official hegemony. Government, its branches and their representatives stand for this hegemony. But in real-life situations in his books, this hegemony is not so strong. The clash of two completely different social, religious and cultural groups is differentiated in a way these two groups viewed on elemental values, such as family life, religion, politics or lifestyle.

“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 your poetry – or your men of science – or your martyrs – or any of the things that really exist.”

(1940, 278)

British newcomers retained their habits inherited from England, such as holding a tennis day or parties with friends. They also insisted on typical British ethics and social behavior. This paragraph reveals the basic values in which these two nations differ. For the British people their solidly based habits formed a firm land on which they build their idealistic convictions about the world. They were proud of the imperial misrepresented ideas and did not take care of the real virtues from their culture.

The attitude of Thompson’s characters is not a superior one. His British characters functioned as ‘donors of culture’ to the host country, but this process is reciprocal. On the one hand, British settlers established many rules concerning mainly politics, education and religion. On the other hand, Thompson’s characters are willing and even eager to grasp the way of thinking of the indigenous inhabitants. These people want to learn from India its smooth lifestyle, family values or strong religious convictions.

In contrast with other British prose from this period where the native population is viewed as an inferior one, Thompson’s characters differ. Neither of them looks down upon the natives. Thompson doesn’t try to typify the British colonizer as a person who is racially or socially superior and as such is predestined for the task of subjugation the less civilized cultures. People from different environments are asking for maintenance of friendships with each other.

His characters are somewhat involved in the process of colonization, but this process is reciprocal, non-violent and open to accept different points of view.

Thompson does not idealize the situation in Bengal as Kipling did, for instance. Although there are relationships between the white men and the natives shown as friendly, there are some situations that do not encourage good relationships from either. But these situations are quite rare.

As D. Baldwin and p. Quinn suggest: “a basic idea behind the European notion of ‘the nation’ is that those withing national boundaries share certain commonalities of language, culture, values, religion, and ideals.” (2007b, 11)

The differences between British way of thinking and the Bengali way are immense. It is clear that two completely different ethnics won't concur.

4.2 Assimilation

The admission of the idea of colonialism was not easy for both sides. The Indian one had to live through the process of subjugating and the British one had to experience the removal from their home country to a completely different environment. The British had to face the life in different climatic condition, culture with distinct values, religion with unknown gods and goddesses and also leave their families thousand miles away from them.

It is therefore arguable that, even before the development of a conscious de-colonizing stance, the experience of a new place, identifiably different in its physical characteristics, constraints, for instance, the new settlers to demand a language which will allow them to express their sense of ‘Otherness’. Landscape, flora and fauna, seasons, climatic conditions are formally distinguished from the place of origin as home/colony, Europe/New World, Europe/Antipodes, metropolitan/provincial, and so on, although, of course, at this stage no effective models exist for expressing this sense of Otherness in a positive and creative way.

(Ashcroft, 2002, 11)

The reader is not allowed to see the process of assimilation from its very beginnings. Thompson puts the reader in a situation when characters from both sides are somehow accustomed to each other's lifestyle. The British are trying to preserve their tradition in the new environment and the natives are trying not to disturb the British. Both of them

are keeping their traditions, but the clashes are unavoidable. Although the number of the newcomers was in comparison to the number of the natives very low, they established very strong rules concerning the culture. The British culture was perceived as the ideal one and the one which is suitable to follow. The setting of his books is also very important. Thompson does not use India only as an interesting place for setting his books, he uses this environment as a typical place for meeting two cultures and highlights the importance of this setting as place which has to face the colonial oppression.

The characters in Thompson's books are educated people who speak English and have a basic notion about the British culture. This people can be called a 'second generation of westernized Indians', as they are accustomed to the new way of living under the British supervision and do not have to face the first attempts of colonialism. Thompson does not notice the people from the lower classes; scope of his characters is very diverse and ranges from minor clerks to high-posted officials from Indian Civil Service.

