

The Empire and Mr Thompson

Making of Indian Princes and English Working Class

Robert Gregg
Madhavi Kale

The elision of empire in E P Thompson's work has had important implications for the emergence of Social History. In his focus on culture Thompson did not merely enlarge the historian's lens to rescue the lower orders as agents, so enabling further enlargement in the future. Instead his use of culture placed another veil in front of History, another layer on the 'palimpsest of history' making it in some ways more difficult to incorporate empire, non-metropolitan subjects and race and gender perspectives into future historical analysis.

As a child I had no doubt that Indians were our most important visitors: the sideboard loaded with grapes and dates was testimony of this. A little older, I would cadge postage stamps from poets and political agitators. Older again, I stood in awe before the gracious Jawaharlal, as he asked me about my batting technique.

— E P Thompson (1980: 138)

IN *The Nehru Tradition*, Edward Palmer Thompson described how just before his death in 1946, his father, Edward John Thompson, had received a letter from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru [EPT 1980: 138].¹ "My father read it," E P Thompson wrote, "propped on his pillows, in the evening hours when his mind was cleared of drugs. It was a letter with the warmth of an Indian wind, thanking him for his work for India. My father let the letter drop onto the sheet: 'Oh Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace!' Several days later he died." Accompanying this letter, Thompson added, "There was [one] also for me, in the same generous terms. From this moment, I suppose, stemmed my 'deviation'" [EPT 1980: 142].

Here, then, is a moment of some significance in the biography of one of the most influential post-war British historians. Indian history, the life and influence of Jawaharlal Nehru, the life and work of Edward John Thompson, were all of great significance in the development of this 'deviant'. And yet this realisation on E P Thompson's part, buried in a relatively obscure essay in one of his less-read works — indeed, in a work which is more political than historical in nature — parallels the status of India in British history itself. It is a central part of the story, but seldom recognised as such [Bayly: 11-15; Burton 1994a, 1994b]. Moreover, there is a distinct irony here that we wish to highlight in this paper. A man so shaped and influenced by the existence of the British Empire as it was represented in Anglo-Indian history, who described himself as having his "political consciousness cut its teeth on the causes of Spain and Indian Independence," and who modelled himself on his father, almost entirely denied a place for the empire

and imperialism in his own historical writing [EPT 1978: iii; Palmer 1994: 27, 174]. While the influence of the father is clearly present in the work of the son, empire itself is conspicuous by its absence.² This would have a profound impact on E P Thompson's analysis and would, consequently, shape the development of social history in Britain and the US.³

In this paper, therefore, we intend to highlight an aspect of E P Thompson's work that has received minimal attention in the various articles and *festschriften* produced in his honour, namely, the relationship between E P Thompson and the British Empire within which he was born.⁴ To describe this relationship fully, we focus on the legacy of the father, Edward John. Further, while we do not discuss here E P Thompson's influence on other Anglo-American social historians, we would argue that his centrality to the emergence of Social History means that this relationship with empire helped to shape the work of a whole generation of historians who followed in the younger Thompson's wake. To understand the genealogy of Social History and developments within the western historical profession over the last 30 years, therefore, the lens has to be widened so that it encompasses not just someone like E P Thompson, but, through him, Edward Thompson, Jawaharlal Nehru and Vinayak Savarkar as well.⁵ Unearthing such genealogies should make us more keenly aware of the politics of history writing, "its conditions of production, its power to shape knowledge systems and to hide its own (in this case) orientalist origins and presumptions" [Burton 1996; see also, Trouillot 1995; Prakash 1994; Gregg 1997].

I

All About R Tagore

Oyez! Oyez! Assemble, ye fellers! Hear this dreadful charge! A *reductio ad absurdum!* An agent-on-earth of the Governor of Hades Himself, versus one Neophyte the Bitter-One! A partnership, a *Quis separabit?* do, and the consequences thereof.

— G V Desani (1986: 98)

At the end we shall find our beginning. One of E P Thompson's last published works was *Alien Homage*, a tribute to the relationship between his father and Rabindranath Tagore, which had culminated in Edward John's study of the Bengali poet's life and work [EPT 1993a; EJT 1921, 1994]. This study of Tagore was the elder Thompson's first full-length book, beginning his transition from poet and teacher in Bankura, to historian and political commentator at Oriel College, Oxford. What strikes one immediately is the fact that this work was the son's attempt to come to terms with his own background and heritage. Its timing is therefore significant. While E P Thompson would say that he began to 'reason' in his 30th year, he began to consider empire when he was twice that age, and this was "unbidden and unplanned." He had inherited his father's papers which chronicled the latter's "long association with India," but had made little use of them until 1986, when a conference was held in honour of the 125th anniversary of Tagore's birth [EPT 1993a: viii]. This was also the moment when Thompson was in the process of returning to historical writing after many years of anti-nuclear and anti-European Community political activism; at the time, in short, when, with the events following in the wake of Gorbachev's ascent in the Soviet Union, the post-second world war political alignments were beginning to crumble taking with them many of the sureties and axioms encompassing Plato and NATO. By the time *Alien Homage* was published in 1993, the Berlin Wall had fallen, the Soviet bloc was no longer, and South African apartheid seemed to be on the wane. Now the empire could get back in, and perhaps (though no attribution should be given to Thompson here), the role of empire in forestalling ethnic strife could be given some consideration. Whatever the ultimate spin given to Britain's "colonial contributions", E P Thompson's own reading of his father's encounter would begin to reveal some of the imperial residue to be found in his own writings.

As is the case for many historians, Edward John Thompson's ideas underwent

considerable change during his life. In the simplest terms, he moved toward a more liberal position with regard to India – as his son would note, he would become “a friend of India”. But this could mean any number of things: from a missionary in India bringing Christianity to “benighted souls”; to an avid reader, translator and presenter of Tagore and other Bengali writers (whose work could receive multiple readings); and, to an advocate of Indian independence and friend of Nehru. It could also mean at different times, an outright imperialist. After all, from one English perspective, the British Empire was itself a civilising mission, bringing the ‘benefits’ of the English language and governmental traditions to India. Clearly, both James Mill and Thomas Babington Macaulay perceived of themselves and the Empire in this way, and Edward Thompson’s partial endorsement of the latter’s *Minute on Indian Education*, reveals the ambiguities of his own friendliness toward India even at the end of his life [Thompson and Garratt: 660-62].

But determining the extent to which Edward Thompson was a “friend of India” is in many ways immaterial. Judging him for his views and actions is also beside the point. Compared to many of his compatriots he should be viewed positively. This is no doubt the reason for EP Thompson’s chagrin that his father had been criticised so heavily and in his view unfairly. Edward Thompson certainly did attempt to cross boundaries and make ‘homages’ to Indians and Indian culture that relatively few Britons at the time were making. The point, though, is that in doing so he nevertheless replicated imperial models, and even while he might be described, generously, as a “crusading opponent of British policy in India” [Said 1993: 206],⁶ he was a great believer in the imperial system. The analyses of both Benita Parry and Allen J Greenberger of Thompson’s novels are very persuasive and almost unanswerable on this score. “During the time of his active involvement in British-Indian politics,” Parry writes, “[Thompson’s] analyses of British rule in India did not come to grips with a critique of its imperialist core.” He retained a commitment to the British idea of empire. “Not a few Englishmen are reluctant to let India go,” Thompson had written in 1930, “not because of the tribute foreigners believe us to draw from it, but for the entirely unpractical reason that it has fired our dreams, and the best of our manhood has gone into her service” [Parry: 166; see also EJT, 1927; 1931; 1938; and Greenberger]. On the basis of comments such as this, Parry concludes:

Thompson’s expression of respect for Indian creativity is certainly genuine, as is his opinion that there are national attainments as valuable as political power. But in accepting the boundaries of “the Empire’s

life” as fixed and in conceding as valid such concepts as making relations “safe,” Thompson is thinking within the conceptual framework of England’s dominion over India and is offering proposals calculated to ensure its continuation [Parry: 171].

In spite of his best efforts to avoid doing so, EP Thompson’s own descriptions of his father’s relationship with Rabindranath Tagore and other Indian intellectuals in *Alien Homage*, confirm much of the picture described by Parry. EP Thompson believed that his father’s “hankering for a continuation in some form of the Indian-British connection – whether by the name of a ‘dominion’ or by whatever name – has too easily been mistaken for a vestigial ‘imperialism’” [EPT 1993a: 104].⁷ In fact, this is not the substance of Parry’s argument. It is not the desire for an Indian-British connection that presents a hint of ‘vestigial imperialism’, it is rather the assumption on which it is based: namely, that the British had brought much that was good to India and this needed to be recognised for the sake of both countries. Moreover, EP Thompson’s analysis of his father’s relationship with Tagore was, as might be expected given the nature of both his sources and his relationship to one of his subjects, distinctly biased. In some ways, it replicates Edward Thompson’s analysis of Indian history and culture [EJT 1994]. It sets out to be fair and to give ‘both sides’ of the story, but the sources and the relationship to the English side lead the author to cast that side in a more favourable light than the Indian. Tagore ends up seeming to be the man whom Edward Thompson believed he was: a great writer who was unable to maintain control over his work’s representation; a man who in spite of his spirituality, became increasingly vain and susceptible to the flattery of his followers; one who, once manipulated, was unable to accept criticism from an ‘unbiased’ biographer; and, an artist who allowed his work, at different times, to appeal to westernised tastes or to become influenced by the politics of nationalism. EP Thompson criticised his father somewhat less harshly for being naive, perhaps even for having delusions of grandeur, but never for being totally wrong, nor for having let his preconceptions about art and society shape his interpretation of Tagore and Bengali culture. EP Thompson could not formulate such a critique because he himself shared his father’s preconceptions.

EP Thompson concluded his study by suggesting that his father’s relationship with Tagore provided a glimpse “into something different to the approved views which predominate in the historical memory today” [EPT 1993a: 101]. This was an “interface between two cultures” and an “authentic encounter” (10). As such the relationship and Thompson’s accounts of it taken from his

father’s record move us beyond “nostalgias for the British Raj; the sometimes simplified nationalist historiography which can see nothing but strategy and tactics of the independence struggle; the easy *ex post facto* ‘radicalism’ of western guilt which assumes that, by definition, every cultural exchange must be read only in terms of colonial exploitation” (101). These three groupings would have been familiar to Edward Thompson himself. What the elder Thompson claimed throughout his life was that there was an alternative to the ‘approved views’ and that he presented something that was unique: an ‘authentic encounter’ between two cultures that could guide imperial development (after all, was not the problem with Tagore the fact that he had ceased to be authentic; Thompson could correct this for the benefit of both the English and Bengalis). EP Thompson ended *Alien Homage* by almost conceding everything to his father.

Of course, something so stark would not be possible today, because of the “‘radicalism’ of western guilt” that is abroad. So Thompson turned to Partha Chatterjee to provide another kind of defense for his father (and, though no such defense is needed, we use this word since EP Thompson was explicit about this purpose behind his work [1-10]). His father “was in a no win situation,” EP Thompson wrote, revealing his penchant for binarisms: “In a profoundly influential formative moment, Indian nationalism had conceded the superiority of the west in material questions: its science, technology and dedication to material progress. But in cultural matters and especially in the spiritual aspect of culture, the east was superior – and hence undominated.”⁸ He then quoted a “private communication to me from Professor Chatterjee”:

There was no way Bengalis were going to allow Thompson to become a critic of Bengali literature: it was ruled out precisely by the colonial relation... There was a large domain of ‘material’ activities where western superiority was conceded... But a supposedly ‘spiritual’ or ‘inner’ domain was proclaimed where nationalism asserted its own sovereignty. Colonial interference was forbidden in this domain. Literature was very much a part of this inner spiritual domain of national life... and no criticisms by the west could ever be legitimate there... (102).

Putting aside the question of the origin of these binarisms, whether they come from EP Thompson’s own influence on Indian historians or another unadulterated source, it is clear that their net effect was to save Edward Thompson from any blame for the failure of his “alien homage”. For, in this view, his efforts would always appear to Bengalis to be patronising, insulting or erroneous, regardless of how close to “the truth” they approached. Edward, his son

maintained, had attempted to be 'fair', using Indian friends like Brajendranath Seal and Prasant Mahalanobis as sources for many of his assessments. Moreover, "Some of his criticisms of nationalist attitudes and Indian social conservatism may not be unfounded – they are rather close to Tagore's" (103). So he was doomed to failure, and his failure such as it was should be seen as only a product of the post-first world war decline of the British Empire, the rise of Indian Nationalist sentiment – in short, the vagaries of the Indian political situation. What we should learn from this "authentic encounter" EP Thompson believed, was something that might enable us to rise above the politics of the inter-war years to something transcending the imperial context (again, this was his father's wish also).

