This volume brings together important writings that illuminate the making and ascendency of the middle class during the period of British rule in India. Many themes in the essays in this volume have been widely discussed before. Indeed some of the issues they touch upon, such as social reform, caste, gender or religion, have even been the subjects of separate volumes in this series. The intent of this volume is, however, different. By bringing together a variety of writings on and about the middle class in colonial India, I hope we will be able to better understand how being middle class—what we might term ‘middle class-ness’—was central to a variety of undertakings in colonial India, including politics related religion, gender, caste, social reform, and, of course, nationalism. Together, they help us better understand the history of the middle class in colonial India, and thus appreciate the strengths and limitations of the very important ideas and practices which have shaped, and continue to shape, modern India.

We cannot write the history of colonial India without centrally engaging with the history of the middle class. Whether in the arena of politics or culture, it is probably not an exaggeration to suggest that the middle class has been central to most conventional histories of modern India. The contribution of the middle class to nationalism, feminism, religious revival, social reform, to the visual arts, to literature, and to a myriad of other fields of endeavor has been well documented in writings on Indian history. With decolonization, a middle class leadership eventually replaced the British ruling class in India. The ascendency of the middle class was the product of a relatively long historical process; predicated on the creation of new forms of politics, the restructuring of norms of social conduct, and the construction of new values guiding
domestic as well as public life. All of these transformations, whether political, social, or cultural, reflected the concerns, and perhaps the contradictions, constitutive of the middle class. Understanding the making of this middle class and the process through which it acquired its predominance in public affairs, is critical to comprehending much of the cultural and political world around us today.

All historiography is a product of its time. It is appropriate, therefore, to begin by locating this book in its own historical context. This volume has been put together at a time when there is a great deal of interest in the middle class. The very visible and relatively recent affluence of what is called the middle class has no doubt contributed to our interest in this social category. Reading some of the contemporary discussions in newspapers or the electronic media, however, one would think that the Indian middle class became significant only about fifteen years ago, around the 1990s. Evidently, that is far from being the case. Economic liberalization has allowed sections of the Indian middle class to prosper. Linked to global capitalism, sections of this class have sought to match the income and consumption levels of affluent groups in the West. To some extent, they have succeeded. In fact, one could argue that its putative 350 million-strong middle class is what makes India a destination of choice for global capital. Yet, and perhaps especially, in the midst of the contemporary celebrations of the Indian middle class, it is critical to recall its history.

The fact that middle class cultural entrepreneurs have dominated public sphere discussions in India for over a hundred years is also quite significant for understanding how we discuss the middle class in contemporary India (and beyond its borders). Indian history, society, culture, economics, and politics has for long been viewed through middle class lenses. Yet, until recently, middle class journalists, commentators and academics, for the most part preferred to analyse the role and formation of other social groups and other collectivities. For at least three decades from the late 1960s, it was the failure of peasant and other subaltern groups, in Ranajit Guha’s words, to ‘come into their own,’ that dominated discussions of modern Indian history. Before that, nationalist paradigms dominated. Though much of the substance of nationalist historiography was concerned with work done by middle class activists, the nation and nationalism rather than the middle classiness of the major actors, was its central analytical focus.

Exploring writings on the middle class in colonial India immediately makes apparent an interesting paradox. We are confronted with a
situation that reveals both paucity and plenitude. On the one hand, few scholars have explored what becoming or being middle class in modern India entailed. On the other hand, if we expand our field to include all studies which deal with middle class activity in modern India, we are faced with such a vast array of scholarship as to make anything approaching a representative sampling virtually impossible. Appropriately perhaps, given its subject, this volume treads a middle path between these two! While preferring essays which directly address the making of this social category, this anthology also takes into account debates and discussions on the subject which indirectly help us better understand the making of a middle class through essays that only deal with some aspect of middle class activity, such as gender or caste relations. Before discussing the contents of this anthology, however, we must deal with a much thornier question: who or what is 'middle class'?

DEFINING THE MIDDLE CLASS

Despite its wide currency, there is surprisingly little agreement on what defines the social category called the middle class. Most scholars who use this category treat the middle class as an already-understood social group, sometimes dividing it into smaller sub-groups based on economic resources or status (such as the lower middle class, upper middle class, and so on). Scholars and journalists alike treat ‘the middle class’ as a fully-formed, sociologically bounded, category defined primarily by economic indicators, ignoring the extent to which social classes do not simply ‘emerge’ but are ‘made.’ Overemphasizing structure and economic factors, they downplay the significance of ‘cultural capital’ and human agency as an important basis for middle class, or other class formations. Thus, Indian historiography cannot boast of a large body of scholarship which analyses the making of the middle class seriously. Common even amongst those who disagree about its composition, however, is the idea that the category refers to people who belonged to the upper strata of society, without being at the very top. While financially comfortable, they were people who did need to work to earn a living. This was one factor which distinguished them from the richest strata of Indian society, such as the large hereditary landlords or the remnants of an indigenous aristocracy. The other, even more significant factor, was their distance, economic, social, and cultural, from the lower classes. Beyond that, though, objective indicators take us only so far in understanding the middle class.
The middle class in colonial India was not a social group that could be classified as occupying a median position in terms of standard sociological indicators of income, consumption, or status. Though usually not from the traditional landed aristocracy, there is little doubt that the people who came to term themselves middle class were from the upper rungs of Indian society. In fact, measured by any set of objective indicators such as income, consumption, occupation or even education, the social groups described as middle class in colonial India were in the top two deciles of the population. As recent critiques of contemporary usages of the category reveal, in purely economic terms, it would make much more sense to speak of the social group we refer to as an affluent class rather than the middle-class. The elitism of the people who claimed this category was even more pronounced during the colonial era. Most of them were male, upper caste Hindus, ashraf (high-born) Muslims, or other such high-status groups, and many came from so-called ‘service communities,’ that is, from families and social groups who had traditionally served in the courts of indigenous rulers and large landlords. Not only did this mean they had sufficient economic resources, but they also possessed sufficient educational training to shape and participate in public debates during the colonial era. Another of the objective indicators distinguishing the middle class in colonial India, therefore, was their exposure to western-style education. But merely the knowledge of English, similarity of family background, or even exposure to western education did not transform these educated people into a middle class. This was achieved through cultural entrepreneurship.

While economic distinctions offer some indication of who the middle classes were, they are insufficient to describe the middle class as a social category. The middle class as a category is better understood if we see it as the product of a group of people sharing a social and economic background who became the producers and products of a new cultural politics in a transformed historical context. It was not simply similarities in education, occupation, or profession, that made a middle class in colonial India. It was the initiation of new cultural politics which allowed them to articulate a new set of beliefs, values, and modes of politics, thus distinguishing them from other social groups both below and above. It was not traditional status alone that upper caste Hindus or ashraf Muslim men deployed to create distinctions between themselves and other social groups in colonial India. Rather, it was by transforming traditional cultural values and the basis of social hierarchy that a distinctive middle class emerged. It was not simply the objective
circumstances of their existence that made a group of intellectuals and bureaucrats key political and social figures. Rather, efforts of cultural entrepreneurship made them into a middle class, and a significant player in the social and political life of colonial India.

Important social, economic, and political changes accompanying British rule in India undoubtedly presented new opportunities to educated men and, a little later, to women as well. But ultimately, being middle class in India, as elsewhere, was a project of self-fashioning. In colonial India, as elsewhere around the world probably, a middle class emerged from processes by which intellectuals and activists created a new and distinctive social category through a ‘self conscious interposition between people of rank and the common people.’ It is, for most part, these self conscious interpositions that essays in this volume examine. To highlight cultural projects as central to middle class formation is not to deny the significance of either economic structure or indeed the historical context of changes in legal and economic regimes that accompanied the transition to colonialism. At the same time though, it is very important not to overemphasize a false dichotomy between ‘objective’ factors versus processes stressing the agency of the middle class. The history of the middle class in colonial India is a near-perfect example of how the two actually constitute each other. Objective conditions delimited the number and sort of people who could aspire to be middle class, but the efforts of people also created or transformed these very objective conditions which made the middle class possible. The emergence of a public sphere in India—a critical arena for the creation of the middle class, is an ideal illustration of this point.

A public sphere may have been facilitated by the British in India, but it was ultimately created by the efforts of educated Indians. It was they who invested in presses, worked as journalists, created civic and political associations, and published and debated their ideas either in the press or in the forums of their associations. And it was through these activities as well as control of the public sphere, that educated, respectable, but hardly among the richest, most powerful or influential of men in colonial India, were able to successfully represent themselves as the middle class. Education and literary accomplishments had, of course, been valued for long before the British came to India. Court officials, religious leaders, and men of letters, the north Indian ‘ecumene,’ did comment on social matters and were occasionally even allowed the license to be critical of the rulers and their administration. Yet their social and political importance was relatively insignificant until the...
latter half of the nineteenth century. Adept use of the public sphere allowed a group of middling significance in the politics of pre-British courts to emerge as arbiters of native social conduct and aspirants to direct political power under British rule. It was through the public sphere that middle class norms came to be universalized in colonial India. Using new institutions of the public sphere, these men were able to recast ideas of respectability to distinguish themselves from upper and lower classes in society, and to posit a moral superiority over both. All of these were a crucial element in the constitution of a middle class. An important task of any historical exercise must be to show the processes through which power comes to be created, and to recognize, as Dipesh Chakrabarty puts it, the ‘ambivalences, contradictions... the tragedies and ironies that attend’ the constitution of power.7 The aim of this collection is to do exactly that for the history of the middle class in colonial India.