Kamalakanta Neogyi can serve as a typical example of a 'westernized Indian'. He was educated at Oxford, as his father was, and who was raised with a long tradition of friendliness of England and English issues. He serves the Raj and thanks to it he is perceived by some of his countrymen as a man of unprincipled selfishness who lacks courage and patriotism. Kamalakanta doesn't know his vernacular language because he wasn't taught it and he was brought in an atmosphere of almost English-worship. Unlike an average Indian in a higher service, Kamalakanta understands his western friends and has good relationships with them. He is an extreme example of an Indian who believes England more than his native land. He is blinded by the vision of England as a powerful philanthropic country and doesn't see what his countrymen know. His father didn't believe that the oppression the British did was accidental and he continued to trust in England. This is an example of how the Indian people were affected by the powerful strength of colonialism. These people lost belief in their country's fate and preferred to serve the British. This process produced 'the Indians in blood and color, but British in taste and origin'.

The Indians who come in contact with the British usually have a more positive approach towards them than the people who directly experienced the British's

hegemony as servants, for instance. These people confess the existence of Anglo – Indian friendships and do not blame the newcomers who are on the same social ladder for the situation in India.

“I have been a part of a world which was not all bad, not all ignoble, of a friendship in some Indians, some Englishmen, had equal place as comrades. And for the fact that it is broken and finished, and makes way now for something sharper and fiercer and no doubt more exciting, I do not altogether blame your people, nor do I think that history will altogether blame them! When I am alone, what troubles me is not that ogre of which I spoke, but the failure of my own people – through all these years! a failure in consistence and honesty of purpose, in courage and fairness!”

(Thompson, 1940, 271)

What do these two characters have in common is that they are educated Bengalis. The process and result of education are crucial. If an Indian is raised and educated in a western method, he usually does not tend to detest the Britons.

Probably the most significant character in Thompson’s books is Robert Alden. In comparison with this character and Thompson himself, several similarities can be found. He is an educational missionary with twenty years of experience and teaches English literature at the university in Vishnugram. Alden is pro-native and open to support all the non-violent progress of India. He is venerated by his students, some of the natives and other British settlers for his cleverness and spiritual virtues. Thanks to his fellowship with both sides, he is by some people perceived as a dangerous person, because ‘he knows too much’. He loves India wholeheartedly not only for the profits she can provide, but also for the beauty and tender wilderness of her. Another factor that contributes to his positive bearing are his Indian friends.

Although he is a missionary, he doesn’t serve God bigotedly and says that God can perceive him as a worshipper only because he does the educational mission.

How can be a British inhabitant characterized from the point of view of an Indian?

We in the West are individuals and walk our individual separate way to the grave. The East is a part of a sept, and its vitality, which so often towers up unexpectedly out of what looked to be utter weakness, is vitality greater than the individual.

(Thompson, 1938, 201)

The Indians did not align with the British way of living. What was deemed ordinary for the Western culture was understood as strange by the Eastern. A British settler was

understood as a man of selfish individuality because for the Indians the family was everything.

But these statements can not be generalized. The variance between the British on high posts and the ones on the lower posts are significant. British people from the lower classes had their own worries as an Indian has.

The British in India who hold the innumerable minor jobs which no publicist even bothers to notice, no novelist ever mentions – men on grass farms or serving as armed inspectors or doing something for lesser prices, - are not like the civilians or prosperous business men whom everyone thinks of when visualizing the ruling race. They have their own ways and thoughts and speech, and their own names.

(Thompson, 1938, 67)

The reason for various opinions is in the perception of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ qualities. What was a virtue for the British may not have been a virtue for an Indian. As Thompson suggests, this problem originates from the act of colonization when settlers invaded a country with completely different values:

Because they do not accept our ethics in a matter. If you could get to the back of the best Indian mind – and I’m thinking of one of our Christian ministers – he’s a saint, a man I admire immensely – but you won’t admire him, you won’t do him any sort of justice, if you insist on looking for British virtues in him. He’s a better man than I am – but in a different way. And if you were to get to the back of his mind – though I don’t believe he ever tells a lie himself – I know a lie seems differently to him than to us.

(Thompson, 1938, 255)

The view that the Indians are good people is admitted, but thanks to the dissimilar social background the British will always evaluate a person according to their formally established prescriptions. A British will always approach towards his personal qualities of a person from the British point of view.

The position of the Bengali population was unenviable. They had to face the loss of their identity, witnessed unnatural cultivating their country and in a quite quick succession had to adapt their lives to the western style. Only a small portion of them owned a piece of land and the others had to endure on its surface by sufferance of others.