But this is all too convenient, and leaves us missing the legacies of the encounter. If we return to Partha Chatterjee's communication, we can see that Edward Thompson's problem appeared to stem from his desire to enter the Bengali world of literature on an equal footing with Bengali literati. If one takes his work on Tagore in isolation, this is indeed how it would appear. The case is made more complicated, however, by a number of facts. First, Thompson seemed to suggest that while Bengalis were indeed superior in the 'spiritual domain', they needed an outsider to remind them of this fact, to keep them on the right path so that they did not stray down the path of western materialism. Thompson would provide a middle way, attempting, as his son would later describe it, to be "a liminal figure," understanding both cultures, and mediating between them. Naturally, this privileged Thompson's own position and implicitly allowed his notions of fairness and objectivity (derived in part from idealisations of the "West's" scientific method, which in turn were derived from the British position of political supremacy in India) to encroach on Bengali "sovereignty". It is not surprising that Thompson could get up the noses of Tagore and later Seal, while C F Andrews, whom E P Thompson would dismiss as being a sycophant, remained in good standing.

Interestingly, Edward Thompson's position with regard to Tagore, Seal, and later Gandhi and Nehru, is analogous to E P Thompson's relationship to the Communist Party, though no moral equivalence is intended. Both Thompsons saw themselves as being outside a movement shaped by irrational and unreasoning forces. Both presented their own ability to 'reason' and be 'reasonable' – in fact, their ability to use "English method" (cricket and empiricism) – to provide an alternative to the party/nationalist line. For EP Thompson situated "Outside the Whale", his antagonists

from Margaret Thatcher to Perry Anderson were Hegelians, conforming to some idealist system whether of the left or the right. For Edward, the antagonists, imperialists and nationalists, were mired in their own cultural assumptions, unable to enter the "caves of forbidden history" without "holding high the torch of...blazing hatred," whether in the name of Cawnpore or Jallianwalla. Father and son refused to concede the idealistic (Hegelian, for EP) basis for their own concept of reason.

Second, the nature of Thompson's criticisms tended towards the generalisation of Bengali culture – "the mediocrity of the derivative 'babu culture'", the spirituality of authentic culture, and so on. The very static (and given the connection with Seal, one could say Hegelian) characterisation of culture (which was then replicated in E P Thompson's account), could only be employed by an outsider, without fear of insult, to praise the culture of another. The notion that a group had ascendancy in a particular social or artistic arena was central to imperial discourse, so the critical generalisation would immediately connect with related hierarchies. At no point could it, as both Thompsons felt it should, represent a "free republic of universal letters" [EPT 1993a: 82].

Finally, the elder Thompson's studies of Tagore were just one part of his work, which also included (outside of his teaching duties at Bankura and Oxford) the writing of novels, poetry, political tracts and histories. In these other writings, the generalisations found in Thompson's work on Tagore were marshalled to legitimate British imperial rule. In particular, the terrain of history was crucial, as Nehru clearly understood, for if Indians were merely 'spiritual', then they were clearly not in a position to fully comprehend their own history. While Nehru would later argue in his own historical writing that such notions needed to be contested, Thompson felt that Indians' history needed to be written for them by sympathetic Englishmen trained in the art of historical thinking and methodology – "friends of India" like himself. And it is here that we see how Chatterjee's notion of western "material superiority" might lead to the privileging of this historical writing (derived as it was believed to be from the west's "science, technology and material progress"). Thompson's opposition to nationalism, then, did not merely reflect his consternation at the infiltration of politics into the realm of art, though this was a position of imperial significance in its own right, it also reflected his dismissal of an Indian's ability to formulate a meaningful nationalist politics, based as he believed it necessarily had to be on such a flimsy comprehension of history. All this would change, as he would be confronted with clear

refutation of his belief (an Indian historian who cited Thompson's work), but in the meantime he was likely to upset Indians regardless of the friendliness of his disposition.

II

The Other Side of History

To find parallels to the sepoy atrocities, we need not, as some London papers pretend, fall back on the middle ages, nor even wander beyond the history of contemporary England. All we want is to study the first Chinese war, an event, so to say, of yesterday. The English soldiery then committed abominations for the mere fun of it; their passions being neither sanctified by religious fanaticism nor exacerbated by hatred against an overbearing and conquering race, nor provoked by the stern resistance of a heroic enemy. The violations of women, the spittings of children, the roastings of whole villages, were then mere wanton sports, not recorded by mandarins, but by British officers themselves...

–Karl Marx [Marx-Engels 1978:79-80]

The work that has made Edward Thompson seem most politically anti-imperial is *The Other Side of the Medal* [EJT 1925]. Seen in isolation and in light of the consternation it aroused in British circles, this work does indeed appear to cast Thompson as "a crusader against British Imperial policy." Once it is realised that any opposition (however minimal) to British administration in India would, at this time, cause widespread hostility, that there was room for many positions under the imperial umbrella, and once the text itself is examined closely, it becomes difficult to see Thompson as anything other than an imperialist opponent of the direction of British imperial policy. His commitment to the imperial system was categorical. This is then confirmed in his biographical work on Sir Walter Raleigh and Charles Theophilus Metcalfe. These works will be considered briefly in turn, before we examine *The Making of the Indian Princes* and consider how the family tree may have shaped "the Liberty Tree", to borrow from Bryan D Palmer (1994:11-51).

In *The Other Side of the Medal* Thompson responded to the changed conditions in India that he found when he returned from his wartime service in Mesopotamia [Palmer 1994: 18-22]. As many people at the time suggested, much of the earlier justification for British imperialism had been contradicted by the events of the first world war. European justifications for their rule of African and Asian peoples now appeared to be specious and self-serving. Thompson and Garratt later noted in *The Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* that added to the war itself the Irish Rebellion and the rise to prominence of Tilak in 1914 signified that the Empire's legitimacy was on the wane (600). They

wrote: "From the Indian standpoint the War had finally killed the idea of European superiority, and roused new ambitions and new hopes." Then came the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre of 1919 and other events at Amritsar, precipitated by the sense of self-doubt among Europeans and the increased political self-assertion among the colonised. For Thompson, these events "formed a turning-point in Indo-British relations almost as important as the Mutiny". The British responded to their own increased fears by exacerbating racial discord and adding to the climate of bigotry. And Thompson felt that such events were a continuation of the reaction to the Mutiny itself, which had become so shrouded in self-serving mystery and lies that the British would continue to use it to justify future acts of repression. What was needed, therefore, the former missionary felt, was to bring the light of reason and historical objectivity to bear on the subject of the Mutiny; to cast light on the shadows that captivated English minds about the savagery of Indians; to bring to people's attention the terrible acts of men like General Neill at Allahabad; and, to make the English aware of the need to atone for their acts. Only by doing this, could the British Empire be saved from its continued slide into racial discord.

Thompson saw 'the Mutiny' as a transformative moment in the history of Britain's empire in India as the British altered their attitudes toward the colonised. The English during the Mutiny had gone mad, and had committed acts that would earlier have been considered unthinkable. According to Thompson:

The Mutiny—that nightmare of innumerable savage hands suddenly upraised to kill helpless women and children—has been responsible for the waves of hysteria which from time to time have swept the European community... And there can be no doubt that the dramatic and heightened fashion in which the Mutiny has been pictured to us has been responsible for deeds that would have been impossible to Englishmen in their right frame of mind [EJT 1925: 87-88].

He further pointed to the memory of the Bibighur incident at Cawnpore as the subtext for the behaviour of Englishmen in the Punjab in April 1919. "At Jallianwala and during the outcry which our people made afterwards we see the workings of imperfectly informed minds obsessed with the thought of Cawnpore and of merciless, unreasoning 'devils' butchering our women" (95). But, as Vinay Lal notes, Thompson appeared to forget other incidents of barbarity, such as "the Highland Clearances, which continued over a very long period of time, were as brutal as anything that has been seen. It seems pointless to pretend that barbarism is the monopoly of a certain people and that others are exempt from such practices" [Lal:55-56].

Thompson's view of the Mutiny missed other precedents for English actions, the invasions of Ireland, Anglo-American genocidal treatment of Indian populations in the New World, multiple atrocities in China, British involvement in the slave trade; and so on. Besides this, his analysis performed a similar function as accounts of the Nat Turner

uprising in the US, seeing the source of white barbarism (Lynch's Law) in the actions of the slaves—missing the fact that these people felt they were responding to their own sense of injustice and barbarity [Stamp:190].

Perhaps the most telling comment on India and Indians is Thompson's assessment that

Announcing a new journal...

Management & Change

Published by the Institute for Integrated Learning in Management (IILM), N. Delhi

Editor: Debi S. Saini (Professor, IILM)

Asstt. Editor: Sami A. Khan (Asstt. Professor, IILM)

Aims and Scope

Management & Change is committed to provide to all concerned an excellent laboratory for experimentation and cross-fertilization of ideas, and thus to contribute to creation of new management-related knowledge. It publishes research papers, review articles, communications, book reviews and management cases on topics of current concern in all functional areas of management and related social sciences.

Editorial Advisory Board

Mohan L. Agrawal (XLRI, Jamshedpur), Abad Ahmed (PVC, Univ. of Delhi), Chetan Baxi (Dean-Research, MDI, Gurgaon), Richard Butler (Univ. of Bradford, UK), N.R. Chatterjee (Dean-Emeritus, IILM), Joseph Correa (Robert Morris College, Pittsburg, USA), Avijit Ghosh (New York Univ., USA), P.K. Jain (IIT, Delhi), Rama J. Joshi (SRCIR, Delhi), M.Y. Khan (Univ. of Delhi), K. Mamkoottam (FMS, Univ. of Delhi), Kamlesh Misra (Dean, IILM), N.K. Nair (Dir., NPC, New Delhi), V.N. Pandit (DSE, Univ. of Delhi), N.R. Sheth (Ex-Dir, IIM, Ahmedabad), J.D. Singh (IMI, New Delhi), Gyorgy Szell (Univ. of Osnabruck, Germany), Prem Vrat (Dean-PGS & Research, IIT, Delhi).

Contents of Volume 1 Number 1 (April, 1997)

1. Some Reflections on Management and Change
N.R. Sheth (Ex-Director, IIM, Ahmedabad)
 2. Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Technological Innovation – The West, Japan and India
Arunoday Saha (Professor, IILM)
 3. Labour-Management Relations in an Era of Globalization
C.S. Venkata Ratnam (Professor, IMI, N. Delhi)
 4. Marketing Research in India: A Perspective
Sanjay K. Jain (Reader, DSE, Univ. of Delhi, Delhi)
 5. Relationship Marketing in Indian Service Organizations: The Natural Facilitators and the Levels
M.L. Agrawal (Professor, XLRI, Jamshedpur)
 6. Role of Exports in Local Economic Development: An Application of the Pittsburgh REMI Model
Kamlesh Misra (Dean, IILM)
 7. An Empirical Test of Random-Walk Model on the Indian Stock Market
O.P. Gupta (Professor, Univ. of Delhi, Delhi)
 8. Change Management and Public Managers: Capacity Building for Sustaining Change
Neela Mukherjee (Professor, L.B.S. Academy of Administration, Mussoorie)
- 22 Book Reviews

Frequency and Subscriptions

The Management & Change is published twice a year in April and October. Annual subscription rates are as follows: For India – Institutional: Rs. 300; Personal: Rs. 200
For Abroad – (All Non-Asian countries) – US \$40; (Asian countries) – US \$30
Crossed Demand drafts for subscription should be drawn in favour of INSTITUTE FOR INTEGRATED LEARNING IN MANAGEMENT, payable at New Delhi.
For further enquiries, please write to the Editor, *Management & Change*, Institute for Integrated Learning in Management, Lodhi Institutional Area, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110 003.
Telephones: 91-11-4631033, 4647820, 4647821 Fax: 91-11-4647796
E-Mail: dsaini@hotmail.com

the history of the 'Mutiny' needed to be written by the English. For,

Indians are not historians; and they rarely show any critical ability. Even their most useful books, books full of research and information, exasperate with their repetitions and diffuseness, and lose effect by their uncritical enthusiasms. Such solid highways to scholarly esteem and approval as indexes and bibliographies are almost unknown to them. So they are not likely to displace our account of our connection with India. They are not able to arrange their knowledge so as to gain that first essential towards a favourable judgment, a hearing. But if they know that our account of certain enormously important events is unfair – and how can they help but know, being so sensitively concerned with them? – their failure to set their knowledge forth will only deepen their resentment [EJT 1925: 29-30].

Thompson here naturalised a linkage between scholarly methods and acceptance of conclusions, which if not so naturalised could only appear to be historically contingent and, ultimately, imperialist. But the linkage was important for Thompson, and he felt that through that educational experiment which was the British Empire, Indians would attain this ability in the future: "And some day," he wrote, "a century hence, perhaps – Indian traditions and accounts of the Mutiny will be taken into the reckoning. It will be treated as history, not prejudice or propaganda. It will become a terrible but most enthralling story..." (105). But, while terrible, this story would not depart dramatically from Thompson's own horrific account. And, any belief that it would contribute to a nationalist politics needed to be dispelled immediately; for nationalist historians would rely on "uncritical enthusiasms", unacceptable for such 'a reckoning'.