Though my usage of the singular—the middle class—may suggest otherwise, I do not intend to suggest that the middle class in colonial India was a monolithic entity. There were, for one, significant regional differences. Probably due to a different pattern of land tenure in the province, the rentier component in the social group which constituted itself as a middle class in Calcutta (described by Tanika Sarkar in this volume) was distinct from those in other towns such as Surat where merchant groups had a much higher profile.8 There was also diversity of other kinds. The religious diversity of Delhi or Lucknow, for instance, ensured a different sort of public religiosity as compared to Madras.9 Nor should we assume that even within regions perfect unanimity characterized the middle class. There were significant differences and debates within the middle class, which are noted later in this introduction, and well illustrated in the essays comprising this volume. Very different access to material resources also made the lifestyles and hence cultural preferences of the contributors to the Kanara Saraswat, described by Prashant Kidambi in his essay in this volume, quite different from, say, a well-to-do lawyer such as Jawaharlal Nehru. Yet, as the essays will also show, there are significant points where the opinions of the two do coincide. It is precisely such intersections that make it possible to talk about a middle class in colonial India.

It is important to reiterate, perhaps, that there is no particular moment when the middle class is ‘finally’ made. Rather, much like most other social formations, it is always in the making. Therefore, the essays in this collection highlight different moments in this history. The history of middle class formations shows both commonalities and differences
in the way the class comes to be made at different times. For instance, at most times, the middle class seeks to distinguish itself from the upper, and more vehemently, the lower orders of society. Quite how it does so, depends on the historical moment. In this collection, the author of the editorial in the *Bengalee* does so very differently from Nehru. Middle class leaders in Prashant Kidambi’s essay on early twentieth century Bombay do so quite differently from the directors of films in the 1970s that Madhava Prasad describes. But distancing has to be reinforced at each historical juncture, because it is central to the middle class project. From this distancing emerge middle class aspirations to leadership and hopes of establishing social and political hegemony.

We cannot really understand the issues and debates involved in defining the middle class unless we squarely address the issue of comparisons. Comparisons have been central to any discussion of the middle class in colonial India. For most part, these comparisons have been unfavourable. Colonial officials and intellectuals had good reason to disparage the aspirations of the upwardly mobile western-educated men, and did so frequently. But even middle class Indians themselves expressed reservations about their lack of authenticity. Of course there was change over time. There was a huge difference, for instance, between Jawaharlal Nehru’s critique of the middle class as ‘déclassé intellectuals,’ (soon to be redeemed by Gandhi’s hyper-authenticity), and the much less confident debates between the advocates of wholesale westernization and neo-conservatives in the nineteenth century. But colonialists and nationalists alike did, implicitly or explicitly, compare the Indian middle class with what they all believed was an authentic model of middle classness originating in the West.

Being middle class in colonial India was a project undertaken by a social elite which deployed a category consciously picked up from the history of their rulers, the British. Taking a cue from the enlightened, progressive role attributed to the middle class in British history, western educated elites of colonial India found little trouble in representing themselves in the same way. But this inevitably led to comparisons. The middle class of colonial India thus repeatedly suffered comparisons, and suffered in comparison, to a presumed model of an ‘authentic’ western middle class. A review of the writing on the Indian middle class from its origins in the late nineteenth century to almost the present day reveals that discussions of the Indian middle class continue to be inhibited by comparisons with an ideal-type of the category derived ultimately from rather simplistic readings of European history. Scholars tend to
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contrast an idealized notion of class formation and unity with the more messy terrain of historical reality, only, and obviously, to find the latter wanting.

Yet, a more careful examination of the middle class, even in European or North American history reveals some significant ambiguities about the use of this category.\(^{11}\) Does the industrial bourgeoisie alone constitute the middle class? Surely not, as then we would have to exclude the central role of cultural entrepreneurs—the teachers, the journalists, the novelists, the politicians, and so on—from our understanding of the middle class. What exactly was the relationship between these groups and the Industrial Revolution? In fact, recent studies seem to emphasize the extent to which this ‘foundational’ middle class too was the product of conscious interventions in social and public life of nineteenth century England or the United States.\(^{12}\) Although the industrial revolution certainly forms an important backdrop to their study of the middle class, Mary Ryan as well as Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall focus on the centrality of cultural projects, and particularly the recasting of gender relations within the family, to the construction of a middle class in England or the United States. Dror Wahrman goes further in challenging prevalent ideas about the middle-class. Suggesting that arguments about an Industrial Revolution leading to an inevitable ‘rise of the middle class’ are more a mythical construct than historical reality, Wahrman contends that the idea of a middle class was actually the product of political representations, carried out in the public sphere.\(^{13}\) Much like colonial India, it seems, the image of Britain as a middle class society came into being through the ‘language of writers and speakers as found in those means of public communication geared towards interventions in the political process and towards audiences interested in such interventions.’\(^{14}\) Instead of a fixed sociological category bounded by income or occupation, Wahrman argues that in Britain ‘the precise social referent of the notion of ‘middle class’ was far from being well defined, and indeed that this vagueness often served the purpose of its users.’\(^{15}\) But it is precisely this myth which now stands as a model against which non-western historical developments are judged. Increasingly, scholarship in other parts of the world too is examining the middle class not only as a project of self-constitution with only indirect links to economic power, but also emphasizing the importance of social manners, morals, and values as integral to middle class formation. Such scholarship, for one, questions a causal connection between rapid industrialization and the emergence of a ‘middle class society.’ These
studies also reveal that public sphere interventions were critical in establishing certain myths about middle class formation.\textsuperscript{16}

With this background then, we can better understand the selections used in this volume. The essays are divided into four parts. The first part, titled ‘framing the middle class,’ looks at writings from the late nineteenth and first part of the twentieth century that are either by or about the newly emerging middle class. These not only give us a sense of how the ‘middle class’ enters public discourse in colonial India, but also how many of the later discussions and critiques of the middle class are prefigured in these documents. The second section surveys the major scholarly writings and debates about the middle class in colonial India. Until recently, much of the discussion on this subject took place without any attention to the ways in which gender, caste, and religion have been central to middle class formation in colonial India. The third section of the book explicitly focuses on the importance of these themes to the historiography of the middle class. In the last section of the book I include essays which explore new fields of study that still need more research. They all engage with concerns of everyday life that have not really been explored in detail by historians of colonial India. Together, the selections included in this anthology seek to explore the dilemmas of being middle class in colonial India and provide a window into how these have been tackled by a variety of scholarly approaches.\textsuperscript{17}

FRAMING THE MIDDLE CLASS

One of the purposes of books in this series is to ‘chart the historiographical shifts that have occurred since the theme emerged.’ The idea of an Indian middle class emerged in the colonial era, and selections used in the first section of this book introduce readers to some of the early discussions about the middle class from the late nineteenth through to the middle of the twentieth century. In no way are these selections meant to be ‘representative’ of the tremendous regional and linguistic diversity of middle class writings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nor does this section even try to represent the canonical figures of middle class politics and literature—Rabindranath Tagore and Mohandas Gandhi are conspicuous by their absence in this section, for instance, as are any women writers. Rather than try to create an anthology of representative ‘primary sources’ of middle class writing (a task which would take more room and much more linguistic competence than I have at my disposal), I have tried to select writing that captures some of the important concerns and anxieties about middle class-ness that
were present during the making of the middle-class. As we will see, these concerns also permeate later historians’ discussions and assumptions about the middle class of colonial India, and in many ways continue to inform contemporary discussions about the middle class.

The middle class was very much a product of British colonialism. I therefore start by looking at how the colonial rulers themselves saw this social group, and use as an example an extract from the farewell speech by the Viceroy to India, the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, as he prepared to leave the office in November 1888. It is quite apparent that the major purpose of Lord Dufferin’s speech was to refute demands being made by the newly-formed Indian National Congress for greater representation of Indians in the colonial administration. Dufferin stressed that given India’s tremendous social, economic, cultural, and above all religious diversity, a ‘microscopic minority’ of educated Indians (he is careful to avoid using the term ‘middle class’ while describing the social group) could not claim to represent this tremendous diversity.

Despite the overall tone and intent of the Viceroy’s address, we can derive a good sense of the historical context that produced the middle class from his speech. Clearly, the middle class was regarded as an important social formation of some significance by the rulers. Else, there would be little reason for Dufferin to have spent a considerable amount of time criticizing the Indian National Congress, then only three years old and with shallow roots in Indian society. That an unsympathetic outgoing Viceroy said he wished to ‘enlarge the surface of our contact with the educated and intelligent public opinion of India,’ no doubt reinforced the middle class’ own sense of self-importance. Equally though, Dufferin’s speech also reveals the ways in which the colonial rulers sought to put the middle class in its place. From the rhetoric of English people’s love of liberty and egalitarianism he quickly moved to the reminder that the English would never permit any interference in the exercise of their power over India. To reinforce this argument, Dufferin went on to excoriate the unrepresentative character of the western-educated middle class, based on their minuscule numbers in proportion to the Indian population, as well as the parochialism of their agenda. As much as the opportunities offered by colonialism, then, the ways in which colonial officialdom sought to limit, circumscribe, and criticize their influence had a tremendous impact on shaping the middle class of colonial India.

Whatever his personal opinions about the emerging middle class, a public speech by the outgoing Viceroy had to be somewhat guarded in
its language. Dufferin chose to display his disappointment over criticism of his administration through sarcasm rather than open hostility. Other supporters of the imperial cause were not limited in the same way. Perhaps the best known of these was the writer Rudyard Kipling. Much more comfortable with an older, authoritarian and paternalist style of administration, Kipling lampooned liberal administrators and commentators as fiercely as he did the emerging westernized middle class of India, through characters such as Hurree Chunder Mookerjee in *Kim* or Grish Chunder De in ‘Head of the District.’ Kipling was at his vitriolic best when contrasting the superficial veneer of westernization in these characters with others whom he represented as ‘real’ or authentic Indians, whether they be the Lama or Mahbub Ali in *Kim*, or the rugged Pathan tribesmen of ‘Head of the District.’ This distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity was to find a significant echo in debates within the emerging middle class of colonial India as well.

