

This section builds towards a discussion of Annie Besant's concept of the "Quickening of Evolution." I argue that this concept emerged in a discursive field that was shaped to a great extent by encounters between non-Indian Theosophists and Indians, both those who belonged to the Theosophical Society and those who did not. When the Theosophists came to India, they formed numerous links with the Indian intelligentsia. In Chapter 5, the totality of this milieu, including the non-Indian Theosophists, is understood as a field of encounters that I will call the "Indian Middle Class," a field that comprehends the group of individuals labeled collectively as the (lowercase) "Indian middle class." The "Quickening of Evolution" is based on the idea that evolution can be influenced by human beings. Theosophical evolutionism was part of a wider discourse on evolution in Europe and India, as will be highlighted in Chapter 6. The Theosophists' engagement with India, as well as their ideas about evolution, cannot be understood without considering the Theosophical master narrative and the wider discourse in which this narrative was embedded (see Chapter 7).