As Thompson's assessment here seems to hint, his analysis of 'the Mutiny' needed to respond to a very significant nationalist and inflammatory account of the same events, namely, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's *The War of Independence of 1857*, which had been written more than fifteen years earlier. Savarkar's text was not a source to be 'reckoned' with in terms of scholarship; it was rather one that had to be "blown out of existence" as an example of the resentment that could build up among Indians owing to their 'inferiority complex' and the kinds of treatment of the war in English histories [quoted in Parry: 177]. "The bitterness is often most deeply felt by Indians in England," Thompson wrote. He continued, simultaneously introducing the author of this significant study and providing the grounds for his dismissal: "Vinayak Savarkar, now serving a life-sentence in the Andamans for complicity in the murder of Sir Curzon Wylie, was a student in London. What made him an irreconcilable there, amid the frank

kindliness that so many Indians have testified to receiving in England? The answer lies in what was his absorbed study," his *War of Indian Independence of 1857* (1925:122). Rather than examining the text directly and providing his own assessment of it (he may not have been able to do so), Thompson instead relied on the *Times*' Indian correspondent, Sir Valentine Chirol, for an assessment of the work. Chirol had written that Savarkar's study was "in its way a very remarkable history of the Mutiny, combining considerable research, with the grossest perversions of facts, and great literary power with the most savage hatred" [EJT 1925: 122; Chirol: 149]. Needless to say, Chirol's assessment ought itself to be considered a gross perversion of fact. Savarkar's study, which employed most of the same sources used by Thompson, differed from *The Other Side of the Medal* because of its author's nationalist political position – a position that Thompson found either laughable or anathema at this time.

But the story does not end there. Thompson returned to his high horse to describe Savarkar further:

Readers may remember his attempt to escape when being taken out of India for trial; he jumped from the ship and swam ashore at Marseilles, being handed back, after hesitation and discussion, as a man accused of a felony and not a political offence. Without palliating his crime, Englishmen may regret that our Empire can do nothing with a youth who combined such pluck with "great literary power" but send him to penal servitude for life. He entered caves of forbidden history, holding high the torch of his blazing hatred; and he described all the deeds which we hoped would never be seen. He read our cold, insolently self-righteous accounts of that most wretched and brutal war; and a madness worked in his brain, which ended in a murder which – with some people, at any rate – shadows Indians studying in our midst today (1925:122-23).

Here we see the alternative imperial mission that Edward Thompson wished for, accompanied by an exceedingly uncritical assessment of the British Empire's treatment of Savarkar. Thompson ended this passage with the rather bland statement: "Savarkar's *History of the Mutiny* is proscribed. It is best that it should be." And, rather self-servingly, he then suggested that even though it was necessary to have "a veil drawn over certain aspects of that war [by which he meant any claims to a nationalist politics], we must give the Indian case recognition in our own histories..." (123). We can now see from our post-colonial, if not quite post-imperial, vantage point that if 'fair' and 'objective' histories can only survive when compared to histories that have been created after 'a madness' has affected the author's brain, when the latter is proscribed, then the

objectivity of the former has to be called into question. We perhaps find it yet more objectionable that the 'fair' historian should then be in a position to certify himself as the person most qualified to speak for the person whose frames of reference have been colored by suffering the indignities of what, even the 'objective' historian admits, amount to no more than racial denigration.

Perhaps if this were all that there was to the Savarkar story then Edward Thompson might be let off with a mild caution. But Thompson's account, not only of the work itself but of Savarkar is grossly inaccurate. No doubt this was due to the fact that sources were not available to him, or he did not choose to dig very far beneath the surface of a rather despicable episode in government censorship and suspension of the 'rule of law'. First of all, the charge against Savarkar, that he was complicit in the murder of Sir William Curzon Wylie (John Morley's political secretary) while not entirely trumped up, was certainly complicated by political considerations. Whether or not Savarkar was implicated in the murder of Wylie, he was a political prisoner, made so because of his authorship of *War of Indian Independence*. Moreover, the crime itself was one that without the publication of this nationalist history probably would not have taken place.¹⁰

Originally, this book had been written in Marathi in 1908, when Savarkar was about 24 years of age. A few select chapters were reproduced in English in speeches that the author gave at the weekly meetings of the Free India Society in London, where he was studying for a law degree, sponsored by Shyamji Krishnavarma [Hunt: 89, 124-27]. Soon the volume drew the attention of the British intelligence department which declared the text "revolutionary, explosive and treasonous" and which proceeded to steal chapters from the original manuscript to examine. The manuscript was sent by the author and his friends to Maharashtra but no printing house dared to publish it there, until the owner of a printing firm who was a member of the Abhi Nava Bharat Secret Society (ANB) decided to publish it. The knowledge that the manuscript was being published brought on a raid of numerous printing houses by the Indian police, but the text remained hidden and was then sent back to Savarkar who was by this time in Paris. Wylie, himself, was ordered by Morley to keep the India House under his watch, and the pressure that this placed on Savarkar and his associates, especially in the form of informants infiltrating the organisation, quite possibly led to the decision to have him assassinated.

After the failure to get the Marathi text printed in Germany, it was decided that an English translation should be published

instead. A number of 'Maratha youths' in London, members of the ANB and candidates for the ICS examination, volunteered to translate the work. After its completion, the text was sent to Paris since all publishers in Britain either objected to the work or feared prosecution. There similar difficulties were faced as the recent signing of the Entente Cordial led French police to collaborate with the British in attempting to suppress the work. Instead, the ANB persuaded a Dutch printing firm to publish it, while indicating to the police that the work was being undertaken in France. Losing touch with the manuscript and unable to suppress it, the British and Indian Governments took the unprecedented step of proscribing the book, although they knew it had not yet been printed. Even the *London Times* believed that these actions proved that there must be "something very rotten in the State of Denmark" [Joshi: xii].

Following publication, the ANB smuggled hundreds of copies of the work into India wrapped in covers entitled *Don Quixote*, *Scott's Works*, or *Pickwick Papers*. In 1910, therefore, the British and Indian governments "launched a violent campaign of persecutions and prosecutions with a view to crushing the ANB Secret Society." Several revolutionaries were hanged; several transported for life; hundreds sentenced to terms extending from 10 to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment" [Joshi: xiv]. Savarkar was arrested in London on the grounds that he was, owing to his membership in the ANB, complicit in the murder of Wyllie and because he had shipped 20 guns back to India.¹¹ The British government was willing to play fast and loose with the question of whether Savarkar was a political prisoner or a common criminal. When he climbed through a port hole of the ship that was taking him back to India and swam ashore at Marseilles, the British claimed that he was a criminal being returned to India to face trial for murder.¹² He quickly became a *cause celebre*, many Europeans recognising the illegitimacy of the charges. Even Sir Henry Cotton, according to Savarkar, "hoped that the International Court of Justice at Hague would restore me to France and thus save itself from being the instrument of trampling under foot every man's bare right to hold his own opinions without any molestation from the State" [Savarkar 1950: 11-12].

When, however, it came time for his trial he was charged with "waging war against the King" and he was sentenced "to transportation for life and forfeiture of his property". To show overwhelming proof of his guilt, the special tribunal which sentenced him did so by quoting a statement Savarkar had made in London in 1908: "The war begun on the 10th May 1857 is not over on the 10th of May 1908, nor can it ever cease

till a 10th of May to come sees the destiny accomplished and our Motherland stands free!" (Joshi: xx). His guilt was fabricated on political grounds; "the rule of law" which both Thompsons cherished as one of Britain's great contributions to India was suspended, and it would be Savarkar who would be accused by English historians of gross fabrications.¹³ By 1924, however, before Thompson had begun his own manuscript on "the Mutiny", Savarkar was released from prison. Clearly the British government felt their treatment of the author was unwarranted, but his work remained proscribed till after independence. That Thompson remained silent about Savarkar's case, except to bemoan the empire's failure to employ a man with such 'pluck' more fittingly, and that he should have been wrong about key facts in the case speaks volumes about his inability or unwillingness to use the historical record to contest imperial assumptions.

Moreover, there are important and fundamental differences between the two authors' texts. Thompson's text is in effect the description of and protest against a lynching, or a mass lynching. Savarkar's text is more akin to an account of an unsuccessful slave rebellion. As such, Thompson's account (while making overtures to the Indians) was focused on the misguided actions of the British. Savarkar's history sees the Indians as actors, having strong and well-articulated reasons for rebellion, and carrying through these ideas almost regardless of the nobility or ignominy of individual English men and women.

The Other Side of the Medal is premised on the notion that 'the Mutiny' represented a loss of innocence. The British Empire had worked well and had brought significant benefits to the Indian sub-continent, but the events of 1857 had derailed this. Thompson asked the English to atone for sins committed in the aftermath of the mutiny; but the reason to do so was to consolidate imperial relations through greater harmony between British and Indian peoples. Savarkar cared little for such atonement and certainly found no loss of innocence. While he did not shy away from describing the horrors of the 'war', he saw these largely as either the result of war or an extension of imperial rule - this is what happens when exploiters are threatened. Such horrors could not be atoned for, they could only be terminated through independence.

Thompson believed the Mutiny reflected widespread discontent. Historians ought not to dismiss it as merely a mutiny that had been poorly managed by authorities, even if this was how it began. But, that it was poorly managed, and that the reprisals got out of hand was, for Thompson, beyond question. If it had been handled differently, if the rulers had been more sensitive to and

knowledgeable about Indian customs, then the initial outbreak perhaps, but certainly the aftermath of resentment could have been avoided. What the British did, in fact, was to ignore the rule of law. Too many people, the innocent alongside the guilty, were executed; and the manner in which they were executed was barbaric. In such conclusions, however, Thompson discounted the idea that the uprising might be politically motivated, at least through a politics of nationalism. He was also inclined to the view that many of the claims about the Indians, particularly at Kanpur were actually true. This is what brought his account into close proximity with that of an American lynching.¹⁴ Rather than seeing that certain actions were either invented by their opponents in order to justify vicious repression, or perhaps regrettable actions undertaken in the middle of a conflict, Thompson instead saw such actions as both true and without political merit.¹⁵ They were the cause of a new infection afflicting the British in India so severely. Savarkar would have found little difficulty labelling Thompson's text as historically biased against Indians and he would have questioned the other historian's claims that the British record was commendable apart from this one outbreak.

And what of Savarkar's claim that the conflict was a nationalist war for independence? Thompson scoffed at it. Even later, when Thompson had to face the fact that Indians were capable of writing history, he was still unwilling to consider the idea that the Mutiny was a war of independence. In *The Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, he and G T Garratt argued that during the summer months of 1857 it did seem "that the Mutiny might develop into a real war of independence, which would make reconquest impossible". But, he continued, "By September it was clear that the Indians who were in revolt were incapable of working to any settled plan, or of subordinating themselves to a national leader. Their prestige was waning, and their commanders had proved themselves incompetent except in guerilla warfare" (438-39). Their failure, in effect, defined them; as, we might suppose, the success of revolutionists in America three-quarters of a century earlier had defined them. But the authors then returned to the text that would not die:

Paradoxically it is an article of faith amongst Indian nationalists to describe the Mutiny as a war of independence. This may be due to the proscription of Savarkar's *War of Indian Independence of 1857*, a book which states the Indian case with force, but with little critical acumen. It is a poor compliment to Indian courage and ability to treat this revolt as an organised national movement. It was repressed by a minute force. Its leaders, when in a position to prove their competence

as rulers, were a failure. Historical accuracy, as well as respect for Indian ability, makes it requisite to stress the small part taken in the revolt by the better elements in the country (438, fn 2).

Such a statement, so pregnant with historical bias and ethnocentricity, illustrates that even when Thompson was seen to be moving towards a pro-nationalist position he was still working within the same old imperial framework: Who are "the better elements"? What constitutes "a minute force", when that force is organised for military conquest and is capable of using all the mechanisms of terror at its disposal? What, in a situation of warfare, can we consider competent rule – the claim used against all revolutionaries from Toussaint L'Ouverture to Maurice Bishop? And, returning to Savarkar, how does he manage to state "the Indian case with force, but with little critical acumen"? But to be fair to Thompson, Savarkar too was concerned with some of these issues, though perhaps he need not have been. He wished to highlight Indians' "courage and ability," as well as highlight their competence as rulers. He also believed that "the better elements" were fighting the British, and employed any number of epithets to describe those Indians who remained loyal to "the Feringhi".

More importantly, though, and here we have to question whether Thompson's assessment was founded on an actual reading of the Indian's text, Savarkar explained the failure of the war on the grounds that the plans which had been laid for rebellion by Azimullah Khan and Nana Saheb, set for the last day of May, were upset by the mutiny in Meerut occurring on May 8. The result, according to Savarkar, was considerable confusion on the part of the revolutionaries about whether to act immediately, and a chance for the British to regroup and prepare themselves for the possibility of widespread rebellion. Using English historians as his source, Savarkar argued that the ground work for that rebellion was securely laid, and that, given the smallness of British forces, had the rebellion occurred as planned, the Feringhi would have been routed quickly [Savarkar 1947: 115-17].¹⁶ Thompson failed to engage this argument, even though the claim that 'the Mutiny' was part of a larger movement was one that many English historians had proposed as an explanation for British officials' need to perform their duty and commit widespread reprisals. Where 'the truth' lies is beyond our scope; it is merely important to note that Savarkar's nationalist position was actually founded in part on the "critical acumen" of English historians and that eliding this genealogy involved a sleight of hand on Thompson's part that protected his own claims to reasonableness and objectivity.¹⁷

III Rallying Metcalfe

I remember the small society, in which hearts communed with each other and happiness never flagged; but what is past is past, and the like will never come again.