Critiques of native social customs such as those articulated by Dufferin, or the charges of cultural inauthenticity exemplified in Kipling’s writings, were to have a profound impact on the constitution of the middle class in this time. Some middle class activists, for instance Mahadev Govind Ranade (and in a different way, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan) took colonial critiques seriously enough to devote their energies to social and religious reform. But equally significantly, criticism of the apparently derivative agenda of middle class reformism arose from within the middle class. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s scathing critiques of the anglicized Bengali Baboo are known to most readers of modern Indian history. Less known perhaps are people such as Sajjad Hussain, a inveterate critic of Sir Sayyid’s modernizing efforts, and whom Sajjad never failed to lampoon in his *Oudh Punch.* Debates between the so-called traditionalists and modernizers were, in fact, a staple of the middle class milieu in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But rather than recapitulate that well-known debate through primary sources, I have chosen to introduce a more unusual primary source next.

Aurobindo Ghosh is better known for his advocacy of radical nationalism in his earlier days and for his later incarnation as a spiritual leader and seer. Yet the extract from his famous series of essays in the *Indu Prakash* also reveals the extent to which the colonial critique of cultural inauthenticity remained a very central element of middle class formation in colonial India.

Aurobindo Ghosh may well have been one of the first to consistently use the label ‘middle class’ to describe people who had been variously
referred to and who had described themselves as the ‘educated classes,’
or ‘the thinking classes’ of British India.24 But his use of this label for
this social group (in which he included himself, incidentally), was
not particularly complimentary. ‘Of all brand new articles we have
imported,’ Ghosh said, ‘inconceivably the most important is that large
class of people—journalists, barristers, doctors, officials, graduates, and
traders—who have grown up and are increasing with prurient rapidity
under the aegis of the British rule: and this class I call the middle class.’
The aim of this series of essays was to point out what he considered to be
the excessive timidity of the leadership of the Indian National Congress
in the face of an oppressive colonial power which did not care a whit for
Indian interests. To do so, Aurobindo argued that the party represented
not the entire nation, but a small fragment of it—the middle class. What
is even more interesting, though, are the terms of Aurobindo’s critique
of the middle class which go beyond simple critiques of elitism and
echo the charges of cultural inauthenticity we noted earlier. Ghosh
compared the Indian middle class to low-priced British imports, such
as ‘cheap Liverpool cloths, [and] shoddy Brummagem wares.’ Both were
equally responsible, in his opinion, for destroying ‘the fine and genuine
textures’ of traditional Indian society. In fact, his very preference for the
term ‘middle class’ rather than others which were used by the Congress
leaders of his time is rooted in this notion. Continuing his comparison
of the westernized middle class leadership to superficially attractive
English artefacts, Ghosh concludes that ‘when we are so proud of our
imported English goods, it would be absurd, when we want labels for
them, not to import their English names as well.’

However damning Aurobindo Ghosh’s usage may have been, his
label was soon to be appropriated in much more positive ways by his
contemporaries and successors. An editorial in The Bengalee from 1911
clearly reveals a much more confident middle class than was described
by Aurobindo. Greater representation in local councils—a demand
being made by the middle class for at least twenty five years—was by now
asserted with a degree of self assurance that had been lacking earlier.
More than simply aspiring to prominence in society, the editorial
appears to suggest both a historical inevitability and a moral imperative
about the role that the middle class was destined to play in colonial
India. This was, in part, based on a (somewhat selective) reading of Euro-
Atlantic history. The historical successes of England, France, and the
United States are attributed to the presence of the middle class in these
countries, whereas the reason for the failures of Russia and Portugal are
deemed to be a result of these nations not having a middle class. The very presence of a middle class then, was a necessary condition of success in this modern age, if we are to believe *The Bengalee*, and its absence a recipe for failure and decline. This is so because, the newspaper tells us: 'Wherever you have a middle class, you have enlightenment, freedom, progress and prosperity. Wherever society is sharply divided into upper and lower strata ... you have superstition, reaction, poverty and decay.' It was as champions of enlightenment, freedom, and progress, as well as the crusaders against superstition and reaction that the Indian middle class made their claims to leadership of native society and demanded a greater representation in the running of the country.

Read together, Aurobindo and *The Bengalee* reveal some interesting facets of middle class formation in colonial India. There is considerable difference in their assessment of the middle class, of course. Whereas for Ghosh the importing of the category signals the extent to which the middle class is alienated from the real textures of Indian society, for *The Bengalee* the presence of the middle class is evidence of India realizing the promises and fruits of modernity. The middle class of *The Bengalee*'s editorial could hardly be accused of the sort of 'mendicancy' that had so infuriated Aurobindo Ghosh. But nor is there any evidence, in *The Bengalee*, of the auto-critique undertaken by Ghosh. Yet, both points of view clearly acknowledge that the middle class is a category whose original home lies in the West. Both base their analysis on a comparison of the Indian middle class with a putatively 'original' Western middle class. For Aurobindo the comparison provides evidence of loss of authentic tradition; for *The Bengalee*, a comparison is the basis of its claim to power.

A facile reading of history might suggest that the gains made by middle class activists in the decade or so after Aurobindo’s critiques gave them the confidence to overcome their earlier reservations. Certainly, the Government of India Act of 1909 strengthened middle class representation in decision-making bodies. Middle class publications thrived, and lent greater public visibility to their causes. The partition of Bengal would be revoked later in the year, lending credibility to the claims of political leadership made by the Indian National Congress, described by Aurobindo as a 'middle class machine.' Yet, reading this as a simple history of growing middle class confidence would have to ignore the fact that throughout the colonial era (and well beyond, as I will later suggest), middle class discourse retained a significant degree of anxiety about its purported cultural inauthenticity. This is not to ignore
their successes or the greater confidence that success bred. Nor can the historian ignore the considerable amount of anxiety about their own authenticity or lack of it that permeated historical discourse through the colonial era, and beyond.

The last of the readings in this section is from Jawaharlal Nehru’s magnificent *Discovery of India*. One would think that more than half a century after Aurobindo’s critique, and a new Indian middle class leadership poised to take power from the British (with the author himself at the helm), there would be fewer anxieties about the authenticity of the Indian middle class. Of course, Nehru’s work anticipates decolonization, and that confidence is reflected in the very project he undertakes in the book. Yet, as we shall see, even as late as the 1940s, concerns about cultural authenticity were prominent even in the writing of this quintessential representative of the westernized middle class. Writing about the era following the First World War, Nehru contrasted India’s sturdy peasants, tempered by centuries of hardship, with ‘déclassé intellectuals’ cut off from the land. This contrast itself is revealing. Romanticizing the hardship of the peasants, Nehru believed them to be somehow more authentic than the middle class, whom he chose to represent as belonging neither to the traditional or the modern world. Reflecting some of the ideas first articulated by men like Dufferin or Kipling, Nehru wrote to say that while the middle class were attracted by modernity ‘they lacked its inner content.’ Nowhere does he tell us what this inner content was, or why educated Indians were incapable of grasping it. Presumably the socialist Nehru perceived some impermeable barrier, undoubtedly related to the very different historical experiences of the western and non-western world, that made Indians lack the ‘inner content’ of (a presumably irremediably western) modernity. Frustrated by their inability to be real and authentic, Nehru suggests that among the Indian middle classes ‘[s]ome tried to cling tenaciously to the dead forms of the past....[while] Others made themselves pale and ineffectual copies of the West.’ Because neither was effective, men of the Indian middle class became, ‘...derelicts, frantically seeking some foothold of security for body and mind and mind and finding none, they floated aimlessly in the murky waters of Indian life.’

While we can dwell on the social, political, psychological or cultural reasons for these representations of the Indian middle class, I would like to highlight here the perceptions of the historical. One reason why both the colonialist and nationalist, why traditionalists and modernists in India, could label the Indian middle class inauthentic was because
the real history of a real middle class, it was assumed, lay elsewhere, specifically in the West. As we shall see, the concerns about authenticity and inauthenticity, about comparisons, came to shape the debates among later historians too when it came to the study of the middle class in colonial India.

**DEBATING THE MIDDLE CLASS**

The second section of this book introduces readers to some of the most important scholarly debates about the existence, origins, and working of the middle class in colonial India. It starts with critical review of Jawaharlal Nehru's *Discovery of India* by one of the most remarkable polymaths of his time, Damodar Dharmanand Kosambi. There are many reasons why Kosambi’s review kicks off this section of the book, not the least of which is because of the subject of the review. Though Nehru was not a professional historian, his book is an important landmark in the historiography of India. On the middle class, for instance, Nehru makes a compelling argument linking its formation to material conditions initiated by colonialism, and more specifically to certain contradictions inherent in colonial rule over India. Undoubtedly Nehru drew upon the work of Marxist thinkers and activists who had made such connections before him, such as Manabendra Nath Roy, as well as the work of nationalist historians like Romesh Chunder Dutt. Scholars such as Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji were soon to elaborate on the arguments we encounter in the *Discovery of India*, linking the formation of a ‘new middle class’ to colonial land-tenure and commercial policies. Yet the sweeping vision, lucid arguments and compelling prose of *Discovery of India* ensured that this work was to play a very important role in shaping the narratives of modern Indian history, including our understanding of the middle class.