Another area of disagreement is the cultural one. The British brought their rules with them did not give up of their typical habits, nor the hot weather prevented them from keeping their tennis afternoons. The British insisted on their traditions, but some of them were open to take part in Bengali festivals or traditions, such as Snake-Queens

puja. Some of the traditions were very interesting for the newcomers, but some of them were quite scary.

“Some sort of puja?” “No. Cock-fights. If you’ve never seen one,” he added quickly, to repress the curiosity that flashed into her look, “be careful never want to see one.”

“Why?”

“It’s no sight for decent people. I’ve seen five cocks dead within five minutes.”

“Dead! But how?”

“If you see the steel spurs they fasten on the birds, you’d understand. It’s the crudest cruelty in the world – not the worst of the cruelest, but the crudest. The people are crazy about it.”

(Thompson, 1938, 247)

This tradition was seen by the British as a fun suitable only for heathens and as a kind of Barbarian habit. Untrained British eye considered this fun as maltreatment. The newcomers took part in the funny and colorful Indian festivals, but when it came to the ‘bloody’ one, they detest it.

4.3 The position of British Women in Colonial Society

This topic will be primarily concerned with Mrs. Hilda Mannering, a young woman who came to India with her sister and her sister’s husband. Hilda is not married and does not seem to plan a wedding. She is an independent type of woman, but she is always limited by men. A woman living in a colony was not allowed to do all the things the men did, as going out without a companion or start their own business. Hilda wanted to break these rules, but she was successful only once. This happened when there were floods in Bengal and she was the only woman to remain in the country and helped the local population. This was the first and the last time she was allowed to act as a man.

Like all intellectual women, she wanted friendship with men; even the dullest man seemed to have some touch with life somewhere. She had not realized this so strongly till she came to India. But men’s friendship never seemed free from some dominion of the senses. As long as she was young and beautiful, men would throng to talk with her, but their friendship was not the thing is seemed. Men had given her the best of comradeship, and then wanted to possess her.

(Thompson, 1938, 125)

Hilda was disgusted about the women’s position. For her, men represented the touch with the ‘real world’, not the world which is full of idleness and empty tea parties – the women’s world. The men did not notice women as equal partners in facing the new

world, but men perceived women as a thing they can possess and who will serve them with silent devotion.

In comparison with Mrs. Hamar, a wife of a colonial judge, Hilda was trying to improve the situation and didn't sit with idle hands. Mrs. Hamar had the 'ornamental function' of a representative of the ruling power (Thompson, 1940, 210).

Married less than two years, in those two years she (Mrs. Hamar) had made little effort to adjust herself to a new life. Her own circle has been distinctly 'worldly', in a healthy pagan fashion, and her training had been for the pleasures rather than enthusiasm of life. Her movements showed this, there was nothing tense or rigid about them, they were graceful with a proud attractive languor.

(Thompson, 1940, 21)

A British woman came to India to accompany her husband and she did not see any reason for changing her habits obtained from the western lifestyle. It was quite common that these women held their tea parties, polo gatherings or evening meals with their friends. Among her tasks also belonged to manage the domestic staff, as it was quite common to have a number of servants who did all the housework.

Until the 1750 the intermarriages between the British men and Indian women were allowed, but after this time the British women were encouraged to come out to India to create background for their husbands. The major task for the women was to create a supportive environment where men could spend their time after work.

Findlay had been, to his own great surprise, wondering. Was it wise that our better-class women should be so scrupulously sheltered from rigors that Indian women endured year after year? Women with children, yes. He knew that these were plenty of women, wives of minor officials with poor salaries or of missionaries, who spent the summers on the plains. but the women who make such "society" as India can manage to produce, and whose idle shallow opinions presently drift into the corresponding stratum of thought in England. He wondered how much of the poisoning of the world's thinking comes from the idleness and ease of sheltered women, especially young women.

(Thompson, 1940, 177)

Thompson suggests that these women should be given at least a little work to do, as the idleness is the root of many problems.

In Bengal, there is a deeply established tradition of patriarchy. For example, there is a custom among Brahmins in India of expecting widows to throw themselves on their husbands' funeral pyres. A British woman had the situation a little bit easier, but

the expectations of a British woman were different than expectations of a Bengali woman.

In his books, Thompson does not pay any attention to lower-class women. He characterizes British women as a being who is not allowed to take part in any matter, except from social events. Hilda Mannering renders undone breakthrough in women's social status.