– Metcalfe, June 16, 1828

Taken together, *Sir Walter Raleigh: Last of the Elizabethans* and *The Life of Charles, Lord Metcalfe* describe the highs and lows of empire, and reveal Thompson's commitment to the imperial project: Raleigh, inasmuch as he represented the Elizabethans, was the low; Metcalfe was the high [EJT 1936; 1937]. Together, also, the subjects of these works were to be guides for the student of British imperialism wishing to comprehend the possibilities and achievements of the British around the world, alongside the recently decried lapses of imperial vision.

With *Raleigh*, Thompson slapped contemporary administrators on the wrist for being like the Elizabethans: "*The pax Victoriana* has vanished," Thompson wrote. "My own generation, from the insecurity and changes and variety of our experience, seems to me closer in sympathy to the Elizabethans than any intervening generation has been..." [EJT 1936: vi]. Raleigh was the last of the Elizabethans because he paved the way for something new:

[Raleigh] "could carry on half a dozen enterprises abreast": was historian, poet, philosopher, writer on naval affairs, courtier, statesman, soldier, admiral, privateer, shipbuilder, patriot, chemist, coloniser, empire-planner, Member of Parliament, administrator, patron of authors and scientists and unpopular thinkers, intriguer, martyr. He was mired in Ireland during his youth, but extricated himself from the barbarism of English treatment of the Irish, to pursue grander schemes. And it is with Ireland that we see Thompson's brief most clearly stated: for Elizabethan Ireland was akin to post-Mutiny India. Echoes of India are found in his assessment of England's 'case' in Ireland:

England's case...is completed if we add that there was more justification than Nationalist idealisation now admits, for the belief that the Irish were savages. Their ancient civilisation did not prevent incessant civil war; and England, treating them as wild beasts, kept them in the wild beast way of living (14).

But the English went too far. Quoting Froude and McFee, Thompson notes that Irish "extinction was contemplated with as much indifference as the destruction of the Red Indians of North America by the politicians of Washington" and "Ireland was territory to be cleared of its savage inhabitants and settled by civilised people" (15). The problem, according to Thompson, was that "Ethics came late to the men of Raleigh's generation, and their coming was not hastened

by this using of Ireland as a finishing school to the French religious wars and the semi-piracy of privateering" (16).

With Raleigh, at least, there was the dawning of the new ethics. Thompson summarised Raleigh's work in Ireland, thus:

It is horrible to remember Raleigh in Ireland; it is horrible to remember any Elizabethan in Ireland. And of course, by that high and noble tradition of truthfulness which distinguishes the Anglo-Saxon race (not in our own idealisation of ourselves only, but in the general judgment of the outside world), he falls short. But this tradition has been "British" for a very brief period [about as long as cricket perhaps!]. It was not Elizabethan; still less, infinitely less, was it Jacobean. Yet even by this test Raleigh falls less than most of his contemporaries, though he was exposed to the temptations which beset the poet and the man whose mind stirs fiercely and always. When the worst has been said against him, he belongs to a different world from that of the Cecils and Bacons; and mankind will less and less be in any peril of confounding him with them (393).

"To remember Walter Raleigh," Thompson concluded, "is to remember valour, imagination, magnanimity," a conclusion that an Irish nationalist, continuing to confuse Raleigh with Cecil and Bacon, might find a little hard to stomach.

But whether or not 'ethics' were to be found in Ireland, they were certainly evident in India. For, in India, there was a generation of scholar-statesmen – the intellectual descendents of Raleigh [EJT 1937: vii] – who were not merely the exceptions but who ran the show. Their greatness lay in their vision, their desire for knowledge, and their pursuit of 'essential truth':

Indeed, there was among them such widespread and critical reading of Persian poetry that it is strange that the taste did not communicate itself to people in England, long before FitzGerald's translation of Omar Khayyam. Men like Malcolm, Jenkins, Elphinstone, Metcalfe, and in the next generation Alexander Burnes, studied Hafiz and Saadi, commenting on them in a manner which showed they had got into their very idiom and emotion, far closer than to those of Horace and Virgil at their schools (24).¹⁸

While Metcalfe's life seemed to embody all the greatness of the generation, a conclusion that Thompson shared with Macaulay (who wrote Metcalfe's epitaph), it is the biographer's description of Archibald Seton which most clearly laid out the type:

[Seton] won respect in an exceptional degree. He had shrewdness and insight; and a spirit of such generosity, patience, tolerance had hardly yet been seen in India, though it was the age of Barry Close, Munro, Malcolm, Metcalfe. Never has England been served by another such group of men operating on this high ethical and intellectual level – Plato's philosopher turned governor (for almost the first, and perhaps the last, time

in imperial history) with success. Seton was in many ways in advance of them all (66-67).

The appeal of such individuals was accentuated by the 'realities' of the India with which they had to contend. For here were 'Orientals', "a jealous untrusting race," some of whom were "troubled in their dark barbaric minds" (76). And Ranjit Singh, with whom Metcalfe had many dealings, was found to make exhalations "from the suspicious murk that served him for a mind" (85). It was also made apparent by the nobility of the British cause, when the "Government desired no territory, having no ambition except the good of all men and of its own subjects in particular", (92) and when men like Malcolm, Munro and Metcalfe were administering justly with their minds "open to the thought of the people they were serving and ruling" (133). Absent from consideration, however, was the involvement of such officials in the East India Company's burgeoning opium trade with China.¹⁹

But in sustaining a commitment to the British Empire rightly conceived, Edward Thompson also retained an understanding of imperial connections, something that his son jettisoned from his historical writing. For the father, English history was very much wrapped in an imperial package: Raleigh was fashioned in Ireland and served his queen from Trinidad to Newfoundland; Metcalfe served, as Macaulay was proud to note, in India, Jamaica (at a crucial time after emancipation), and Canada. The Napoleonic Wars, one of the prime movers in *The Making of the English Working Class*, were, as the father would have recognised, to a large extent decided outside Europe. While the French suffered crucial defeats against the British and her allies at the Battle of the Nile and at Assaye, securing the empire in India and making possible the transfer of Arthur Wellesley to the Iberian Peninsula, Napoleon's imperial pretensions suffered an even more stunning blow at the hands of former slaves in Saint Domingue. The father was aware of such things, while the son, in spite of the significance of Saint Domingue for the establishment of a 'liberty tree', ignored them. Indeed, the father shows that at a time when many Britons were deeply ambivalent towards the English cause in the Napoleonic War, it was some relief to the Pitt administration that it could rely on the East India Company. In Calcutta, Edward Thompson wrote:

under the domination of 'the glorious little man', as the imperious excited Governor-General was called, patriotic resolution blazed more fiercely than even in London. London had wide stretches of apathy, and scattered pockets of 'democrats' professed to find in the doctrines of revolutionary France those which their own land needed. But in India, where no one might land without

the Company's leave, there was only one school of thought (22).

And yet, even for the father Empire tended to move outwards from the centre to the periphery. While Edward Thompson praised Metcalfe and his ilk with a lavishness seldom seen outside the panegyric, it may well be that their contributions to humane government, such as they were, came not from their schooling on the playing fields of Eton, but rather from their experience at the Peshwa's court in Pune (to borrow from the Duke of Wellington). Indeed, one of Metcalfe's greatest accomplishments, even Thompson notes as being almost un-English. During his "reign" as "King of Dilhee" Metcalfe carried out not a single sentence of capital punishment. Yet, it appears that Metcalfe may have learned this quality of mercy from the "suspicious murk" of Ranjit Singh. And, Thompson further acknowledged, other English administrators could even learn from their Indian counterparts, "the Marathas especially, [who] were on the whole...far humaner than that of Great Britain at this time" (123).²⁰ In almost all things, Thompson believed, England was bringing light to India – not vice versa. The possibility that the rule of law, or even nationalism itself, might have been heavily influenced by Indian traditions remained out of the question, unless of course they could be explained away as part of India's spiritual sphere [Bhandarkar: 390].

IV Indian Princes Meet English Working Class

As the age of decolonisation is upon us, and given Bombay's infinitely greater staying power – as I write Yorkshire are at the bottom of the county championship, which they haven't won since 1968 – would it not be more just to call Yorkshire 'England's Bombay'?

– Ramachandra Guha (1992: 50)

As its title might suggest, *The Making of the Indian Princes* incorporated certain themes that could later be carried over, implicitly or explicitly, into the son's work. The five that we will focus on here are, the idea of a crucial period of transformation in history, the notion of the 'making' of a social group during that period, the need for a new 'bottom-up' perspective, the gendering of social conflict and social history, and the recognition of the 'peculiar' English experience.²¹

Both father and son shared the view that there was a transformative period falling roughly within the years 1789 and 1832 (though *Indian Princes* ended in 1819 with the establishment of the East India Company's (EIC) paramountcy on the sub-continent). *The English Working Class* ends with the political reforms of the 1830s. For

the father, this was also a period of "wonderfully attractive men, vivid and eager and in the main tolerant and far-seeing" [EJT 1943: viii]. Unfortunately, though, all the far-seeing men were in India while the Benthamites and other reactionaries, whom the son decried, remained at home to plague those other attractive men, Cobbett, the Luddites, and the members of London's corresponding societies. And for the son, this was the period of the great antinomian William Blake, the subject of one of his final works (*Witness Against the Beast*) and clearly a model for E P Thompson to emulate.

The extent of the transformation occurring during this period has remained open to question. In the case of India, the idealisation of Metcalfe, Malcolm et al was all that differentiated this history from others, and even Edward John would recognise the 'personal' aspect to his intervention on Anglo-Indian history: he liked these people and what they read and wrote [EJT 1943: vii-viii]. For *The English Working Class*, Eric Hobsbawm (1984) and others have questioned the periodisation of the work and have suggested that the 'making' may have occurred at a later time. In fact, though, if the imperial dimensions of class formation are taken into consideration, the period, with its assault on the slave trade and slavery, slave rebellions, the opening up of industrial production in India to pay for British goods, the establishment of the opium trade, the assault on the Irish, and the influx of Irish labourers into the English labour market, may indeed be decidedly important – though for altogether different reasons. But in order to describe such a transformation, India (which receives no mention in the later *Making*) and the Irish (who receive 15 pages) have to be more than just a side show to the story of class formation.

The second theme found in the works of both father and son was the 'making' of a social group. Here, though, the two differed also: in the case of the father Indians participated in the narrative but the actual 'making' was very much that of the English colonial authorities; in E P Thompson's case, the lower orders had 'agency' and contributed to their own future. Edward John's model, clearly remained more instrumentalist and imperial, his son provided a more self-generative view of social change. But one of the ways Edward Palmer was able to attribute this level of agency to his subjects was by narrowing the focus so that imperial assumptions remained unquestioned. Once again, the Irish were important to this narrowing of focus. Cultural considerations were crucial for Thompson to class formation (this after all was one of his contributions to Marxist historiography), so determining what it was about the English that allowed for the development of working-class

consciousness was extremely important. All the more so because, as he rightly noted, a great many Irish had recently entered England and had begun to fill up the lowest rungs of the labour market. How would such people be incorporated into the English working class? The answer was that they wouldn't be; they didn't have the experience of Methodism and Protestantism generally, they were still 'pre-industrial' in their outlooks and as yet unfamiliar with the harsh rigours of 'time-work discipline', which made them ideally suited for exploitation as cheap labour by mill owners and other capitalists.²²

In proposing this argument, E P Thompson relied on imperial government and capitalist archives that had been established regarding potential labor sources, wherein all racial or ethnic groups were categorised according to the type of labour they were likely to provide. In this fluctuating and often contradictory hierarchy, the Chinese and the Indians were usually considered most desirable, Africans were considered desirable only if they were in the condition of slavery, while the Irish were believed to be good workers for certain kinds of unskilled jobs. The secret to all such assessments, however, was that capitalists wanted any labour that they could get more cheaply than the labourers they already had [Kale 1995, 1997]. These latter had been desirable once, now they were no longer so. E P Thompson, therefore, fell back on many of the stereotypes employed by capitalists to describe their labourers and failed to interrogate his sources. For example, "The Report on the State of the Irish in Great Britain", was considered by Thompson "one of the most impressive essays in sociology among the Blue Books of the Thirties." It had concluded: "The Irish emigration into Britain is an example of a less civilised population spreading themselves, as a kind of substratum, beneath a more civilised community; and, without excelling in any branch of industry, obtaining possession of all the lowest departments of manual labour" [EPT 1966: 435]. By falling back on descriptions of the Irish that would have been consistent with those found in his father's chapters on Ireland in *Ralegh*, and consistent also with the elder Thompson's descriptions of the level of civilisation of Indians (perhaps "the Irish of the East"), cultural differences were made to account for labour market differences and were made to seem almost irrelevant to the creation of 'English' working-class culture (429).