Perhaps an even more important reason for starting this section on scholarly debates about the middle class with Kosambi’s review is because of its uninhibited use of a Marxist framework (albeit an explicitly unorthodox one) to understand the Indian middle class. Despite its limitations, we really cannot ignore Marxist frameworks while deploying class as a category of social analysis. Yet it is a telling commentary on the changing nature of academic fashion that few of the scholars whose writings follow Kosambi’s essay in this volume do so. One reason for this could well be Marx’s own emphasis on a bipolar class model, leaving little room for theoretical discussions of intermediate social classes. Yet to overlook Marxist methodology all
together would also mean ignoring the importance of Marxism in the shaping of our understanding of modern South Asian history.\textsuperscript{29} Even if quoting Marx is no longer fashionable in the era of postcolonial scholarship, the political edge bequeathed by the Marxist tradition—the idea that the point of scholarship is not just to interpret the world but to change it—remains an important one in Indian historiography, even among scholars who find it impossible to overlook the Eurocentricism of Marxist paradigms.\textsuperscript{30}

Though appreciative of Nehru’s vision, Kosambi takes him to task for virtually ignoring class, class struggle, and capital accumulation as the explanatory framework for understanding the recent history of India. For Kosambi, as the title of his review suggests, the 1940s signal the ‘coming of age of the Indian bourgeoisie.’ The review reveals quite clearly the many strengths as well as some of the limitations of the Marxist framework Kosambi employs. Evident is a prescient analysis of the strengths and limitations of the middle class agenda in soon-to-be independent India, including a provocative argument explaining the emerging divergence between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. But even Kosambi’s unorthodox Marxism cannot overcome the apparent disregard for delving too deeply into the character and composition of an intermediate social group called the middle class. In Kosambi’s analysis, intellectuals and political activists are conflated with industrial and financial tycoons, making all elements of the middle class appear to be either tools or representative of financial and industrial capital. However, it must be noted that Kosambi’s approach is remarkably free of attempts at explicit or implicit comparisons of the Indian bourgeoisie with an ‘original’ western model. It is such comparisons, and the inevitable discovery of a lack or lag, which most infuriates critics of Marxist teleologies among contemporary postcolonial critics.\textsuperscript{31}

The nation and its toiling millions became the focus of virtually all Indian historiography of the first four decades after independence. It appears that historians were not really interested in the middle class. There were also other factors at work. As Satish Deshpande suggests, ‘the middle class may have seemed an ‘unworthy’ or self-indulgent topic for a generation of social scientists drawn from this class, who believed their mandate was to act on behalf of ‘the people’ who constituted the nation.’\textsuperscript{32} With a focus on the lower orders of society then, there was little attempt at exploring the making of India’s middle class.\textsuperscript{33} While scholars of the 1950s and 1960s did use the term ‘middle class’ extensively, for the most part the middle class was assumed to be a self-evident sociological
category which did not need further explanation. This is typified in Banke Bihari Misra's seminal work on the Indian middle classes, which follows Kosambi's review in this volume. Misra says that 'since most of us, without the aid of a specialist, understand what we mean when we use the term,' he sees little need or value in trying to reach more precise definitions of the middle class. Instead, Misra presents us with a rich introduction to the history of the commercial, landed, educated, and professional 'middle classes.' To a large extent, this first academic study of the Indian middle class of colonial India concurs with earlier assumptions of colonial administrators and Indian nationalists. Misra, like most of the writers reviewed in the first section of this volume^{34} saw the middle class in colonial India simply as the product of English education, the rule of law, and a capitalist economy introduced by the British in India. There was little sense of the middle class' own efforts in their creation. It is a testament to how under-studied the category of the middle class is in Indian history that B. B. Misra's work remains, to date, one of the few comprehensive treatments of the subject by a historian of India.

Though the making of a middle class may not have been the focus of Indian historiography, a large proportion of it during the 1960s, 1970s and even the 1980s, did deal with the activities of middle class nationalists. It would be inappropriate, even if it were possible, to summarize this vast array of fine historical literature around nationalism. All that is really possible given limitations of space and time is to mention a few exemplary works, by scholars whose study of nationalism was particularly useful for understanding the making of the middle class. Among these would have to be Bipan Chandra's study of economic nationalism, Sumit Sarkar's exploration of the Swadeshi movement in Bengal, and John McLane's excellent study of the early Indian National Congress.\textsuperscript{35} While it may be unusual to reference a textbook among specialized monographs, Sumit Sarkar's \textit{Modern India} is far from a usual textbook. For the subject of this volume, I cannot think of a better short introduction to the study of the middle class of colonial India than contained in Sarkar's textbook.\textsuperscript{36} In their own very different ways the work of these scholars took our understanding of the middle class well beyond the limited parameters suggested by scholars such as Misra who had easily fallen into describing the middle class much as colonial officials had, by agreeing, for instance, with the argument that 'the Indian middle class which the British aimed at creating was to be a class of imitators, not the originators of new values and methods.'
The body of opinion represented by B. B. Misra, however, remained strong and these assumptions about the middle class came to be shared by scholars in the 1970s and 1980s who denied the existence of a ‘real’ middle class in India all together. Working on revisionist interpretations of Indian nationalism, historians from Cambridge University in the 1970s saw educated Indians acting as ‘clients’ of other powerful people, and completely without an independent political agenda. Michelguglielmo Torri built on these ideas to argue that the devastating intervention of the ‘Cambridge school’ historians exploded a ‘master concept’ of Indian historiography and signed the ‘death warrant’ of the middle class as a category of Indian history. Describing them as the urban non-capitalist bourgeoisie, he suggests that it was precisely because of their role as intellectuals, that the so-called middle class suffered the ‘delusion’ of belonging to an autonomous social group, ‘endowed with a political weight of its own.’ It is striking to see the extent to which Torri too works with the idea of there being a real middle class against which he can compare the Indian version to find it lacking. This notion of a real middle class located in western history is hardly limited to Torri’s work. In fact, one could argue that it has come to acquire the status of historical common sense. For instance, in his otherwise fascinating study of construction of modern Sikhism, Harjot Oberoi rejects the applicability of the term middle class to Indian history because he sees the former as a category which is the product of Europe’s historical experience of industrialization. ‘In India on the other hand petty bureaucrats and urban professionals could at best only dream of industrialization; thus this non-productive class could not appropriately be named middle class.’ Joya Chatterjee repeats the same argument in her work on Bengal’s partition.

Given the origins of Torri’s inspiration, it is instructive to note the differences between his position and the arguments outlined by Christopher Bayly, earlier identified with the so-called Cambridge school. Refuting the idea that the history of India was so different as to preclude the emergence of public sphere politics comparable to that of Europe (crucial to middle class formation), Bayly suggests that ‘public opinion—the weight of reasoned debate—was not the preserve of modern or western polities.’ Tracing a much longer indigenous genealogy for the public sphere activities of the later nineteenth century activists, Bayly suggests that these men, whom he terms the ‘north Indian ecumene,’ drew upon a tradition of debate, persuasion, and communication which owed as much to Indian norms as they did to
Comte or Mazzini.’ This ecumene, he points out, had long functioned as a critical reasoning public, with the literati or officials using poetry, satire, letter-writing, placarding, festivals, and religious congregations to exercise a degree of critical surveillance on the activities of the state. Though certainly contestable, Bayly’s point of view provides a unique perspective to the discussion on the Indian middle class. At the very least he allows us to understand the significant continuities that mark the pre-colonial and colonial eras and better understand the nature of the resources—material as well as cultural—that were deployed in middle class formation during the colonial era.

If Christopher Bayly looked for the pre-colonial traditions of public debate in India, Partha Chatterjee, in contrast, suggests that no real public sphere could ever exist in colonial India. What Chatterjee terms ‘the rule of colonial difference,’ ensured that any rights the middle class may have believed they possessed, that of public criticism of colonial policies, were in fact denied any legitimacy in the colonial milieu. Even as late as the 1880s, the only ‘public sphere’ that existed in colonial India, Chatterjee contends, consisted of ‘European residents of the country.’ The Indian middle class, he suggests in the extract we read from the book, even while contesting ‘colonial difference’ in the public sphere, came to locate their own project of counter-hegemony in a ‘spiritual’ or ‘inner’ domain, over which they claimed sovereignty. It was here that they sought to fashion a middle class nation that would be both modern and traditional, strong enough to contest colonial rule yet not lose its essential cultural uniqueness. The Calcutta middle class was thus attracted to Ramakrishna’s teachings, yet, as Chatterjee demonstrates through his reading of the Kathamrta, their attempts also reveal the ‘fears and anxieties of a class aspiring to hegemony [and] ... reveals to us the subalternity of an elite.’

Chatterjee’s work is an excellent representative of the postcolonial approach to the study of the middle class in colonial India, and displays the significant strengths as well as some of the possible limitations of this approach. It certainly helps to open up ways of thinking about the middle class in colonial India beyond the categories of analysis derived from the European Enlightenment and naturalized through the colonial experience. The advantages of this are many. For one, it eases (though not completely alleviates) the burden of comparisons that has dogged the historiography of the middle class in colonial India which compares the middle class of colonial India and finds it deficient, in many respects, to a presumed liberal and enlightened western middle class. Rather than
Chatterjee's work highlights the contradictions and racism inherent in a colonial milieu that could not but lead to the fashioning of a distinct and different colonial modernity. The Indian middle class Chatterjee describes could not, therefore, be the same as the idealized middle class of the Western tradition. Responding to the colonial milieu, they fashioned their counterhegemonic project in the ‘inner domain of cultural identity,’ and with a sense of despair at their lack of successes in the public sphere. Their interventions, seeking to create a new middle class national culture, were consciously created as models that differed from the ideals of western modernity. Second, and equally important, the postcolonial approach that Chatterjee and others employ, allows for a shift in the focus of historiography away from purely political history, so that we finally get some serious attention paid to the ‘inner domains’ of middle class politics such as the family and religion.

