center. In Indian history, the power of category construction lay with ordinary Indians all the time, not unilaterally with the British and not even with them in adjustment with the protests of the periphery. Categories of the self should be seen as going beyond the usual structures of colonialism, class, state, and nationalism to a group’s own imagining of its needs and maneuvering of available technology.

Katten takes issue with historians who write within the rubric of colonial power or elite domination, and then with those who pursue the emancipatory project of documenting the resistance of the undergroups. This includes almost everyone writing Indian history: subalternist historians, Cambridge-school wallahs, older social-cultural Marxists, economic historians, and those, presumably, who write in a postmodernist mode to question subjectivity. Katten wants to reposition historical events as those that take place “between and beyond revolutions, revolts, and insurrections” and to expand subjectivity into something produced and existent all the time. Some of his most interesting questions concern the sources that can be used for such a project.

The topics in chapters two through five each revolve around one source to tell the story of category creation. In chapter two, we are told about the negotiation of land disputes, and how the very identity of a “village” and “villager” emerges. In chapter three, the technology of the petition is traced through its changing history of most of a century. The petition, according to Katten, exemplifies a site where Indians were producing categories about themselves, but one that, after a certain time in the mid-nineteenth century, served to freeze them within those hitherto negotiated categories. To the question that arises of whether this does not display the relative powerlessness of Indians to be in control of category construction, Katten’s response would be that “epistemologies of the self were still being developed, they were being developed elsewhere” (pp. 21–26).

The fourth chapter rests on the Bobbili Katha, or the narrative of Bobbili (a fort besieged in 1757, upon which all the noncombatants martyred themselves). The history of this story, as traced over 150 years, illustrates the formation of the identity of a caste: the Velama. It demonstrates caste formation to be the work of Indians and not the colonial state. Caste is shown to be something different than what current debates suggest. The larger point is that communities began “essentializing” and objectifying themselves with the coming of print media and associated changes. Katten finds a commonality in this development of a new identity between Europe and India. Finally, in chapter five, perhaps the strongest in terms of its historical argument, Katten discusses the production of an identity for weavers in coastal Andhra. This moved between “weaver” as occupation, as caste(s), and as a description with several political nuances. Economic historians of the region and industry are taken to task for sidestepping any serious discussion of weavers’ own sense of selfhood.

When put like this—“sense of selfhood”—some of the questions raised stand forth. What is the author’s theory of identity that the book revolves around? Katten’s problematization of caste is convincing, but the discussion of weavers eschews class without any serious discussion, and gender is a category mostly ignored. Is it enough to present people’s own versions of themselves, and, if so, why not look at some impressive works of ethnosociology that theorize this procedure? What could it mean to use terms like “ongoing change in the makeup of society” and “wider-ranging subjectivity over time” (pp. 5, 18)? What could be the locus of subjectivity? I am afraid, as someone favorably inclined to Katten’s agenda and delighted with his sources, that he is making an important point in a relatively unimportant way. The point made is that Indian history has been dominated by the role of the colonial state and that historians’ imaginations need to break out of this impasse. To do justice to this agenda, what could be theoretically refined is how Indians themselves exercised a politics, poetics, and reflexivity in their production of subjectivity to keep all those ironical, deconstructive questions active that presently delight us when targeting the colonial state.

But in making this larger point, Katten gives us four stimulating historiographical-cum-historical essays that deserve reading and pondering over. He is to be congratulated for writing an ambitious and stimulating book.

Nita Kumar
University of Michigan


This book focuses on the restructuring of class in relation to caste and gender in nineteenth-century Punjab. Arguing that much of the scholarly literature about caste has a long and problematic history in which either gender or class is left out, or caste is seen as primordial, inherited, and unchanging, Anshu Malhotra shows how caste changed in relation to class mobility. She rewrites the history of caste in colonial Punjab, arguing that reform movements enabled certain kinds of class and caste mobility, and that such mobility is especially visible when one examines women’s lives of this period. Malhotra claims that both the colonial state and the Indian reformists undertook projects of modernization with the goal of reforming women. They did so while maintaining patriarchal power, for example, by recasting the ideal of the pativrata wife. Thus both the Singh Sabha and Arya Samaj movements altered marriage practices, created educational institutions, and tried to address the “problem” of the “high-caste Hindu widow” without altering the subordinate status of women. Yet Malho-
tra reveals that women were not without agency in this process; they were subject to these new ideologies but not always victimized by them.