As such, when E P Thompson described working-class agency he did so mainly in opposition to capitalism – and it seemed so pure. Once we take the Irish into consideration, however, class formation begins to look a lot more like the establishment of an aristocracy of labour; like the establishment of craft unions in the

US excluding blacks and immigrants at the end of the 19th century, or even like white workers attempting to establish colour bars in South Africa at the beginning of the 20th. Clearly, the ability of a social group to contribute to their own formation was greater when there was another social group that could be set apart from them. Here E P Thompson's response to Linda Colley's *Britons* (1992) is instructive. Thompson was troubled by Colley's apparently conflict-free description of the English working class. While he had described workers engaged in a bitter class struggle, she portrays them busily constructing the notion of the Briton. Thompson wrote:

This is not to reject Colley's theses but to seek to qualify them. If they are 100 per cent correct then my old study, *The Making of the English Working Class*, must be wrong. For I argued there, and elsewhere, that a significant part of the British experience in these years was the formation of the structures, oppositions and contradictory cultures of 'class'. 'Class' was perhaps overworked in the 1960s and 1970s and it has become merely boring. It is a concept long past its sell-by date. Colley appears to share the prevalent view and evades any full discussion of the alienation, in the 18th century, between patricians and plebs, and in the early 19th century between aristocracy, the middle class and the emergent working class. But I am not ready to capitulate. I cannot find one univocal nation of 'Britons' [EPT 1993b: 326].

But Thompson did not wish to fight over this issue. "Perhaps we could compromise," he wrote, "by saying that the truth lies somewhere between my view and Colley's? I am certainly not proposing that there was an almost-revolution in Britain in the 1790s" (329). And yet without the empire brought into the picture there is no real possibility for compromise, one is likely to find either conflict or conformity (false consciousness). With the empire, and especially the Irish and Scots added to the soup as immediate examples of foreign, 'less-civilised' labour, there is room for compromise. The language and resolution of the most vitriolic class conflict revolves around the need for the assurance that the 'free-born Englishman' will not be placed in the position of virtual servitude like members of other "less-civilised races."²³

The third theme making its way from India to Yorkshire, was that of the need for historians to turn historical scholarship on its head, to write history from the perspective of those who have been left out of the historical record. Implied within this was a political orientation and engagement for history. In the father's case this was a belated endorsement of Indian nationalism, in the case of the son it was an interest and commitment to politics defined by

an understanding of working-class consciousness.

If we take support for Indian Independence as the barometer of friendliness, then Edward Thompson became more of "a friend to India" as his career developed. He moved in his earlier writings from a more reserved position with regard to India and the justifications for British presence on the subcontinent to one of outright advocacy of independence. By the time he began his final text, *The Making of the Indian Princes* of 1946, he could trumpet the fact that "India's right to independence has been acknowledged" [EJT 1947:vii].²⁴ In the process of moving towards this political position, Edward Thompson became acutely aware of his own position as an English man writing the history of India. The preface to this work notes a debt to the Congress leader, for "Jawaharlal Nehru drew my attention to matters which an Englishman, left to himself, would be bound to overlook" (vii). Moreover, his bibliographical note commented on the "really excellent Histories written before 1865" (before the Mutiny had taken its hold on historians):

Such writers as Marshman, Thornton, Beveridge (whose *History*, 1872, is rather later), Montgomery Martin, have never had adequate recognition of their merits. They had this advantage, that they had only a public of their own people to consider, and did not have to keep glancing over their shoulder, to see if frankness and truthfulness would be overheard and have an adverse political effect. Another flaw in British-Indian historical writing is the way in which our want of interest in anything Indian has allowed such interests as we have felt occasionally to concentrate on one or two episodes, notably the Mutiny, to the almost complete neglect of other events" (288).

Clearly, an 'Englishman's' perspective on India was not all that it had been in the days of Mill and Macaulay. Certainly, this reflected the loss of confidence in the imperial civilising mission witnessed and celebrated in the rise of anti-colonial movements after the first world war. Thompson noted that "Native India and its leaders have made only incidental appearances, their motives rarely understood or even regarded, their personalities left shadowy." Not surprisingly, therefore, "Our writing of India's history is perhaps resented more than anything else we have done" (vi).

Thompson proposed implicitly, then, a new kind of approach to Indian history for an English man. A kind of 'bottom-up' perspective, or at least that from 'the middle-up', which would give significance to the actions of the Indian princes, even if 'agency' would remain elusive (he used neither this term nor an equivalent).²⁵ In the process, it was now necessary for an outsider to turn

to 'native informants' for facts and interpretations: Nehru was one, Rai Saheb Sardesai, who "left his remote home in the western ghats, to help me as no other student of Maratha history could," was clearly another. The change in Seal's frosty relations with Edward Thompson may also have been a result of this change in the latter's approach to Indian history. A transformation, however minimal, had occurred in the father's work between the study on Metcalfe and this study of the Indian princes. From absence altogether, they could now be likened to the challenging topography and the monsoon, to the Indian landscapes Britons so often retreated to describing or substituting for characters (a characteristic of Thompson's novels, no less than E M Forster's).

For the son, modelling himself on his father in this instance was certainly a worthy enterprise. By taking this position the father had aligned himself politically with nationalists like Nehru; he had revised his dismissive assessment of Indian historians and would no longer suggest that they were incapable of writing history. Now it was important that he, as an Englishman, understood his limitations as a historian because of his inability to appreciate an Indian perspective. When it came to the *Making of the English Working Class*, E P Thompson, building upon the 'deviance' inspired by his father and Nehru, found that he could do something similar for the working class. His 'history from below', however, would attempt more self-consciously than his father's to "recover the experience" of those "hidden from history" [O'Hanlon: 193-94]. E P Thompson sought "to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the 'obsolete' hand-loom weaver, the 'utopian' artisan, and even the deluded follower of Joanna Southcott, from the enormous condescension of posterity." He would show that "their aspirations were valid in terms of their own experience," [EPT 1966:12-13] and that he as a product of a different class and of a time after industrialisation, needed to be ever vigilant about his own inability to understand these people whose perspectives he was 'rescuing'.

In the process, however, both Thompsons retained assumptions about where that 'bottom' lay that would shape their analyses of those who needed to be 'rescued'. Edward had made Indian princes players in the development of the British empire in India, but rather as a Kumar Shri Ranjitsinhji, Maharajah Jam Saheb of Newanagar, would be incorporated into a history of 19th century cricket. They were there producing runs and doing some good fielding, but still the rules were being established by the MCC of the early 19th century subcontinent - Metcalfe, Cornwallis and Company. Other Indians would have to wait before their perspectives

would be added to the historical record. For E P Thompson, the rescue would include the aforementioned groups, though in the case of the "deluded follower of Joanna Southcott", Joan Scott (1988) has shown that the rescue attempt was abortive.²⁶ The very fact that Thompson described this follower as "deluded" showed that there was some distance between his own perspective and the follower's aspirations that were "valid in terms of their own experience". Women received short shrift, as many have noted, but then so did non-artisanal labourers and any non-English workers.

In a suggestively titled chapter, 'Artisans and Others', E P Thompson borrowed Henry Mayhew's distinction between artisan and labourer. In doing so, he gave agency and the historian's respect to the 'artisan' while denying it to the 'other'. Thompson quotes from Mayhew: "In passing from the skilled operative of the west-end to the unskilled workman of the eastern quarter of London, the moral and intellectual change is so great, that it seems as if we were in a new land, and among another race" [EPT 1966:240-41]. Often it would be the case that the observer had not entered a new land, but had indeed come into contact with people who were not born in England [Walkowitz 1992; Burton 1994a]. Thompson then added,

In the South, it was among the artisans that the membership of friendly societies was largest and trade union organisation was most continuous and stable, that educational and religious movements flourished, and that Owenism struck deepest root... We shall see how their self-esteem and their desire for independence, coloured the political radicalism of the post-war years. And, if stripped of his craft and of his union defences, the artisan was one of the most pitiful figures in Mayhew's London [EPT 1966:241].

Perhaps he then resembled someone of another race, perhaps even one in the condition of slavery! The point is that Thompson retained assumptions about worthy, artisanal working-class culture which needed to be valorised, and about 'deluded' culture thrown up by 'pitiful labourers' which the historian might continue to neglect. This search for a working-class culture that could be valued would be taken up by the new Social Historians.²⁷

The Scots were also neglected in *The Making*. Thompson apologises to his Scottish (and Welsh) readers quite reasonably:

I have neglected these histories, not out of chauvinism, but out of respect. It is because class is a cultural as much as an economic formation that I have been cautious as to generalising beyond English experience. (I have considered the Irish, not in Ireland, but as immigrants in England.) The Scottish record, in particular, is quite as dramatic, and as tormented as our own. The Scottish story is significantly different. Calvinism was not the same thing as Methodism,

although it is difficult to say which, in the early 19th century, was worse. We had no peasantry in England comparable to the Highland migrants. And the popular culture was very different. It is possible, at least until the 1820s, to regard the English and Scottish experiences as distinct, since trade union and political links were impermanent and immature (13).

This desire to give the Scots due respect is belied by the extent of the omission, since many Scots were residing in England and their experiences were not so distinct from those of the English, not least because they were subjected to considerable taunting and invective. As Linda Colley has shown, a strain of Scottophobia motivated many defenders of the English 'Tree of Liberty'. She writes, "Scots, so the Wilkite argument went, were inherently, unchangeably alien, never to be confused or integrated with the English" (113-14). This is something that Thompson passes over, in spite of the fact that he does mention Cobbett's view of "Scotch feelosofers." (776) (and, knowing Thompson's declarations regarding the "poverty of theory", this is a considerable slight indeed).

The omission of people of African descent from *English Working Class* is equally telling. Thompson did mention blacks - a couple of times. He quoted from Cobbett's 1819 defence of some women who were being vilified for their unladylike support of the real strikers (men):

Just as if women were made for nothing more but to cook oat-meal and to sweep a room! Just as if women had no minds! Just as if Hannah Moore and the Tract Gentry had reduced the women of England to a level with the Negresses of Africa! Just as if England had never had a queen...! (417).

What we see here is the extent to which race and gender were held beneath the surface of both class consciousness and Thompson's class analysis. They are the two silences of class consciousness; there is no relational aspect to Thompson's definition of working class, except as it relates to the new bourgeoisie.

Other relations, the fact that there might be something of value beyond a working class, either woman or slave, either inside or outside England, seems to be absent from his thought. And yet, clearly these were on people's minds, as Thompson's other mention of blacks in *The Making of the English Working Class* unwittingly reveals. Paul Gilroy begins *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* with an epigraph taken from Thompson's text:

I dreamed I was in Yorkshire, going from Gomersal-Hill-Top to Cleckheaton; and about the middle of the lane, I thought I saw Satan coming to meet me in the shape of a tall, black man, and the hair of his head like snakes:...But I went on, ript open my clothes, and shewed him my naked breast,

saying, "See here is the blood of Christ." Then I thought he fled from me as fast as a hare could run [Gilroy 1987:39].

Gilroy's point, one that he has returned to in his subsequent study *The Black Atlantic* (1994), is that historians, with a few exceptions, have passed over in silence the ways in which Africans and slavery have influenced British history (Robinson). They have made empire invisible. Certainly Thompson, who helped to shape much of the social history of the 1960s and beyond, was guilty of this. The passage that follows this quote from John Nelson's *Journal* further illustrates this. Not only does Thompson make no comment about the fact that Satan should take on "the shape of a tall, black man" (as in Winthrop Jordan's work), but he suggests that Nelson's "fantasy has undertones of hysteria and of impaired or frustrated sexuality" (40). For Thompson, these were merely linked to Methodist revivalism, and he ignored both the fact that "frustrated sexuality" often accompanied racial stereotyping (or discussion of people considered lower on the social scale) and that the context of slavery and emancipation was likely to be intimately related to the emergence of an 'English' working class.

Once we incorporate empire into the development of class in the 19th century it is difficult to imagine how the idea of a working class could fail to be expressed at some level in relation to the existence of slavery and notions of unfree labour (just as it clearly was in the US at this time) (Roediger). The very mention of 'Negresses' in *The Making of the English Working Class* should lead to a discussion of how working classes in England situated themselves in relation to capital given the existence of slaves in the labour market (albeit at a distance); how they defined a 'moral economy' as an economy beyond the exploitative forms of 'wage slavery'; and how gender and the roles of 'their' women would be crucial in defining their imperial location in society (especially given shifts in gender relations as part of the onslaught of capitalism, that Thompson mentions, and the prevailing assumptions about the emasculating nature of slavery).

There is clearly a problem delineating a working class when certain groups are not taken into consideration. This is a problem within the confines of one country, but it is compounded when the attributes of that class are searched for in other countries and places. For, as Dipesh Chakrabarty has shown (1989), Thompson's formulation can then be wielded to the detriment of analyses of working classes elsewhere. Chakrabarty reveals that Thompson's use of culture leads to an accentuation of the Englishness of working-class formation. "The making of

the working class," Thompson had written, "is a fact of political and cultural, as much as of economic history" (221). But Chakrabarty rightly notes that this emphasis on culture is bound to have important implications for the history of working class formations outside of Britain. He writes:

Not being a historian of the English working class, I have no quarrel to pick with Thompson's "facts". But consider the wider problem that arises from the way he poses the question of culture. If the particular notions of "free-born Englishman"; of "equality before the law", and so on were the most crucial heritages of the English working class in respect of its capacity for developing class consciousness, what about the working classes—for instance, the Indian one—whose heritages do not include such baggage? Are the latter condemned then forever to a state of "low classness" unless they develop some kind of cultural resemblance to the English? (222).