The limitations of postcolonial approaches have been addressed by a number of scholars. Probably the most articulate of the critics has been Sumit Sarkar, whose own work on the middle class shows how factors such as income, caste, and the new discipline of clock-time, rather than the resistance to a generalized ‘colonial discourse,’ shaped middle class identities in colonial Bengal. A critique from a different perspective is made by Claude Markovits in his essay that follows Chatterjee in this collection. Markovits complains that most studies of the middle class in colonial India only look at cultural productions of western educated professionals while ignoring merchant groups—a very justifiable criticism of the existing scholarship. To remedy the situation somewhat, Markovits focuses primarily on entrepreneurial and merchant groups in this essay where, he claims, ‘Macaulay and his kind play no role.’ Markovits doesn’t quite deliver what he promises, as comparisons between merchants and ‘Macaulayans’ occur through the essay. However, he does succeed in pointing out the distinctness of mercantile middle class groups, who, he argues ‘remained largely separate from the world of the English-educated middle classes.’ But perhaps the most significant contribution of Markovits’ essay is to point out the scant attention historians of the middle class have paid to groups such as the Marwari, Gujarati, or Chettiar merchant and entrepreneurial communities while proffering their analyses of the middle class in colonial India.

The last essay in this section represents one of the most recent interventions on the subject of the middle class in colonial India. Drawing upon some of the newest work on the middle class in India as
well as other parts of the world, Prashant Kidambi dispenses with the idea that we can look at the middle class as some sort of given, stable entity. Focusing on upper-caste white-collar salaried employees in colonial Bombay, Kidambi shows how they invoked a distinctive ‘middle class identity’ when demanding better wages and working conditions, and simultaneously distanced themselves from similar demands being made by manual workers in the city. Kidambi is also careful to show how material concerns shaped the making of Bombay’s middle class. In doing so his argument contests ‘the assumption that there was a clear-cut distinction between the ‘material’ and ‘cultural’ domains in the ideological articulation of middle class identity.’

It is perhaps fitting that an essay calling for attention to material domain of middle class formation in colonial India closes this section of the book which began with Kosambi’s Marxist reading of the role of the Indian bourgeoisie. Kidambi’s essay, as important as it is for what it says, is also significant in how it reveals the trajectories taken by the scholarship on the middle class since Kosambi’s analysis. Clearly aware of the critiques undertaken by postcolonial interventions, Kidambi never invokes the sort of invidious comparisons with a putatively originary middle class of the kind that informed, for instance, the work of B. B. Misra. Nor is he willing to give up entirely on looking at the middle class as a comparable social formation by emphasizing only the uniqueness of a colonial modernity. But, as Kidambi himself points out, there are certainly limitations in his approach. In its lack of attention to gender, as well as to caste and religion, Kidambi’s essay is fairly representative of the mainstream scholarship on the middle class of colonial India. All of these dimensions of middle class formation certainly need much more attention, and it is to them we turn in the next section of the book.

GENDER, CASTE, AND RELIGION IN THE MAKING OF MIDDLE CLASS MODERNITY

One of the conceits of a foundational category such as ‘class’ is to relegate to subordinate status other vectors of social hierarchy, and other forms of social or cultural identity. Engaging with gender, caste and religion, the essays in this section of the book also bring to fore some larger questions. Can a category such as ‘class’ which clearly has roots in a variety of Eurocentric traditions, be capacious enough to accommodate other social and cultural variables? Even more significantly, does privileging class (in this case, the category ‘middle class’) help us better understand the ways in which class, caste, and religion played out in the
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politics of colonial India? The essays in this section of the book suggest that the answer to these questions should be a definite yes.

Despite the fact that being middle class in colonial India (as elsewhere) was a highly gendered project, it took historiography quite a while to recognize and appreciate the fact. In spite of obvious upper-caste dominance, attention to issues of caste in the historiography of Indian middle class modernity is even more recent. Religion, though, has had a slightly different place in the writings on colonial India. Primarily because the politics of religious identities produced a political division in the subcontinent, and then because of the continued salience of religion in politics, historians of middle class activities in colonial India have paid attention to religious identities. However, despite a couple of decades of bashing, Orientalist traditions remain well and alive, which explains why a particularly reified notion of religious identities continues to permeate the writing of Indian history.

A large and vibrant body of feminist scholarship has engaged in revealing the extent to which the project of middle class nationalism was a gendered one. This is a tradition that probably predates the first generation of Indian feminist activism. Despite the limitations under which they operated, early Indian feminists such as Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya or Uma Nehru made their critique of patriarchal assumptions governing middle class nationalism quite apparent. It took a much longer time, though, for these critical viewpoints to make their way into mainstream historiography of modern India. It was really only during the 1980s and 1990s, through the efforts of many feminist historians, that the gendering of the middle class of colonial India came to the attention of other historians of the region. Thanks to some of these writings, modern Indian historiography now boasts of stellar scholarship about how colonialism and nationalism recast patriarchy in colonial India to create dutiful daughters, bourgeois bahu (daughters-in-law) or efficient housewives. Increasingly, in fact, feminist historians are turning to examine ways in which middle class connections cut across lines of metropole and colony to reaffirm patriarchal authority or other elite agenda.

The essay by Tanika Sarkar included in this volume builds on and contributes to the established tradition of feminist scholarship on the gendered nature of the making of the Indian middle class. What stands out in Sarkar’s approach is her steadfast refusal to subscribe to either the colonial-nationalist binary, or indeed the divide between materialist and cultural historians. Though paying careful attention to the material
circumstances that went into the making of the Bengali middle class, Sarkar’s essay reveals that the middle class does not arrive fully-formed as a result of these circumstances, but rather is made through the efforts of people. It is these efforts, as we can clearly see from her essay, that are highly gendered. Despite some significant disagreements, Sarkar does concur with Partha Chatterjee on the extent to which the home represented an autonomous space where the contours of a nationalist middle class were shaped. If, as Sarkar says, ‘the home was not merely an escape from this world but its critique and an alternative order’ then the relationships within that home, and in particular the conjugal relationship, had to be represented in new terms by the middle class. However, unlike Chatterjee, Sarkar is able to reveal not just the new disciplinary formations that emerge from colonial-nationalist discourse, but also the contested and contradictory nature of this discourse. Characteristic of middle class politics was not only the struggle for arenas of power against colonial domination, but also, critically, over other social groups, which at this time included women from their own class. This became apparent when women such as Rukmabai, or the Phulmani Devi case, challenged the authority of middle class men over their own households. Then, the discourse of love and affect quickly transformed itself into another kind of language that reeked of patriarchal authority and misogynistic readings of sacred texts. It only took a challenge to their authority within the home to show the limits of their claim that love, harmony and a general sense of self-fulfillment lay at the heart of middle class conjugality. Sarkar’s essay demonstrates the fractures and contradictions constitutive of middle class formation in colonial India, containing both the possibilities of egalitarian and highly authoritarian and illiberal political positions.

Dipesh Chakrabarty, although also examining notions of domesticity, gender relations and, in particular, the constructions of an ideal housewife, opens up somewhat different questions about what it means to be ‘middle class’ in colonial Bengal. While feminist scholars have often read these new ideas as the recasting of patriarchy, Chakrabarty closely examines these constructions to reveal a fundamental disconnect between bourgeois notions of domesticity, and those of the Indian middle class. This Bengali middle class approach to gender relations in the home, he argues, was constituted by tensions, as it sought to incorporate both the historical and modern as defined by the ideal-type of Western modernity, and the anti-historical modern, ‘tied to mythico-religious time’ which ‘escapes and exceeds bourgeois time.’ There was much in
the ideals Bengali middle class men proposed for the housewife which was derivative of the modernity brought by colonialism, he argues, but it was also a modernity which sought to evoke ‘formations of pleasure, emotions and ideas of good life that associated themselves with models of non-autonomous, non-bourgeois and non-secular personhood.’ His point here, as in large parts of his magisterial *Provincializing Europe*, is to demonstrate the limits of the universality of the model of modernity derived from the EuroAmerican experience. Chakrabarty suggests that these are ‘subaltern pasts’ which are not really amenable to tenets of modern secular historicization without doing considerable violence to the subjects of these pasts. Chakrabarty’s is an important contribution to any attempts at seeking a language for writing about the middle class of colonial India, for it creates space for delving into the specifics of the histories of non-western subjects without necessarily evaluating them by a history they could never replicate, or by a set of standards which would always find them wanting.

Chakrabarty is critical of the existing historiography based on public narratives of private lives as it, ‘tells us very little about what went on in the everyday lives of actual, empirical, *bhadralok* families.’ Yet, it must be said that for all its historiographical significance, in this respect his essay does not take us as far as some emerging feminist scholarship on the middle class family. Though perhaps even here, one would have hoped for more attention to the quotidian and greater use of non-official sources for the writing of family history. We are told that Indian history has to be such because India simply lacks the sort of sources that would allow the sort of detailed, local, ‘French’ style, social history of private life in India. While that may not necessarily be true, there is a problem of master narratives. So much do the themes of colonialism and nationalism frame Indian historiography, that even historiographical traditions which emerge to challenge these master narratives, end up somehow reinforcing their hold. Thus feminist critiques remain grounded in critiques of colonial and nationalist constructions. Though they successfully challenge the prevailing assumptions about colonial and nationalist reforms, through looking at gender relations in the family, they really have not shed light on the more mundane aspects of family politics. Perhaps Chakrabarty is right in concluding that secular historicist narratives are incapable of apprehending non bourgeois personhood—or as he puts it elsewhere, subaltern pasts are not amenable to strategies of radical histories.