In this book, the colonial state is understood as being neither the motor of everything that went on in colonial India, nor is it unconnected to the lives of women. Even if most women were not in direct contact with the colonial state, they were altered by its presence through the work of the reformists. Colonial campaigns against infanticide and Arya Samaj and Singh Sabha attempts to address widow remarriage and women's education were all examples of new ideologies and institutions so entangled in that they cannot be understood in isolation from each other.

This book is valuable for many reasons. First of all, few works have focused exclusively on gender in relation to colonial Punjab. Even more recent accounts of colonial Punjab, reformist movements, or the history of Sikhs or Hindus or Muslims in Punjab have neglected women. If attention has been paid to them, it has come through accounts of the Partition of 1947, in relation to the writings of Dhai Vir Singh, or as a peripheral topic within the accounts of colonial Punjab. What is also welcome in this work is that gender is not studied in isolation but in relation to caste and class and thus as a relational and changing formation within the making of modern India. Women here are not the subjects of a "tradition" but of a changing idea of modernity produced by reformers and their patriarchal ideas. Thus, Malhotra reveals how new forms of regulation accompanied class mobility while they rearticulated caste divisions, and that modernized class and caste practices in their turn had much to do with the changing gender relations within the process of modernization. Because women were seen as "hallmarks of caste status," their relationship to caste was thought to require careful regulation, and reform movements took this task very seriously. Here Malhotra could have pushed her analysis further by showing how gender itself, and not just women or femininity, was a changing formation in relation to both colonial rule and reform movements. Especially in relation to the ideology of the "martial" races of Punjab, more attention to masculinity would also have been important.

Malhotra points out that her attention to reform movements keeps the focus on middle and upper-class women, so that lower-class and caste women are often ignored. Yet we need more of these accounts of women of other classes and castes to understand not only patriarchy in relation to caste and class but also colonial practices of many kinds, from the forms of governmentality put in place by such undertakings as the census to missionary conversions. Furthermore, while Malhotra points out that reform movements lead one to speculate on the different kinds of sexual practices that might have existed at the time, she does not delve further into this area and thus misses the opportunity to further emphasize what the articulation of the *pattirvata* wife puts into erasure.

Muslim reform movements are also not addressed here. Especially in nineteenth-century Punjab, when Muslim *anjumans* and Islamic high schools emerged in relation to and with movements in the Sikh and Hindu communities, the omission of Muslim reform is striking. Despite these problems, this is a long overdue and welcome work.

INDERPAL GREWAL
University of California, Irvine


The Marwaris are a group of business people, originating in the region of Rajasthan in northwestern India, who have achieved considerable success as traders and industrialists throughout much of South Asia. Marwari magnates such as G. D. Birla have been among the subcontinent's wealthiest and most influential commercial figures. Economic historians have done much interesting work in analyzing the networks of trade and migration that have made the economic prominence of the Marwaris possible, but these scholars have generally taken the Marwaris' existence as a primordial "community" as a given. The category of Marwari, however, is not indigenous to Rajastan itself and has come into being only as traders from a range of mercantile subcastes have migrated out to other areas of the subcontinent.

In this study, Anne Hardgrove turns to an exploration of the processes of community formation among the Marwaris over the past century. She emphasizes the critical role of the social practices or "performances" in public life through which Marwaris have projected and contested the values of Marwari-ness, and by which they have constructed the group's symbolic boundaries. The book treats a wide range of very different kinds of performance contexts: the mapping of Marwari identity onto the South Asian landscape through such means as the writing of community histories, the fashioning of distinctive architectural styles in specific neighborhoods of Calcutta, and temple building over much of India; the construction (and later abandonment) of spectacular mansions in Rajasthan; the defense by early Marwari public associations of economic practices such as gambling and commercial speculation; debates over social reform (especially of women's roles); and *sati puja* (the worship of women who engaged in *sati*, or widow immolation). Hardgrove argues that these performances reflect a "familial cosmopolitanism," a discourse that reshapes the language of kinship and lineage in the context of an all-India and sometimes global public culture.

Hardgrove's work is truly multidisciplinary. While a number of scholars of South Asia (including myself) have represented themselves as "ethnolistorians," they often are either applying anthropological theory