Were Chakrabarty a historian of Britain, he might question such "facts", since they are based on assumptions of "Englishness" that are open to question. Was the category of "free-born Englishman" meaningful outside of a context of the empire in which slave labour was the assumed norm for Africans, and once this was ended categories of indentured labour were established for Indians and Chinese? Was the "equality before the law", which Thompson extolled in *Whigs and Hunters* necessarily either an English contribution or an English reality? But even if these stand as "peculiarities of the English" then, as Chakrabarty shows, culture still presents problems for the labour historian. For, how does this apply to the colonial context? [Prakash: 1484].

Chakrabarty proceeds to show how Thompson's category of class is suspect precisely because he has neglected the empire, and if the category of class does not work with the empire in mind, it quite possibly does not work at all. Chakrabarty suggests that the question whether Indians are condemned to "'low classness' unless they develop some kind of cultural resemblance to the English...reveals the absurdities of our dilemma". For if the answer is affirmative, then "class consciousness" begins to seem like no more than one of England's "peculiarities" (and certainly not very Marxist). "On the other hand," Chakrabarty continues:

if our liberalism moved us to reject the question and to argue that there was no one cultural route to class consciousness, two conclusions would follow, both devastating for the argument at hand: (a) we would then make the question of "cultural specificity" redundant to the issue of class consciousness, and (b) Thompson's highlighting of certain particular elements in English popular culture as factors specially conducive to "class

consciousness" would seem alarmingly arbitrary. For it is entirely possible that a contrary set of cultural elements could have also given rise to a similar consciousness (as indeed would be argued now for non-European working people without a liberal heritage) (222).

Clearly Thompson would not wish to exclude the rest of the world from his analysis, and certainly he welcomed the attempts of American labour historians following Herbert Gutman to bring American history up to speed on working class formation, but as Chakrabarty shows there was no way to do this without fudging over large areas of historical terrain.

So Chakrabarty concludes, "A 'universalist' mode of thinking, a reading that constantly produces out of Marxism a master narrative of history, is what defuses the dangerous potential of the "exceptionalist" argument of *The Making*." And yet, "the dangerous potential" remains for those who choose to take a particular working class in isolation (as most labour historians have done—i.e., isolated, except from similarly situated European labourers). It also seems to have led to an uncritical acceptance of a "universalist mode," so that those who might question the narrative of *The Making*, perhaps from perspectives that consider race and gender as of equal importance to class, appear as questioning some political absolute, questioning history itself. In light of this, the reaction of E P Thompson to some of his critics, resembles very closely the reaction of Edward Thompson to those he deemed incapable of writing history.

Thompson's category of the working class is defined only in relation to other groups within England. He is attuned to cultural variations and deviations from economic divisions. Class is to be found among people not abstractions. But those people are to be found, or recognised, only on English soil. And they will only really be men and white (picts, britons, anglo-saxons and the odd Celt from Cornwall or Devon) to boot. But leaving aside one group from the analysis of developing English working class, whether it is Afro-Caribbean slaves, Indians, Scots or Irish, on the grounds that they deserve full respect means not telling the story at all. This is especially so if we accept Thompson's injunction that

the notion of class entails the notion of historical relationship... We cannot have love without lovers, nor deference without squires and labourers. And class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs (9).

If people define themselves through such relations, then surely on an imperial terrain

the relations must be more than solely based on relations of production hierarchies. Thompson implies that this is so, because he gives such significance to the 'peculiarities of the English', to the Englishness of working class formation. But in conceding this he is inviting the question: what is Englishness if it isn't defined through historical relationships? "We cannot have love without lovers..."

Closely linked to this theme of turning historical scholarship on its head and working from the bottom-up, is that of the gendering of such analysis. Defenders of the Thompsons might argue that theirs was a problem of omission rather than commission, women just get left out of the picture, and the analysis can stand once they get inserted. Yet, the problematic of turning the world on its head has significant implications in an imperial landscape, because manliness, masculinity, emasculation, femininity, feminisation, and the like, take on important dimensions in a context of labour exploitation, wealth extraction, and colonial rule. These will mean different things in different places, and how these different meanings relate will be of some significance. Always crucial, gender is especially significant for an analysis of the Thompsons for two reasons. First, there is the sense among many historians and contemporary commentators, difficult even for the most critical to challenge, that if India gained anything from its imperial association with Britain, then it was with regard to the rights of women. And, not coincidentally, this is the last ditch defence of the Thompsons employed by Palmer (1994). The elder Thompson wrote a history of sati, and the eradication of such practices could be heralded by the younger as one of the benefits of taking a "middle way" between "nostalgias for the British Raj" and "simplified nationalist historiography" [EJT 1928; EPT, 1993a]. Second, E P Thompson has come under heavy attack from Joan Scott and others, an attack that he found very difficult to stomach, on the grounds that his analysis of working class formation was a gendered one [Scott 1988].

Ashton from *Far Pavilions* refers to the eradication of sati as the foundation for Britain's achievement in India, "Well, if we have done nothing else [and we can assume that he felt they had done a lot more], at least we can mark up one thing to our credit - that we put a stop to that particular horror" [Rajan: 44]. And, as historians like Edward Thompson would assure us, the record seems to speak plainly on this matter. Sati was prohibited by William Bentinck, in Bengal in 1929, and then in the rest of British India in the following year. While it was an Indian, Rammohan Roy, who revealed the change of text in the Rig Veda from "Let the mothers advance to altar first" to "Let the mothers

go into the womb of fire" (an act that Max Muller would describe as "perhaps the most flagrant instance of what can be done by an unscrupulous priesthood"), it was the fact that the British government turned its attention to the matter that led to the reform [EJT 1928: 17]. For according to Thompson,

When the attention of the British government was first seriously drawn to the rite, it was so entrenched by centuries of performance that the enquiry as to whether the Hindu scriptures enjoined it was irrelevant and useless. It was as well established as the habit of warfare in Christian Europe. The enquiry had a value, if only because it helped to encourage the government at last to break through its timidity and past its promises of toleration for all religious rites (19).

Without foreign intervention reform, Thompson argues, would have been out of the question: "It seems to me beyond controversy that Indian opinion and Indian princes would have allowed suttee, and a host of horrors besides, to continue indefinitely but for this alien vigour in the land" (83). Proof of this, Thompson believes, lies in the fact that once sati was abolished in the British controlled region, it was "driven into the Native States" where it continued to be practised [EJT 1930: 18]. The association between masculinity and the British ("alien vigour"), who were capable of "defending" women within their sphere of interest, and emasculation and Indians, who were not, is quite clear. And out of this unwillingness or inability to eradicate "this horror", could come a defence of many aspects of imperial rule. Take Macaulay's approach to education, for example: "If it was a mistake to set Indian education on solely western lines, it was a mistake for which Indians had themselves to thank, for the fruits of Hinduism a century ago were bad" [EJT 1928: 129-30].

Of course, the record does not speak as plainly as Thompson imagined [Mani: 119-56]. Regarding many of the reforms for women, the impulse towards reform came not from the Bentincks but from the Rammohan Roys. The later reform of the age of consent was spearheaded by, among others, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, not by British reformers, though Whitehall and Westminster were important sites of protest for the reform. Moreover, were the British truly knight errants in this process of reform on the behalf of women then the critical response of someone like Pandita Ramabai to their efforts would be inexplicable. According to Ramabai, the English government had "proved to be a worse tyrant to her than the native society and religion" [Shah: 178].

But the question is not whether the British undertook this act of benevolence and should be praised accordingly. Taken in isolation certain acts can be rendered in such a light,

and, once rendered, they can be used to speak for a whole, that might otherwise more than counteract or at least complicate the benevolence of the intervention. Rather, the question should be how were the Thompsons' visions of history shaped by the fluctuations of gender relations within this imperial terrain. Here Gayatri Spivak's *Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism* is of particular value. "The emergence of the feminist individualist in the west," Spivak writes, "cannot be an isolated development, but is, instead, achieved through an imperialist project (that of 'soul making') in which the 'native female' must play a role" (1985:47). Thus, "in the colonial encounter the Hindu 'good wife' is constructed as patriarchy's feminine ideal: she is offered simultaneously as a model and as a signifier of absolute cultural otherness, both exemplary and inimitable" (47-48). In the process, both British government officials and feminists could, for different reasons, advance the suggestion that Indian women needed defending from their men [Burton 1994b; Prakash 1994: 1487-88].

A link between the two historiographical discussions, can perhaps be found in the older Thompson's comment in *Indian Princes*, that "The Men of 1800-1819, despite their coolness, tolerance, catholicity, and humanity, were every way as efficient and heroic as the men of 1857" [EJT 1943: 37]. Here, a premium is placed on demonstrating a masculinity or manliness, the contours, practice and substance of which are assumed or taken for granted: humility, generosity, "alien vigour", efficiency, poetry, reason, beauty, and honour. This is the poet-king-warrior-scholar, transcending race, hovering above the rest of humanity as some sort of superman. We should place alongside these considerations, the absence of gender in *The Making of the English Working Class*. The peculiar English artisan takes on many of the characteristics of the British Indian administrator in his ability to combine the ideas of liberty and moral economy. But, as Carolyn Steedman has noted, in the process of writing this narrative of men, Thompson "writes the male gender out of the picture as well as the female one" [Cooper 1995: 241, fn; citing Steedman 1994]. In their apotheosis administrator and artisan transcend sex, and the power of gender to influence analysis is deflected and deflated (conspicuous in absences relating to the location of women, those of colonised peoples, and possible relationships between the two).

The final shared theme was that of the "worthy English", evident in *The English Working Class*, as the foregoing analysis would suggest, but becoming still more pronounced in the essays in *The Poverty of Theory and Writing by Candlelight*. For the

father, as mentioned earlier, the English had made significant contributions to the world through their empire; for E P Thompson the "peculiarities of the English", from their dogged empiricism to their faith in cricket were of cultural significance and worthy of celebration, not merely ridicule or embarrassment.

In the conclusion to *The Making of the Indian Princes*, Edward John highlighted once again the English contribution to the world. This contribution was very much the gift of the men who controlled India at the beginning of the 19th century. "The reader," he wrote,

cannot have failed to notice that the men who made the settlements of 1818 and 1819 held in common a body of political doctrine, which they had worked out over a course of many years. Unlike the men of Lord Wellesley's time, they were not opportunists – no men of action ever were less so. They knew their way and had a very fair guess as to its termination and goal. They built wittingly and deliberately, where both their predecessors and immediate successors did it by sheer accident and forceful blows.

Owing to their 'pragmatic' philosophy, which meant that they were "guided by the principle of workability and also by a sense of justice, often flawed and imperfectly followed out, but nevertheless present," they were able to create an empire of which any Englishman could be justly proud. Not only that, the Indians themselves could be happy with the settlements: "Bitterness came later, in abundant measure and with frequent justification," Thompson wrote. "But perhaps no conquest on such a scale was ever put through with so little bitterness at the time." This was a stunning achievement. "The work they achieved was to stand the test of over a century, and when all empire and dominion at last are finished their work will still win toleration and sympathy, and not in their own land only" [EJT 1943: 287]. If only the Elizabethans hadn't come back to the fore in 1857!

In Edward Palmer's work, pragmatism reappears as 'English empiricism', (valorised in contrast to 'French flu' and 'Scotch feelosofers'), while justice returns as the rule of law. E P Thompson starts his essay, 'The Peculiarities of the English', with an epigraph taken from Marx's comments about Darwin, which reads: "One has to put up with the crude English method of development, of course" [EPT 1978: 245]. Thompson's use of this quote is ironic, naturally, and gestures to his belief that there was more than one Marx. There were texts that could lead in the direction of Anderson, Nairn and Althusser, which were decidedly unEnglish, and there were the texts that contributed to sound historical materialism. Thompson's favoured Marx, along with Engels (whom

Thompson attempts to rescue from relative obscurity compared to Marx), would not have seen the crudeness of English method as a negative (1-210). While Anderson and Nairn, for example, "feel themselves to be exiles from an 'English ideology'" which "in its drooling old age...gives rise to a kind of twilight, where 'empiricism' has become myopia and 'liberalism' a sort of blinking uncertainty" (245). Thompson proudly proclaims his Englishness. While these two Marxists decried English bourgeois culture, Thompson was even willing to give this bourgeoisie some credit:

It is true that each national bourgeoisie has its own peculiar nastiness which it has often inherited from the class which went before; with the Germans, militarism and statism; with the French, chauvinism and intellectual metropolitomania; with the Italians, corruption; and with the Americans, the ruthless celebration of a human nature red in tooth and nail [African, Asian, and Latin American national bourgeoisies apparently remain in a stage of "pre-nasty"]. It is true also that the peculiar nastiness of the British bourgeoisie is in shameless observances of status and obsession with a spurious gentility...[T]here are at the same time certain strengths and humane traditions in British life which Other Countries, including those whose airports are superb, whose Marxism is mature, and whose salesmanship is high-powered, do not always display... (265)

Of course, the issue whether the English bourgeoisie was as vicious as others was itself a question framed by an imperial, if post-colonial, terrain. Both E P Thompson's view and those of Nairn and Anderson fit within the idea that bourgeoisies could be and should be categorised according to certain cultural traits – traits which in all the above-mentioned cases could be carefully crafted in relation to colonised subjects. In each case, culture is reduced to its imperial essence and made to compete according to rules akin to a *Eurovision Song Contest*, certainly not *Jeux sans Frontiers*. But the winner in such a contest changes from year to year.