M. S. S. Pandian’s essay introduces readers to a fracture at the heart of middle class modernity in colonial and postcolonial India analogous
to Tanika Sarkar’s argument. Just as Sarkar’s essay clearly shows the
gendered nature of middle class formation in colonial India, Pandian
turns our attention to the extent to which constructions of middle class
modernity are hugely inflected by caste. Focusing as it does on the
processes by which middle class public sphere activists ‘delegitimised
the language of caste in the domain of politics,’ Pandian shows that in
accounts of modern, middle class life, ‘caste always belongs to someone
else; it is somewhere else; it is of another time.’ Pandian’s essay highlights
the denial of the significance of caste by middle class activists, who were
themselves from the upper castes and contrasts their writings with
those from people of lower castes, for whom caste is a central fact of
their everyday life. His essay makes apparent the discomfort of upper
 caste intellectuals and scholars (whether the novelist R. K. Narayan or
the sociologist M. N. Srinivas) are about their own upper caste status,
as this highlights for them some of the limits of the ‘universal’ values
and principles they espouse. The championing of an ‘unmarked
modern’ by middle class activists, he argues, ‘is stealthily upper caste
in its orientation.’ Just as middle class nationalists sought to deny the
inequities of power between men and women, they sought to deny or
justify the existence of caste inequalities through explanations and
analogies deploying the languages of modernity. Caste was either just
another form of division of labour, or else a form of creating boundaries
between hygienic and unhygienic practices, according to middle class
nationalists. Yet, as Pandian argues, this reveals middle class nationalism
to be not simply the contestation of colonial domination, but also a
strategy to secure ‘domination over the subaltern social groups such as
lower castes, women, marginal linguistic regions, by the national elite.’

Historiographically, caste and class have had an uneasy relationship
in the writings on colonial India. Thanks to a strong Orientalist
tradition, some of whose origins have been well explored by Nicholas
Dirks, among others, studies of class in India have had, and continue to
have, a particularly ambiguous relationship with caste. Louis Dumont,
for instance, forcefully argued that hierarchy, exemplified by religion
and caste, rather than equality and social mobility characteristic of class
society, were emblematic of Indian society. Class, he therefore warned,
was a completely inappropriate category of social analysis to use for
India. Perhaps seeking to be more authentic by the use of ‘indigenous’
categories, many outstanding studies of middle class life in colonial India
limited themselves to a single caste community. Precisely because the
middle class was so decidedly upper-caste in its composition, yet sought
to represent the entire nation, mobilization of lower caste groups had a profound impact on its politics. The mobilization of groups such as the Namashudras of Bengal, the non-Brahmin movement in Madras Presidency, or Jyotiba Phule and then the rise of the Ambedkar-led movement in western India, clearly challenged middle class hegemony. If one response to this was a mild autocritique and paternalistic ‘uplift’ movements sponsored by liberal elements among the middle class, an equally significant response was an aggressive championing of Hindu nationalism by the middle class of colonial India. It is middle class religiosity, including involvement in Hindu nationalism, that the next two essays in the section explore.

Despite much evidence to the contrary, the notion that somehow an ideal-type middle class must be secular, enlightened, and liberal, persists in writings about the middle class. This is a standard particularly applied to the middle class of non-western or formerly colonized countries. The place of religion in the historiography of colonial India is perhaps even more fraught with problems of reification than the ‘career of caste’ described by Nicholas Dirks. As a result two kinds of approaches predominate. We have, on the one hand, the reduction of religion to politics, the pigs-and-troughs analogy where religion functions merely as a guise for apparently more real economic and political interests. On the other hand, scholars have essentialized religious identities into something primordial and foundational. Yet, as the essays in this section suggest, such dichotomies are not very useful. My essay about the remaking of Hindu religiosity in Lucknow, and Margrit Pernau’s work on the ‘secularization’ of middle class Muslims in Delhi, both reveal that religion both shaped and was shaped by the very processes that created a modern middle class in colonial India.

A redefinition of respectability was key to the emergence of the middle class in both Lucknow and Delhi. Margrit Pernau studies a section of Muslim professionals and intellectuals began to reconfigure the meaning of being sharif, or respectable, meant. This ‘new meaning of sharif’ Pernau suggests ‘laid less emphasis on birth, noble lineage, and inherited qualities and more on behaviour and achievement.’ This allowed for the emergence of a middle class, ‘[w]ith an identity of its own, clearly demarcated both from the nobility and the lower classes.’ Far from a class committed to secularist ideals, religion, new forms of Islamic piety in this case, played a central role in the constitution of the middle class Pernau describes. Sections of the new middle class were drawn from among the ulama (religious scholars). But more significant
was the reworking of what constituted appropriate religiosity, one that now emphasized ‘this-worldly activity as a means to salvation.’ Moreover, a focus on the message of revealed texts such as the Quran and the Hadith, reduced the importance of mediatory religious specialists and made personal agency and achievements more significant. A new middle class Islamic religiosity, Pernau thus argues, was both the product and the producer of the Muslim middle class in nineteenth century Delhi.

Middle class activists played a central role in the way religiosity came to be imagined and practiced in colonial India. Of course, policies of the colonial state certainly played a significant role in the way religion was reshaped in the period. However, whether Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh, syncretic or sectarian in approach, middle class activists played a central role in the way religion was deployed in politics, or in the emergence of new forms of piety, and in reworking the relationship between religion and politics during the colonial era. However, as some previous essays in this volume have noted, there was a tremendous variety in the ‘middle class’ interventions in the area of religion during the colonial era. Middle class intellectuals manned both the liberal and the conservative, the revivalist and the reformist, sides of the fierce debates that erupted over the place of religion in public life. In some cases, in fact, the same middle class activists moved from one position to another. Occasionally, this has been read as evidence of middle class hypocrisy. But, the essays in this volume suggest, such vacillations may well have been integral to the constitution of the middle class in colonial India.

My essay on the middle class of Lucknow, for instance, shows the emergence of a new ‘public’ religiosity among the Hindu middle class of the city. This was an effort to create a singular kind of ‘Hinduism’ from multiple strands of beliefs and practices. Liberated from specific devotional beliefs, social and cultural practices, and detached from the world-views from which they emerged, purged of its divisive and hierarchical aspects, this ‘republicized religiosity’ was easily deployed for a variety of modern projects in which the middle class played a central role. The effort to create a more or less monolithic ‘Hinduism’ was, of course, largely an upper caste and male effort, and reflected its origins. The contradictions between its claims to inclusiveness and its exclusionary practices is something I take up elsewhere, but can be seen in the efforts of the upper-caste actors M. S. S. Pandian describes in his essay in this volume. What my essay here does is to look at how the middle class recasting of religion created powerful discursive templates which were then deployed in many different ways, for a variety of different political
agenda. Not only did a transformed Hindu religiosity allow for the imagination of an exclusivist Hindu nationalism but, more surprisingly perhaps, such templates also served the project of a more liberal ‘secular’ Indian nationalism. In some cases, the same people advocated for both positions in colonial Lucknow. This was not the product of political opportunism or hypocrisy, but rather of the contradictions constitutive of middle class modernity in colonial India.

Engaging with gender, caste and religion, the essays in this section suggest a complex interaction between class and these other vectors of power and authority. What emerges fairly evidently is that we need to look beyond a paradigm that sees the middle class only as a product of income, occupation and education. Caste, gender, and religion played significant roles in shaping the colonial Indian middle class. But this cannot be used to reject the use of the middle class as a category to understand society or politics in colonial India. Of course there are social and cultural variables that are unique to the Indian context. It is also true that ‘class’ as a category of analysis developed in the context of understanding western histories and societies and naturally privileges different social and cultural traditions. Nevertheless, class analysis is ultimately about understanding and revealing relationships of power. Without the burden of a colonial and Orientalist legacy, western historiography does not appear to have had too many problems in incorporating race, class, ethnicity and gender into analyses of the middle class. It is high time ‘our’ difference be equally easily incorporated into class analysis of South Asian history. But it is not so much about the preference for one mode of analysis as it is about the insights into relationships of power that offers the best reason to focus on the middle class. As the essays in this section reveal, not only did religion, gender, and caste shape the middle class, but that middle class activism, in turn, played a crucial role in configuring gendered, upper caste, and religiously-inflected ideas about the nation, community, and modernity in colonial India. We really cannot understand the politics of caste, religion, and gender without paying close attention to the middle class. Because middle class ideas have, over time, been normalized and naturalized, it is even more important to reveal and to understand their historical evolution. Lastly, of course, the essays in this section of the book point to the absolute necessity of moving beyond simplistic comparisons of an ‘originary’ western middle class and a ‘derivative’ colonial model. In fact, in their rethinking of how the middle class modern was created by middle class activists in colonial India, these essays compel us to rethink
and expand existing models of exploring the meanings of being middle class entailed across the world.

WHITHER MIDDLE CLASS STUDIES?
In the last section of the book I include essays which point us to new and interesting directions toward which the field of middle class studies appears to be headed, and point to others that remain unexplored and need more research. The essays in this section of the volume belong together, for one, because of the way in which they all engage with concerns of everyday life that have not been explored in detail by historians of colonial South Asia. It is studies such as these which point to new, and relatively unexplored, avenues of research which historians of the middle class could profitably engage with in the future. Colonialism and nationalism are hardly absent in any of these essays. Yet, by focusing on issues as diverse as consumption, sport, and popular culture, they are able to decentre the master narratives of modern South Asian historiography, even while enriching our understanding of concerns that were, and remain, central to middle class lives. I must apologize for not paying more attention to the significant field of music and the middle class. While popular film music has not attracted the attention of historians, outstanding examples of studies on classical music resonate with many strands of the history of middle class formation in colonial India. For this absence, I can only offer a mea culpa, and as an excuse, point to the limitations of space available in volumes such as this one.