Conclusion

Edward John Thompson (1886 – 1946) belongs to a group of authors writing about the colonial period with the possibility of eye witnessing the changes this controversial era brought to many colonized countries. Thompson's personal relationship towards these changes influenced him in writing his stories.

Based on the Thompson's biography written by Mary Lago, the author discovered several topics of Thompson's life reflected in his stories. Thompson disagreed with some of the changes – mainly with the education. He asserted that the installed English model was suitable only for English gentlemen and the needs of the native inhabitants were not taken into account. Together with his biography, we can find in his writings many similarities with the main character of his books – Robert Alden. Via Alden's mouth Thompson presents his thoughts on contemporary issues.

In contrast with many authors of that time, Thompson doesn't criticize the native inhabitants and doesn't think about them as about an inferior race who needs civilizing by the superior race who is predestined to rule the rest of the world. The artificially made hierarchy serves as an unavoidable part of colonialism. His characters are able and willing to maintain friendships with the native population. They choose the best from both cultures and as mainly Robert Alden does, try to help the native inhabitants on their way towards independence. The negative opinions appear also, but they are by the reader perceived as another way of looking into the Indian situation. The reader has the right to choose which opinion he will identify with.

Thompson's characters are mainly from the upper layer of the society; Thompson does not pay any attention to representatives of lower classes, except from the students of the Vishnugram University.

Some of the characters criticize the system the British Government tried to uphold. They disagreed with the prodigality on the native inhabitants. The idea of these people was that the British can profit from India as it is possible and the indigenous inhabitants should be grateful for anything they got from the newcomers.

The main character in his books is Robert Alden, a university professor in Vishnugram, a small provincial town. Alden doesn't belong to the group of people who criticized and sit with idleness. He supported India's self-government, equal opportunities for all the graduates and methods of non-violence for solving various problems. In terms of language, Alden sometimes uses words from the Bengali language and in this way he shows no superiority and the interest for the natives. He is willing to make Indian friends and learns from them. Thompson himself worked as an educational missionary with the contacts to many important Indian personalities, so many of the opinions said by Alden approve of the Thompson's ones.

The books by Edward Thompson depict the situation in Bengal from the period before the partition from the Empire to the last days of the British rule with the growing call for independence.

Resumé

Období britského kolonialismu je považováno za jedno z nejvýznamnějších, ale také nejkontroverznějších období lidských dějin. Tato éra význačně ovlivnila mnoho stránek lidského života, od geografických změn po politické, ekonomické nebo sociální změny milionů obyvatel kolonialismem zasažených zemí. O těchto změnách se můžeme dočíst v encyklopediích, krásné literatuře nebo cestopisech, existují ale i faktory, o kterých se dočíst nemůžeme. Ztráta lidské důstojnosti, zdání podřadnosti či negativní pocity kolonizovaných obyvatel nejsou zapsány v žádné z těchto literatur. Tyto pocity byly zažívány lidmi, kteří žili v této mnohotvárné době, kdy došlo ke střetu dvou naprosto odlišných kultur a světy obou kultur se obrátily vzhůru nohama. Střet těchto kultur přinesl něco, s čím jsme se nikdy předtím nesetkali a umožnil vznik mocného impéria na kterém „slunce nikdy nezapadá“. Rané počátky kolonialismu byly mnoha lidmi vítány s nadšením, ale konec impéria byl neodvratný. Žádná světová velmoc nemá právo podrobovat si jinou zemi a z jejích obyvatel dělat otroky svých pořádků. Indie pomalu nabírala síly ke střetu s kolonialismem a ke konci byla schopna s ním vítězně bojovat za svou nezávislost. Jedna věc je však jistá – nebýt imperialismu, Indie by se s určitostí vyvíjela jiným směrem.

S příchodem Britů do Indie se stalo mnoho význačných změn. Byl ustanoven nový způsob vlády, model vyučování, půda, na které se nepěstovaly plodiny se začala měnit v čajové plantáže, miliony obyvatel byly donuceny používat anglický jazyk a uctívat jednoho vybraného boha. Některé inovace z dob Britů v Indii zůstaly, jako například anglický jazyk nebo systém vzdělávání, jiné stránky každodenního života zůstaly stejné – například systém kast nebo náboženství. Díky skutečnosti, že Indie měla možnost vidět obě stránky – mocnou imperiální a svou původní chudou, měla možnost volby, kterou cestou se na cestě za svou nezávislostí vydá.