On the matter of justice, E P Thompson reveals a great deal of confusion regarding the contributions of the English. In his conclusion to *Whigs and Hunters* he ends with a discourse on the rule of law:

the notion of the regulation and reconciliation of conflicts through the rule of law – and the elaboration of rules and procedures which, on occasion, made some approximate approach towards the ideal – seems to me a cultural achievement of universal significance. I do not lay claim as to the abstract, extra-historical impartiality of these rules. In a context of gross class inequalities, the equity of the law must always be in some part sham. Transplanted as it was to even more inequitable contexts, this law could become an instrument of imperialism. For

this law has found its way to a good many parts of the globe. But even here the rules and the rhetoric have imposed some inhibitions upon imperial power. If the rhetoric was a mask, it was a mask which Gandhi and Nehru were to borrow, at the head of a million masked supporters [EPT 1975:265-66].

Here Thompson tried to have his cake and eat it too. First of all he pronounced the rule of law to be a cultural achievement. He then recognised that it might be an "instrument of imperialism" in a context of "even more inequitable contexts" (thus privileging English inequities as in some way less iniquitous than those to be found among other peoples). But, then, even when this might be the case, we are told that its presence led to "inhibitions upon imperial power" – perhaps because the imperialism was in this case British (so that these inequities were established by people familiar with social conditions of less iniquity, who could therefore guide their new subjects in that direction). To imply, as this surely does, that there is some absolute benefit to be gained when nationalists learn the language of imperialism in order to overthrow it seems at the very least ironic when that imperialism has only been made effective by that same language.

Ranajit Guha exposes Thompson's weaknesses most clearly here. Guha asks how it is that knowledgeable people "could go on talking about a rule of law in colonial India when the facts of colonialist practice did nothing to support such assertion?" (1992: 276). The answer, he believes, "lies in the pervasive power of the ideology of law in English political thought. It derives from the long standing of the British legal system and its proven superiority to all other historically evolved systems of the same order up to the age of capital." Guha writes:

It stands for the universalist urge of bourgeois culture and practice of law under metropolitan conditions as to assume the status of 'a cultural achievement of universal significance' in the eyes not only of English liberals and colonialists like Dodwell, but also, alas, of English radicals like E P Thompson from whom those words are taken.

Thompson, then, falls foul of that English tendency noted by Marx "to take only itself as its standard" (1964: 154). Guha continues:

It is indeed the hallucinatory effects of ideology that a particularistic cultural achievement of the bourgeoisie should appear as one of 'universal significance' both to the friends and foes of that class. However, neither the special pleading by Dodwell when he speaks of a rule of law following a rule of force in the post-Mutiny period, nor the ingenuity of Thompson when he tries unsuccessfully to disentangle himself from the metaphysical implications of his statement by allowing for the class manipulation of the rule of law, can take away from the fact that bourgeois culture

hits its historical limit in colonialism. None of its noble achievements – liberalism, democracy, liberty, rule of law, etc – can survive the inexorable urge of capital to expand and reproduce itself by means of the politics of extra-territorial, colonial dominance. Colonialism stands thus not merely for the historical progeny, atmaja, of industrial and finance capital, but also for its historic Other (Ibid).

But, if “bourgeois culture hits its historical limit in colonialism” what of working class culture? For are not the English working class situated on an imperial terrain to some extent alongside industrial and finance capital? Not always, but sometimes? If so, are the noble achievements as they are picked up and wielded to the benefit of the working class by the Gandhis and Nehrus of England also incapable of surviving in the colonial landscape? Probably.²

Conclusion

“What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?”

– C L R James (1983: xix)

It is difficult to read ‘The Nehru Tradition’ without being moved by E P Thompson’s account of his father’s close friendship with Nehru. Clearly, through his father E P Thompson knew empire intimately. But, like many of his generation, empire was “over there”. His political essays, which were naturally preoccupied, as everyone seemed to be at the time (partly owing to his efforts), with the possibility of nuclear destruction, seldom mentioned the ‘peculiarities’ of those ‘English’ who had come from India, Pakistan, Uganda or the Caribbean (not to mention any number of other places of origin – Ireland, Italy, Germany, Romania).

This elision of empire in Thompson’s work has had important implications for the emergence of Social History. While E P Thompson continued a well-established tradition among English historians of treating the empire as peripheral, the weight of his enterprise was considerable.³ The fact that one of the most radical and acclaimed of historians ignored empire and all its aspects, enabled many others to adopt a category of class that was reductionist, even while it claimed to combat the reductionism of orthodox Marxism [Bayly 1989; Burton 1994a; Scott; Hall 1992; Said 1993]. In other words, in his focus on culture Thompson did not merely enlarge the historian’s lens to rescue the lower orders as agents, so enabling further enlargement in the future (a Whiggish version of historical practice). Instead, his use of culture placed another veil (to use W E B Du Bois’s term) in front of History, another layer on the “palimpsest of history” (to appropriate Nehru’s metaphor), making it in some ways more difficult to incorporate empire, non-metropolitan subjects, and race

and gender perspectives into future historical analysis [Du Bois 1989; Nehru 1991]. Efforts to focus on such things have faced resistance, often from people who now invoke the name of E P Thompson. Such a focus, these people claim, will lead in the direction of nihilism, reactionary politics, ‘fashion’, and a loss of the only truly radical historical category, that of class [Palmer 1994: 185]. Instead, we would suggest that an enlargement of class analysis is required to incorporate race and other mutually constitutive categories, like gender, within an imperial framework. Thus we need to appreciate that class, race, and gender are historically contingent, and that they have been shaped by nations and national histories that are also historically contingent. And, when we incorporate all peoples as ‘agents’ into history, we need to be aware of the historical genealogy of the idea of agency itself and the fact that its use in the past has often obscured as much as it has revealed, granting to some while denying to others.

Notes

[The authors are grateful to Antoinette Burton, Ian Fletcher, Pramod Kale, David Ludden, Dan Rodgers, and Mike Zuckerman for their suggestions and encouragement.]

1 Both men were historians of India and were nationalist by inclination, though they also found much that they could embrace in what Britain had introduced to the subcontinent. But, while Edward Thompson would come to see that British governments had often been misguided with regard to India, Nehru believed that this was generally the case and was, in fact, an outgrowth of the imperial relationship itself. Both believed that there were two “Englands” – but Thompson saw this as being divided between the Metcalfes, Malcolms and Elphinstones, who built the empire, and the commoners who inherited it and inflicted the barbarities of 1857. Nehru was inclined to see it divided between the England of Shakespeare and Milton, and that of “the savage penal code and brutal behaviour, of entrenched feudalism and civilisation” [EJT 1937; 1943: 264-65; Nehru 1991: 287-88, 303-06]. Consequently, while Edward Thompson could idealise parts of British intrusion into India, as bringing light to darkness, Nehru would always see this history more than balanced by the weight of brutality.

2 In *E P Thompson*, Bryan D Palmer describes the father’s influence on his son, part of which was found in the latter’s lifelong expectation that governments would be “mendacious and imperialist.” Palmer does so partly to defend Thompson from the charge of “Little Englandism” and cultural nationalism (1994: 11). While he is to be commended for highlighting this influence, Palmer’s description of this influence is one-sided. For, although the son’s political consciousness “cut its teeth” on India, it is remarkable that he could ignore so many issues arising out of imperialism. Palmer’s own understanding of Thompson, cemented in his earlier work *The Making of E P Thompson* (1981), ignores this issue, and his reading of the father’s influence is through concepts like Methodism and liberalism that are stripped of their imperial meaning and context. Indeed, Palmer takes on the mantle

of being an apologist for the Thompson family, when the issue is not to defend the Thompsons but to understand them. The words of Edward Thompson regarding C F Andrews’s uncritical reading of Tagore seem to apply to Palmer’s reading of E P Thompson: He is like “a lover who has long got past the stage of being able to criticise” [EPT 1993a: 33].

3 We are not suggesting that E P Thompson was in any way politically an imperialist. Palmer (1994) indicates clearly Thompson’s many anti-imperialist political pronouncements (see also, EPT 1980: 144, 148). Robert Young provides a similar critique of Jean-Paul Sartre’s ethnocentric history combined with anti-imperialism (1990: 41-47).

4 Few of the many obituaries and articles spanning *The Nation*, *New Statesman*, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *American Historical Review*, *Economic History Review*, *Journal of Social History Monthly Review*, *Commentary*, commented or dwelled on an imperial connection (see also, the articles in Kaye and McClelland). Peter Linebaugh comes close in, “Commonists of the World Unite!” Frederick Cooper (1995) considers Thompson’s impact on historians of Africa but remains oblivious to any imperial roots for Thompsonian analysis like his own; while Roger Wells (1994) discusses the applicability of Thompsonian concepts to the interpretation of peasantries worldwide. The influence in James C Scott’s work (1976; 1984) is obvious. But none of the aforementioned reverse the analysis to discuss the way empire influenced Thompson’s writing (Palmer is the exception here).

5 And, we should add, other genealogies can be found that would require the intrusion into the profession’s narrative people like W E B Du Bois, Anna J Cooper, C L R James, Eric Williams, George Padmore, and a host of others who have been made to seem peripheral [Kelley: 1-33].

6 Said, in his introduction to *Kim*, is wrong to describe Thompson’s *The Other Side of the Medal* as “an impassioned statement against British rule and for Indian independence” (1989: 25).

7 Thompson wrote, “Benita Parry’s capable and compact study of EJT in *Delusions and Discoveries* leans over-heavily on this point, and she has been followed by others” (1993: 107).

8 Thompson here quotes from Chatterjee (1986: 66).

9 It is around this point that praise or condemnation of Thompson’s work on Tagore tends to revolve. An author who accepts or implicitly assumes that there is a location for the critic “above the storm” (as Matthew Arnold defined for himself beyond class conflict in *Culture and Anarchy*) tends to give Thompson greater credit than one who doubts this. For an example of an assessment that E P Thompson would have considered “fair”, see Harish Trivedi (1993: 39).

10 Savarkar’s involvement in the crime was similar to that of Tilak in the assassination of Walter Charles Rand in 1898 (Wolpert). No actual direct involvement on the part of Savarkar was found (otherwise the punishment would have been far worse) [Fryer 1980; Visram: 103-10].

11 One of which was used in the murder of an official in Nasik [Wolpert: 230].

12 Savarkar had escaped from custody once already in London, as a result of a collaborative effort of Irish and Indian nationalists [Fryer 1980].

13 Stephen Hay describes Savarkar as a Hindu nationalist only, and anachronistically attempts to reveal a line of continuity between the violence of the revolutionaries in London and the assassination of Gandhi by Savarkar's "devoted lieutenant", N V Godse in 1948 (Hay: 289-90). *War of Indian Independence*, however, endeavored to bridge gaps between Hindu and Moslem communities in revolt against the British.

14 Thompson compared the Mutiny to lynchings in the US [EJT 1925: 38]. He noted that when uprisings of slaves against their masters occurred there was often "devilish cruelty on both sides...Terrorism wars with terrorism, till the stronger side issues its bulletin to the world." The Mutiny should, therefore, be placed alongside slave revolts in Jamaica in the 18th century, the uprising at Demerara in 1824, and the Morant Bay uprising in 1865 (though the participants were not slaves). But rather than making the most obvious and telling comparison with the US by focusing on the events surrounding the Nat Turner rebellion, which would have forced him to consider similar political issues surrounding the justification of slave violence in the pursuit of freedom, Thompson compares the Mutiny to lynchings that continued in the US at the time of his writing. While this gives *The Other Side of the Medal* a defensive air, seemingly justifying inhuman acts by showing one of his audiences some of its own propensities for inhumanity, it more importantly defuses the potential political message surrounding the events and characterises the actions of Anglo-Americans as reactive – a response to alleged criminality of the victims. Perhaps by focusing on Nat Turner, Thompson would have been led to concede that "the services which Britain has rendered to India [and] the greatness of the individual contribution of many of her sons and daughters." (20) might have been exaggerated, when viewed from the perspective of the non-Briton. And had he, instead of turning to American lynchings, focused on the manner in which Americans had made treaties with and then through war and the decimation of buffalo herds brought about the virtual genocide of American Indians, he would have found a more comparable model for British rule in India. See Ward Churchill on the massacre at Sand Creek (1991: 111-20). Such a comparative perspective, drawing on the similarities and continuities between American and British imperial policies might have led Thompson to reconsider his sanguine assessment, which he shared with many of his peers, that "The record of my country is cleaner from such deeds of deliberate cruelty than the record of any other country on the globe. The story of mankind is a melancholy one; but we have at least the right to claim that, though often ruthless, we have rarely been fiends. This incident is exceptional in our annals; but the whole Mutiny episode was exceptional" [EJT 1925: 49].

15 Savarkar asked, "Are massacres in the cause of freedom justified?" (206). While he did not say that they were – "The question 'should be left to God!'" – he intimated that if "duty" could be used as a defence of conduct (as English historians were wont to do for the barbarous acts of imperial forces), then it was really only "the revolutionaries" who could use this claim legitimately.