The section begins with A.R. Venkatachalapathy’s masterly study of coffee-drinking and middle class culture in colonial Tamilnadu. What can be more basic than food and drink to human society? Like other signs of middle class modernity, coffee produced its own share of anxieties among the brahmin-dominated Tamil middle class. As in other parts of India, and with other signs of Western modernity, middle class ideologues were particularly incensed by coffee’s ‘invasion’ of realms hitherto perceived as free of the taints of western modernity. It should come as no surprise to see how the consumption of coffee by women and ‘especially the supposedly blemishless, pristine and untainted countryside and its folk,’ came under particular surveillance and critique from early opponents of coffee. But over time, coffee’s popularity transformed middle class attitudes, and Venkatachalapathy’s essay reveals the very interesting processes through which this formerly alien beverage came to be normalized as the acme of upper caste and middle class Tamil culture in the twentieth century. In fact, coffee drinking
now helped to distinguish the middle class from the plebeian (and the Muslim), who were represented as consumers of tea. Venkatachalapthy’s work amply demonstrates how a focus on something ordinary can illuminate the larger processes of middle class formation and the way in which this class came to shape the world around them.

Just as we need more, and more serious, histories of food,71 we need historians to turn their talents to exploring other passions of the middle class. Sports (specifically cricket) and films are just two represented in this anthology. Cricket served the interests of empire and was equally well mobilized by those opposing imperialism.72 The outstanding work on the history of cricket in India, including very interesting insights on the role of the middle class, is by Ramachandra Guha.73 Boria Majumdar, however, has been even more prolific in detailing the history of the game in colonial and postcolonial India.74 His essay in this volume focuses on the reasons, and the means through which, the Bengali middle class patronized the sport. Cricket was encouraged by colonial authorities as one of the strategies of ‘civilizing’ the native population, and also for gaining allies amongst a section of the population—not too different from the intent laid out in the famous ‘Minute on Indian Education’ by Thomas B. Macaulay in 1835. The products of a Macaulayian educational system did not produce ‘a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.’ Similarly, exposure to cricket did not necessarily draw Indians closer to their rulers. Majumdar’s take on the middle class as patrons and participants in the sport is an explicit attempt at countering the ‘bad press’ that the middle class receive, particularly in academic forums. His celebration of middle class efforts makes for a refreshingly different perspective compared to other essays in this volume. Majumdar sees Indian middle class participation in cricket primarily in terms of contesting colonial dominance. There was, of course, much of that. What Majumdar does not dwell upon is the extent to which participating in the Imperial sport also worked to buttress the social standing of the middle class, distinguishing them from the masses. Given that the Indian aristocracy also played a significant role in the sport in colonial India,75 it would have been fascinating to see how the middle class distinguished themselves from the aristocrats in the context of what was to become not just the popular sport, but virtually a religion, in postcolonial India.76

If cricket is one modern religion in postcolonial India, cinema is the other. Discussions of both dominate the middle class media, and from my own observations, most middle class living rooms as well
as street corner conversations. There are some fascinating studies of cinema in colonial India, particularly on imperial representations of India. While the Indian film industry dates its history back to 1913 and Dadasaheb Phalke’s Rajah Harischandra, we have surprisingly few studies of Indian cinema in the colonial era. That may well be because high costs, strict regulation, and censorship did not allow for overt expressions of nationalism via films during the colonial era. So, perhaps this lacuna in film historiography has roots in Indian historiography’s preoccupation with stories about the nation. We do know, however, that early Indian film makers, particularly after the advent of sound, were deeply concerned about social issues such as marriage, family, caste and class. It might be interesting to note the extent to which middle class concerns permeated and were modified by their involvement in early Indian cinema. Without such analyses available, I have chosen to use a selection from M. Madhava Prasad’s seminal work on the history of Indian cinema in the postcolonial era. In this chapter Prasad examines ‘Middle class Cinema,’ particularly films that focus on ‘the individual in society, faced with the struggle for existence, the locus of desires, fears and hopes.’ With its focus on postcolonial India, Prasad’s work also reveals the extent to which the anxieties we noted for the Indian middle class in the colonial era continue to be central to the post-colonial Indian middle class. The relationship to modernity remains as fraught with ambivalence, with the middle class both embracing it and yet simultaneously distancing themselves from it through a celebration of the ‘real’ and ‘authentic’ rural India, exemplified for instance in Prasad’s analysis of films such as Mere Apne and Rajnigandha. The family, as in colonial times, remains a source of great anxiety. Films such as Guddi, Prasad argues, which show the process of the maturing of a schoolgirl into ‘responsible middle class womanhood,’ ultimately work to reinforce the ideals of class-based endogamy and, policing female sexuality, ultimately to legitimize middle class patriarchy.

That there are clear parallels in the themes that Prasad discovers in middle class cinema in the 1970s and the concerns of the nineteenth century Bengali middle class, is fairly obvious if we were to read Prasad’s essay in conjunction with those by Chatterjee, Sarkar and Chakrabarty earlier in the volume. This is not to suggest that there was no change in the constitution of the middle class over a period of almost a hundred years. Rather, these parallels point, first, to contradictory pulls that remain at the heart of the project to be middle class—whether in colonial or postcolonial India. Second, and much more significantly,
they also reveal that the project of being middle class is never complete. Certain elements, such as the necessity of maintaining distance from upper, and even more so, the lower classes, have to be reinforced at each historical juncture as they are central to the creation of a middle class. From that distancing emerges the claim to be better than others, and the justification for the leading roles to which the middle class aspire in society, demonstrated in Prasad's essay through his analysis of *Namak Haram*. With its focus on notions of inclusion and exclusion, of contradictions constitutive of the middle class imagination, this essay draws our attention back to the very paradoxes with which we began this study.

**STUDYING THE MIDDLE CLASS OF COLONIAL INDIA**

In different ways, contemporary critics are well attuned to the contradictions of the middle class. Let me use a small cross-section of this contemporary critique as an example. The editor of a top news magazine, a politician and political pundit, as well as a bureaucrat (also renowned as an ‘expert’ on the Indian middle class), all excoriate the Indian middle class for its failings. While Vinod Mehta points to the middle class’ hostility to empowering the poor, Mani Shankar Aiyar calls them the ‘muddle class’ and takes them to task for supporting potentially fascist politics, while Pavan K. Varma reprimands the contemporary middle class for their moral bankruptcy, contrasting their contemporary materialism with the historically progressive role the middle class played earlier in Indian history. While in agreement with elements of the critiques, what is striking about most recent analyses of the Indian middle class is the scant attention paid to the history of the middle class—beyond an idealized view of early nationalists. What historical myopia produces, in turn, is either a superficial, and ultimately grossly ahistorical nostalgia about the ‘good old days’ of a more noble middle class, or the recourse to easy cliches about the muddleheadedness or hypocrisy of the contemporary middle class. To move beyond such facile analyses, we need to understand the history of this duality.

Essays in this book have highlighted the historical constitution of the middle class in colonial India and the contours of the debates among scholars. While the essays differ in their emphases and their perspectives, the central premise behind their collation is that they illustrate the processes through which this middle class was created. They also reveal the very different ways in which this class has been represented
in scholarly writing about modern India. Being middle class in colonial India was a project. Yet, as we see through these essays, it was a project fraught with contradictions and ambivalence. While Dufferin’s attempt to paint them as a self-serving elite who only masqueraded as people’s representatives evidently reflected the anxieties of colonial rule, we also need to move beyond representations such as the one in *The Bengalee*, which represented the middle class solely as champions of liberalism, social justice and democracy.

As the essay by Kidambi, among others, reveals, the drive toward material success as well as an ethic of public service were constitutive of the making of a middle class in colonial India. That it was a class made aware of its own limitations is quite apparent from Aurobindo’s self-critical look at the middle class. The concern with a lack of authenticity that Aurobindo reveals continues to pervade the middle class imagination. While it sometimes produced a relatively harmless (even admirable) drive to master the domains of the indigenous and the western, in other cases the anxiety about authenticity had more serious consequences for public and private life in colonial and postcolonial India. Ideas about religion, nation, and most significantly, about appropriate gender relations, came to be inflected by this anxiety. Modern nationalism, communalism, as well as many of the more invidious attempts at recasting patriarchy are its products. Equally fraught were the relations between the middle class and the subaltern groups whose interests they claimed to represent, particularly during the nationalist movement. Nehru’s essay shows the extent to which the middle class was aware of the social and economic distance between themselves and those on whose behalf they spoke. This distance was negotiated in different ways, depending on time, location and context. There is no doubt that male, upper caste, norms became the foundations of the modern society that the middle class sought to forge in colonial and postcolonial India—as Pandian and Venkatachalapathy show. Yet, these essays also reveal the extent to which these upper caste norms and practices needed to be justified with a new vocabulary of liberalism, quite different from articulations of a more traditional hierarchical worldview. There are also parallels here with the Bengali bhadralok discussed in the essays by Sarkar and Chakrabarty. It is this vocabulary, this language of (albeit spurious) universalism, that has also allowed for challenges to male, upper caste hegemony. It was not so much the hypocrisy of middle class individuals, but often the contrary pulls that constituted the middle class that produced the
ambivalence of middle class politics. Understanding this history may well help us better understand the potential as well as limits of middle class politics in more contemporary times.

NOTES


4. As Veena Naregal argues, the upper caste men managed to secure the public sphere for their own agenda even in colonial western India, where circumstances had allowed for the presence of a strong anti-Brahmanical challenge in the public sphere from people such as Jyotiba Phule. For details, see Veena Naregal, Language Politics, Elites and the Public Sphere: Western India Under Colonialism, (New Delhi, Permanent Black, 2001).


15. Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class*, p.16.


17. I have made an attempt to be somewhat representative in my selection, taking care to include essays that touch on north, south, east and western regions of India, but I cannot be entirely ‘balanced’ in the selections. If one task of volumes in this series is to provide readers with a sense of the state of writing on the subject, perhaps this volume may underrepresent Bengal. In the major English language writing on the subject, the history of the Bengali *bhadralok* more or less stands in for the history not just of the middle class in colonial India, but often the history of colonial India itself!


20. See the references under ‘Socio-Cultural-Religious Reform and Revival’ in the Annotated Bibliography to this volume.

21. Sudhir Chandra, *The Oppressive Present: Literature and Social Consciousness in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press,1992); Sudipta Kaviraj, *The Unhappy Consciousness: Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and the Formation of Nationalist Discourse in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press,1995); among a host of so many others on Bankim that it led Rukun Advani to pen a satirical piece called ‘Bankim’s Bunkum’ in *Indian History from Above and Below* (Delhi: Don’t Press, 1993).


23. For those who wish to pursue this debate further in primary sources, it may instructive to contrast the view of two doyens of Indian nationalism, Gandhi and Tagore in the ‘Nationalism’ section of the Annotated Bibliography. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya’s compilation of their correspondence
also illuminates this issue, *The Mahatma and the Poet: Letters and Debates between Gandhi and Tagore, 1915-1941* (Delhi: National Book Trust, 2001). Also see Wolpert on Tilak and Gokhale in same section of the Bibliography, as well as Tucker on Ranade and Troll on Sir Sayyid in the ‘Socio-Cultural-Religious Reform and Revival’ section of the Bibliography. All of these explore similar debates between reform, revival, between the proponents of the ‘new’ light and the ‘old.’

24. Though, as Sumit Sarkar points out, newspapers such as *Ananda Bazar Patrika* were using the term ‘*madhyabitta sreni*’ or middle class, as early as 1869. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1983): 67-68.

25. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982): 312-22. For reasons of space, this is not included in the extract from Nehru’s work in the first section of this volume.


27. R. C. Dutt, *The Economic History of India* Vol I and II. (Delhi: Publications Division, 1990 [reprint of 1901 and 1903 originals]).


29. Sumit Sarkar has made this point emphatically in a number of studies in recent years, see for instance, *Writing Social History* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997).


32. Satish Deshpande, *Contemporary India:* 128.

33. An interesting debate was initiated by Ashok Rudra, a Marxist critic, with, ‘Emergence of the Intelligentsia as a Ruling Class in India,’ in *The Economic and Political Weekly,* with responses from Andre Betteille, ‘Are the Intelligentsia a Ruling Class,’ and Pranab Bardhan, ‘The Third Dominant Class.’ *Economic and Political Weekly of India* (January 21, 1989). Though with potential for an interesting discussion on the definition and role of a middle class, all of the contributors shied away from using that term. It is also telling of the lack of interest in the middle class, that unlike furious and continued debates on modes of production or the composition of the peasantry in *The Economic and Political Weekly,* there was little follow-up to this discussion.

34. And scholars like Bruce McCully before him, see, Bruce T. McCully, *English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism* (Gloucester [Mass.]: Peter Smith, 1966).

35. Please look at the section titled ‘Nationalism’ in the annotated bibliography for detailed citations to these and other important works highlighting the role of the middle class in Indian nationalism.

36. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India,* is an amazing resource, with original analysis of an incredibly wide body of secondary work that Sarkar manages to synthesize into an engaging larger narrative. I deeply regret that unreasonable demands by the publishers do not allow me to include the section titled, ‘“Middle Class” Consciousness and Politics’ as part of this volume.
37. See references in the subsection of ‘Nationalism’ titled ‘Cambridge School and their Critics’ in the Annotated Bibliography at the end of this volume.


40. Hardiman, ‘The Indian “Faction”.

41. See Joshi, Fractured Modernity, 24-25 and 32-33.

42. Chatterjee, Nation and Its Fragments: 22.

43. See his ““Kaliyuga”, “Chakri” and “Bhakti”: Ramakrishna and his Times,’ for a very different take on Ramakrishna, who also figures prominently in Partha Chatterjee’s arguments, also ‘Vidyasagar and Brahmanical Society,’ both in Sumit Sarkar, Writing Social History, pp. 282-357 and 216-281; also ‘Identity and Difference: Caste in the Formation of the Ideologies of Nationalism and Hinduuta’ Ibid.: 358-390. The over-representation of Bengal, although understandable in a collection about the middle class in colonial India, precluded me from including any of these excellent essays in this volume. For another critique of Chatterjee’s argument, Tithi Bhattacharya, The Sentinels of Culture: Class, Education, and the Colonial Intellectual in Bengal (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005).

44. Merchant groups play a central role in Douglas Haynes’ analysis of the middle class in colonial Surat, of course, but his is an exceptional study. On the other hand, historical studies of mercantile and entrepreneurial groups make no effort at seeing them as part of the middle class either. See, for instance, David West Rudner, Caste and Capitalism in Colonial India: The Nattukotai Chettiars (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) and Thomas A. Timberg, The Marwaris: from Traders to Industrialists (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978). Anne Hardgrove’s study might suggest some reasons for this, when she reveals tensions extant between the Bengali bhadrakol and Marwari communities in Kolkata, see, Community and Public Culture: The Marwaris in Calcutta, c. 1897–1997 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).


47. Tarabai Shinde’s scathing critique of the hypocrisy of middle class male nationalists is well captured in her Stri-Purush Tulana. Rosalind O’Hanlon, A
Comparison Between Women and Men: Tarabai Shinde and the Critique of Gender Relations in Colonial India (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000).


49. Perhaps the best known of these remain the essays compiled in Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid ed.s, Recasting Women. Geraldine Forbes’ Women in Modern India (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) contains an excellent bibliographical essay tracking some of the important contributions of feminist historians such as Aparna Basu, Meredith Brothwick, Malavika Karlekar, Gail Minault, Barbara Ramusack, and Bharati Ray to this process.


52. Provincalizing Europe, chapter four.


54. Antoinette Burton has made a forceful case for this in Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing, Home, and History in Late Colonial India (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). Ironically though, Burton, despite a powerful theoretical argument for use of alternative archives, only uses a limited number of English language texts to make her own case.

55. Chakrabarty, Provincializing Europe, 35.
56. For a discussion of some of the problems with bringing the mundanities of middle class family life in colonial India into ‘mainstream’ historical debates, see Sanjay Joshi, ‘Familiarizing History: Writing About the History of the Family in Colonial India.’ Unpublished paper presented at the International Association of Historians of Asia meeting, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Nov. 14, 2008.

57. For another perspective, see D.L Sheth ‘Secularization of Caste and the Making of a New Middle Class.’ *Economic and Political Weekly of India* (August 21-27/August 28-September 3, 1999).


63. For one discussion of this, see Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

64. While one continues to see this played out in a variety of contemporary writings, for one example, see the discussion between Paul Brass and Francis Robinson in David Taylor and Malcolm Yapp ed. *Political Identity in South Asia* (London: Curzon Press, 1979).

65. There is a vast body of literature on this subject, for instance, see references to the work of Arjun Appadurai, Ronald Inden, Gregory C. Koslowski, Gyanendra Pandey, Harjot Oberoi, and Peter van der Veer, cited in
the ‘Socio-Cultural-Religious Reform and Revival’ section of the Annotated Bibliography at the end of this volume.

66. Please look at the section titled, ‘Socio Religious Reform and Revival’ in the Annotated Bibliography of this volume.


68. Joshi, Fractured Modernity, 118-121.

69. In addition to Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, see Catherine Hall, White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History (New York: Routledge,1992).

70. I am particularly disappointed not to have included be able to include the work of scholars as Lakshmi Subramanian or Janaki Bakhle. I would urge readers interested in the subject to see Lakshmi Subramanian, From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy: A Social History of Music in South India (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006) and Janaki Bakhle, Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

71. There has been work on the history of food and cuisine of India, of course. Lizzie Collingham, Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) is an example of recent popular history writing on the subject. K.T. Achaya, A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) represents another body of work, exceptional in terms of research, though perhaps not as well contextualized as historians might wish. The recent interest in the history of attire, fabrics, and other commodities also indicates growing interest in related areas.


74. The Illustrated History of Indian Cricket, (Delhi: Roli Books, 2006); Lost Histories of Indian Cricket: Battles of the Pitch (Routledge, 2005); Indian Cricket: A Reader (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005); Twenty-two Yards to Freedom: a Social History of Indian Cricket (Delhi: Penguin-Viking, 2004); Once Upon a Furore: Controversies of Indian Cricket (Delhi: Yoda Press, 2004) in addition to a number of articles on the subject in a variety of scholarly and popular journals.

75. Richard I Cashman, Patrons, Players, and the Crowd: the Phenomenon of Indian Cricket (Delhi: Orient Longman, 1980), also Satadru Sen, Migrant Races:

76. It is also interesting to note that for once in this volume, the history of Bengal occupies a subaltern position. Just as the Bengal derived paradigm is hegemonic in histories histories of the Indian middle class, in the history of cricket, it is Bombay (now Mumbai) that dominates. Undermining ‘Bombay hegemony’ is certainly an important part of Majumdar’s agenda in this essay.


79. See the discussion of V Shantaram’s films in Ashish Rajadhyaksha and Paul Willemen, Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema (London: British Film Institute; Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994; 2nd ed., OUP, 2001)


82. See the essays by Chatterjee, Sarkar, Chakrabarty, and Joshi in this volume.