První literární pokusy spojené s koloniální érou se přiřazují k autorům, kteří vyjadřovali svůj souhlas s britským systémem. Tyto literatury upřednostňovaly kolonizující kulturu, jako třeba básně a příběhy Rudyarda Kiplinga. Druhým obdobím jsou práce napsané původním obyvatelstvem pod dohledem Impéria. Rozsah žánrů těchto literatur je velmi široký, od prvotního oslavování imperialismu Rudyardem Kiplingem po satirické a ironii zavánějící díla Orwellova.

Na začátku práce se autorka pokusí zasadit do širšího kontextu osobní zkušenosti z Thompsonova života v Indii do námětu jeho tří děl – *An Indian Day*, *A Farewell to India* a *An End of the Hours*. Edward John Thompson byl sám schopen osobně zažít situaci v Indii z pohledu vzdělávacího misionáře. Thompson se od ostatních autorů své doby liší tím, jak popisuje vztahy mezi vládnoucími a ovládnutými. Jeho hlavní postavy jsou hlavně z vyšších sociálních vrstev z obou obyvatelstev – britského a indického. Tyto postavy jsou schopny rovnocenného přátelství, ale díky kolonizaci se není možné vyhnout menším či větším střetům mezi těmito dvěma odlišnými etniky. Na druhou stranu je nutno říci, že Thompsonovy postavy nijak nevyužívají uměle vystavené nadřazenosti a jsou si vědomi rasové rovnocennosti. V dílech se občas objeví negativní názor na původní obyvatele a jejich potřeby, ale tyto názory slouží většinou k podpoře argumentů proti nim.

Převažující myšlenka vyšší třídy byla, že by britská vláda měla utrácet peníze na mnohem důležitější účely než je například vzdělávání původních obyvatel. Anglie se díky Indii stala jednou z největších světových velmocí a stala se na Indii závislou.

Tato práce je rozdělena do dvou hlavních částí. První, úvodní část se ve svém počátku bude věnovat objasnění pojmů kolonialismus a imperialismus a přiblíží Edwarda Thompsona jako poměrně málo známého autora. Dále v této kapitole popíše vlivy Thompsonova života na psaní jeho tří knih.

Hlavní část se zabývá tím, jak přímé a nepřímé vlivy nového světa ovlivnily původní obyvatele a jejich vztahy k nově příchozím. Hlavní důraz bude kladen na podstatná témata jako jsou vzdělávání, s tím spojený anglický jazyk, pozice britských žen v indické společnosti a také vlivy politické. Autorka bude prezentovat kladné i záporné názory a pokusí se pro ně najít zdůvodnění.

V dílech Edwarda Thompsona se můžeme setkat s poměrně jednoznačným nesouhlasem britských misionářů s tehdejšími systémem vzdělávání v Indii. Britové do nového světa přinesli svůj model výuky, který ale z důvodů kulturní odlišnosti nevyhovoval potřebám indickým studentům. Jak Thompson sám přiznává, typ britského vzdělávání byl vhodný pro britské gentlemany a ne pro mladé Indy. V rukou koloniálních vůdců se indické hodnoty a učení měnily ve svérázné zvláštnosti. Původ britského vzdělávání můžeme hledat u britských misionářů, kteří přišli do Indie za účelem naučit místní obyvatelstvo křesťanské víře a zároveň s tím probíhala výuka, zejména anglického jazyka. Poté

začínaly vznikat školy pod dohledem mocného oka impéria s typickým západním kurikulem. Univerzita je v Thompsonových knihách vnímána jako instituce s limitovanou možností vyjadřování názorů a místem, kde se mohly střetávat odlišné etnické či náboženské skupiny. Britové také nevědomě posilovali segregaci mezi kastami a příznivci nejrůznějších náboženských skupin. Vzhledem k faktu, že většinu vzdělané indické vrstvy tvořili Brahminové, byly vzdělané menšiny v nevýhodě. Hlavní postavu Thompsonových knih, Roberta Aldena, znepokojoval osud vzdělaných Bengálců. Přestože měli stejné vzdělání jako jejich britští rivalové, šance na zaměstnání adekvátní jejich znalostem byla mnohem menší. Jejich jedinou šancí byla v služba v Indické občanské službě či zastávání úřadů menších úředníků v britské samosprávě. Znepokojující stránkou věci bylo, že i když Indové vystudovali vysokou školu, jejich konečný osud to příliš nezměnilo. Stále jim hrozila chudoba a mnozí z nich živořili na hranici bídy. Na vyšších postech vzdělání Bengálci většinou neměli přístup, Britové se přeci jen trochu obávali možného rozmachu jejich moci.