16 Savarkar describes the Sepoys as showing "unexampled skill" in "nationalising" the revolt by quickly seizing Delhi, but then

bemoans: "If the whole of Hindusthan had risen simultaneously on the 31st of May, history would not have had to wait longer than 1857 to record the destruction of the English empire and the victorious Independence of India...[T]he Meerut Sepoys, by their rising, unconsciously put their brethren in unforeseen confusion by warning the enemy beforehand!" Savarkar uses J C Wilson for this assessment. Thompson also concedes, in the comment cited earlier, that any widespread rebellion would have led to the eviction of the British.

17 It is worth noting that both Karl Marx and Jawaharlal Nehru characterised the events of 1857 to 1859 in terms closer to Savarkar's than Thompson's [Marx-Engels 1978; Nehru 1942: 414; 1991: 322-26].

18 Metcalfe's minutes "are the mirror of a mind bent always on the finding of essential truth, by exclusion of the personal and accidental" (59).

19 The extent of Metcalfe's personal involvement in the expansion of poppy growing and establishment of factories in Calcutta to process large quantities of opium mixture which would then become a major source of revenue for British India and the key to British policy in China is uncertain. But the fact that he governed Calcutta for several years while his elder brothers served in the lucrative position of factor for the EIC in Canton is, at the very least, suggestive (Compilation Group).

20 Thompson wishes to see this as Metcalfe's innovation. He writes, "But Charles Metcalfe, aged 26, had abolished both mutilation and the gallows, at a time when Ranjit Singh was in constant warfare and in England a code of nightmare severity was being enforced" (123). What is really noteworthy, however, is that Ranjit Singh could be noted for being merciful even while he was facing "constant warfare."

21 Several other continuities between father and son can be found of varying significance. E P Thompson's dismal portrayal of methodism in *The Making of the English Working Class* has often been commented upon. Palmer (1994) describes Thompson's experiences at Kingswood School and reveals the extent to which this criticism of Methodism arose from his reaction to his father's and mother's Methodism as well as from his father's criticism of the denomination when he ended his work as a missionary in India. This legacy has been treated sufficiently and will not be discussed here. Two other continuities from the *Indian Princes* to the *English Working Class* of considerably less significance were, the influence of the Leverhulme Trust (which contributed significantly to Edward Thompson's transformation from a Bengali scholar at Oxford to a historian of the British Empire, and which extended its support to E P Thompson's research for *English Working Class*), and the near obsession that both historians seem to have had with footnotes as essential to proper historical scholarship.

22 At this point, E P Thompson's work takes on the distinctive character of modernisation theory [Rodgers 1977].

23 Cedric Robinson notes that slaves gave to the movements of the poor and of workers a language of resistance, as when Cobbett pronounced: "White men can be sold, and white men are sold by the week and the month all over England" (1987: 131-32).

24 This transformation was very much a self-conscious one on Thompson's part. In his introduction to the second edition of his

biography of Tagore he noted the fact that his interpretation of the poet had undergone change owing largely to the transformations that had occurred in India.

25 In fact, the term 'Princes' would not be conferred on these men until after their defeat at the hands of Edward Thompson's heroes. Indians remained pawns or, rather, flotsam before the ineluctable logic of British imperialism and history, even while their testimonies were being sought.

26 For the defence of Thompson against the Scott critique, see Palmer (1990: 78-86, 271). While some of Palmer's points have merit, others do not, and it is enough to note that "on one, quite basic, level," he agrees that, as Scott claims, "in *The Making of the English Working Class* the master codes that structure the narrative are gendered in such a way as to confirm rather than challenge the masculine representation of class."

27 See, for example, Gutman (1976), Wilentz (1984), Laurie (1980), and Dawley (1976). This approach is then extended to apply to African Americans also, especially in the literature on migration; see Trotter (1991) and for a critique, Gregg, (1992, 1993).

28 And this was not limited to Britain and British history. Thompson's impact was arguably greater on the American side of the Atlantic than on the European. Peter Novick (1988: 440-42) has noted that "no work in European history ever so profoundly and so rapidly influenced so many American historians." See similar comments in Palmer (1981; 1994) and Laurie (1989: 6-7).

References

- Bayly, C A (1989): *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780-1830*, Longman, Harlow.
- Bhandarkar, R G (1933): 'The Critical, Comparative and Historical Method of Inquiry' in N B Utgikar and V G Paranjpe (eds), *Collected Works of Sir R G Bhandarkar*, vol I, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, 362-93.
- Burton, Antoinette (1994a): 'Rules of Thumb: British History and 'Imperial Culture' in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Britain', *Women's History Review*, 3 (4): 483-500.
- (1994b): *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh (1989): *Rethinking Working-Class History: Bengal, 1890-1940*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.
- Chatterjee, Partha (1986): *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World – A Derivative Discourse*, United Nations University.
- Chirol, Valentine (1910): *Indian Unrest*, Macmillan, London.
- Churchill, Ward (1991): *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema and the Colonisation of American Indians*, Common Courage Press, Monroe, Maine.
- Colley, Linda (1992): *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Compilation Group for the 'History of Modern China' Series (1976): *The Opium War*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking.
- Cooper, Frederick (1995): 'Work, Class and Empire: An African Historian's Retrospective on E P Thompson', *Social History*, 20 (2): 235-41.
- Dawley, Alan (1976): *Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn*, Harvard

- University Press, Cambridge.
- Desani, G V (1986): *All About H Hatterr*, McPherson, New York.
- Du Bois, W E B (1989): *The Souls of Black Folk*, Bantam, New York.
- Fryer, Peter (1980): *Staying Power*, Pluto, London.
- Gilroy, Paul (1987): *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, Hutchinson, London.
- (1994): *The Black Atlantic*, Harvard University Press, New York.
- Greenberger, Allen J (1969): *The British Image of India: A Study of the Literature of Imperialism, 1880-1960*, Oxford University Press, London.
- Gregg, Robert (1992): 'Group Portrait with Lady', *Reviews in American History*, 20 (3, Sept): 354-59.
- (1993): *Sparks from the Anvil of Oppression: Philadelphia's African Methodists and Southern Migrants, 1890-1940*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia.
- (1997): 'Apropos Exceptionalism: Imperial Location and the Comparative Histories of the United States and South Africa' in Rick Halpern and Jonathan Morris (eds), *American Exceptionalism? US Working-Class Formation in an International Context*, Macmillan, London.
- Guha, Ramachandra (1992): *Wickets in the East: An Anecdotal History*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.
- Guha, Ranajit (1992): 'Dominance without Hegemony And Its Historiography' in Guha (ed), *Subaltern Studies VI: Writings in South Asian History and Society*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, pp 210-309.
- Gutman, Herbert G (1976): *Work, Culture and Society in Industrialising America*, Vintage, New York.
- Hall, Catherine (1992): *White, Male and Middle Class*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Hobsbawm, Eric (1984): *Workers: Worlds of Labour*, Pantheon, New York.
- Hay, Stephen (ed) (1988): *Sources of Indian Tradition*, volume II: *Modern India and Pakistan*, Columbia University Press, New York.
- Hunt, James D (1993): *Gandhi in London*, Promilla and Co, Delhi.
- James, C L R (1983): *Beyond a Boundary*, Pantheon, New York.
- (1995): *A History of Pan-African Revolt*, Charles H Kerr, Chicago.
- Jordan, Winthrop D (1977): *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812*, W W Norton, New York.
- Joshi, G M (1947): 'The Story of this History' in Savarkar, *The War of Independence of 1857*.
- Kale, Madhavi (1995): 'Projecting Identities: Empire and Indentured Labour Migration from India to Trinidad and British Guiana' in Peter van der Veer (ed), *Nation and Migration: The Politics of Space in the South Asian Diaspora*, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
- (1987): 'Capital Spectacles in British Frames', *International Review of Social History*, 41 (1996).
- (forthcoming): *Casting Labour: Empire and Indentured Labour Migration*, forthcoming.
- Kelley, Robin D G (1995): 'Introduction' in James, *A History of Pan-African Revolt*, pp 1-33.
- Kaye, Harvey J and Keith McClelland (1990): *E P Thompson: Critical Perspectives*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia.
- Lal, Vinay (1993): 'The Incident of the "Crawling Lane": Women in the Punjab Disturbances of 1919' in *Genders*, 16 (Spring), 35-60.
- Laurie, Bruce G (1980): *Working People of Philadelphia, 1800-1850*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia.
- (1989): *Artisans into Workers: Labour in 19th-Century America*, Hill and Wang, New York.
- Linebaugh, Peter (1992): 'Commonists of the World Unite!' in *Radical History Review*, 56: 59-67.
- Mani, Lata (1986): 'Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India' in *Cultural Critique*, 7, Fall: 119-56.
- Marx, Karl (1964): *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, International Publishers, New York.
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels (1978): *The First War of Independence 1857-1859*, Progress Publishers, Moscow.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1942): *Glimpses of World History*, John Day Co, New York.
- (1991): *The Discovery of India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.
- Novick, Peter (1988): *That Noble Dream: The Objectivity Question and the American Historical Profession*, Cambridge University Press, New York.
- O'Hanlon, Rosalind (1988): 'Recovering the Subject: Subaltern Studies and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia' in *Modern Asian Studies*, 22, 1: 189-224.
- Palmer, Bryan D (1981): *The Making of E P Thompson: Marxism, Humanism, and History*, New Togo Press, Toronto.
- (1990): *Descent into Discourse: The Reification of Language*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia.
- (1994): *E P Thompson: Objections and Oppositions*, Verso, London.
- Parry, Benita (1972): *Delusions and Discoveries: Studies on India in the British Imagination, 1880-1930*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Prakash, Gyan (1994): 'Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism', *American Historical Review* (December 1994) 1475-90.
- Robinson, Cedric (1987): 'Capitalism, Slavery and Bourgeois Historiography', *History Workshop*, 23 (Spring), 122-40.
- Rajan, Rajeswari Sundar (1993): *Real and Imagined Women: Gender, Culture and Postcolonialism*, Routledge, London.
- Rodgers, Daniel T (1977): 'Tradition, Modernity, and the American Industrial Worker: Reflections and Critique' in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, VII: 4 (Spring) 655-81.
- Roediger, David W (1991): *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, Verso Press, New York.
- Said, Edward W (1989): 'Introduction' in Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*, Penguin, London.
- (1993): *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage, New York.
- Savarkar, V D (1947): *The War of Independence of 1857*, Phoenix Publications, Bombay.
- (1950): *My Transportation for Life: A Biography of Black Days of Andaman*, Sadbhakti Publications, Bombay.
- Scott, James C (1976): *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Resistance in South East Asia*, Yale University Press, New Haven.
- (1984): *Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Scott, Joan Wallach (1988): *Gender and the Politics of History*, Columbia University Press, New York.
- Shah, A B (ed) (1977): *The Letters and Correspondence of Pandita Ramabai*, Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture, Bombay.
- Spivak, Gayatri (1985): 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', in *Critical Inquiry* 12 (Autumn) 243-61.
- Stampp, Kenneth M (1956): *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*, Vintage, New York.
- Steedman, Carolyn (1994): 'The Price of Experience: Women and the Making of the English Working Class', in *Radical History Review*, LIX: 108-19.
- Thompson, Edward John (EJT) (1921): *Rubindranath Tagore: His Life and Work*, Oxford University Press, London.
- (1925): *The Other Side of the Medal*, Hogarth, London.
- (1927): *An Indian Day*, A A Knopf, New York.
- (1928): *Suttee: A Historical and Philosophical Enquiry into the Hindu Rite of Widow-Burning*, George Allen and Unwin, London.
- (1930): *Reconstruction of India*, Dial Press, New York.
- (1931): *A Farewell to India*, E Benn, London.
- (1936): *Sir Walter Raleigh: The Last of the Elizabethans*, Yale University Press, New Haven.
- (1937): *The Life of Charles, Lord Metcalfe*, Faber and Faber, London.
- (1938): *An End of the Hours*.
- (1943): *The Making of the Indian Princes*, Oxford University Press, London.
- (1994): *Rubindranath Tagore: Poet and Dramatist*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.
- Thompson, Edward and G T Garratt (1962): *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, Central Book Depot, Allahabad.
- Thompson, Edward Palmer (EPT) (1966): *The Making of the English Working Class*, Vintage, New York.
- (1975): *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act*, Pantheon, New York.
- (1978): *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays*, Monthly Review Press, New York.
- (1980): *Writing By Candlelight*, Merlin Press, London.
- (1993a): 'Alien Homage': *Edward Thompson and Rubindranath Tagore*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.
- (1993b): *Making History: Writings on History and Culture*, The New Press, New York.
- (1993c): *Witness Against the Beast: William Blake and the Moral Law*, The New Press, New York.
- Trivedi, Harish (1994): 'Introduction' in Thompson, *Rubindranath Tagore*.
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph (1995): *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Beacon Press, Boston.
- Trotter, Jr, Joe W (ed) (1991): *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Visram, Rozine (1986): *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes: The Story of Indians in Britain, 1700-1947*, Pluto, London.
- Walkowitz, Judith (1992): *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Wells, Roger (1994): 'E P Thompson, "Customs in Common" and Moral Economy', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 21 (2, January) 263-307.
- Wentz, Sean (1984): *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Wolpert, Stanley A (1961): *Tilak and Gokhale: Revolution and Reform in the Making of Modern India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.
- Young, Robert C J (1990): *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, Routledge, London.