Tím, že na univerzitách studovalo mnoho zástupců nejrůznějších náboženských skupin a z nich byli v největším počtu zastoupeni Brahminové, Britové neúmyslně upevnili pozici této skupiny v tradičním systému kast.

S vzděláváním je úzce propojena výuka anglického jazyka. Britští osadníci se odmítali učit jeden z mnoha bengálských dialektů a místo toho ustanovili anglický jazyk jediným možným způsobem komunikace. Indové se do užšího kontaktu s jazykem dostávali v misionářských školách, později byla jedním z mnoha kritérií přijetí k vyššímu studiu. Angličtina byla jediným jazykem na univerzitách a její dobrá znalost byla podmínkou. Indové se tomuto požadavku přizpůsobili a výsledkem jejich snažení byla angličtina uzpůsobená jejich jazykovým schopnostem a zvyklostem a se standardizovanou angličtinou toho měla poměrně málo společného. Tím, že Britové ustanovili angličtinu jako jediný jazyk, nevědomky posílili národní jednotu Indie. Najednou byla komunikace mezi uživateli nejpodivnějších dialektů snazší.

Ačkoli Britové byli nuceni čelit mnoha vlivům odlišných od britského prostředí, snažili si své charakteristické chování přinést i do nové země. Nebylo divu, když v dusných odpoledních britští osadníci hráli tenis a jejich manželky striktně dodržovaly čajové dýchánky.

Pozice britských žen v koloniální společnosti nebyla jednoduchá. Jejich hlavním úkolem bylo plnit ornamentální funkci po boku manžela a vytvářet mu příznivé domácí prostředí.

Myšlenka národností jednoty a samosprávy se u Indů začíná objevovat s prvními negativními názory na britskou vládu a s tím spojenými nepokoji. Postavy Edwarda Thompsona většinou podporují nezávislost Indie, pouze se s názory Indů liší ve způsobu dosažení této samosprávy. Názor postav z nižších kruhů indické společnosti preferuje radikální řešení situace a hlavním mottem pro jejich snahu bylo, že pokud Indie byla podmaněna krví, má svou nezávislost krví také vybojovat. Zástupci vyšší vrstvy z britské společnosti preferovali nenásilné řešení.

Image britského kolonizátora v očích původního obyvatele nebyla příjemným pohledem. Kolonizátor symbolizoval útlak, ztrátu vlastní důstojnosti a zotročování. Jednou z otázek spojeného se samosprávou byl způsob, jakým by měli Britové z Indie odejít. Ti považovali Impérium za filantropickou instituci a tím zakrývali vlastní prospěchářské cíle. Británie se v době svého největšího rozmachu stala na Indii závislou, zejména díky jejímu nerostnému bohatství. Britové, pokud se od nich odchod z Indie očekával, přemýšleli, jak tento odchod uskutečnit. Hlavním kritériem byla důstojnost. Nechtěli celému světu ukázat tvář poraženého.

Robert Alden, hlavní postava Thompsonových děl, podporuje Indý na jejich cestě k samovládě. Je ochoten něco obětovat – když Indové udělají to samé. Preferuje nenásilné protesty a chce celou situaci v Indii řešit s rozvahou a klidem. Na toto reagovali Indové. Proč by Britové měli přinášet oběti když pouze navrací zpět zemi, která jim nikdy nepatřila.

Britské politika však byla smutkem pro obě strany. Pokud už vláda poskytla limitovanou šanci pro samosprávu, poskytla tím také obrovský prostor pro úplatkářství. Britové se nesnažili vytvořit politiku výhodnou pro obě strany. Pokud se objevil nějaký problém, měla ihned po ruce násilné řešení. Uplatňovala metodu síly reprezentovanou zbraněmi a násilnými řešeními.

Tím, že Indové viděli vzor v ostatních zemích, které se odprostily od břemena kolonialismu, získával jejich na síle a výsledkem byl odchod Britů z Indie a následné vyhlášení samostatné Indie v roce 1947.

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