rather than its contents. The analysis of forms of address from the seventeenth century provides much fruit for reflection about the fundamental transformation from a medieval to a recognizably modern society.

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DUBE, Saurabh — *Stitches on Time: Colonial Textures and Postcolonial Tangles*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004. Pp. 259.

How can we re-think the notion of the "subaltern" in ways that pay attention to the vexed and contested subjectivities entangled in the mechanisms of colonial power? How have historiographical interpretations of colonial conditions become enmeshed in the very fabric of power, knowledge, and categorization that make historicity possible? What implications does this have for our reading of the relationship between colonial power and modernity? In *Stitches on Time*, Saurabh Dube draws from previous work in *Untouchable Pasts* (1998) and *Critical Conjunctions* (2002), but gives these questions fresh relevance by addressing them in new ways and casting them in a critical light that goes beyond the standard renditions that many readers have come to expect. As professor of history in the Center for Asian and African Studies at El Colegio de México in Mexico City, Dube offers an important dialogue between the kinds of debates associated with south Asian diasporic intellectuals in the anglophone West, and the ways in which the legacy of subaltern studies is being received and translated in a Latin American context. Through his own unique interpretation, strategic position, and cultural location, Dube departs from singular readings of colonial dominance and hence situates himself outside the orthodox conduit of established post-colonial scholarship.

Dube's aim is to write a "history without warranty", which at once cuts through simplistic renderings of a singular Western modernity and its universal history as much as it challenges the somewhat reductive employment of the terms "mimicry" and "hybridity" as tools to understand and make comprehensible the tightly knitted fabric of colonial culture. Instead, he offers an insight into the cracks and fissures of a south Asian modernity that was not merely the extension of the West into Indian social and cultural worlds. On the contrary, the first section of the book charts the ways in which Western colonial practices were strategically appropriated to create an ambivalent and yet highly politicized culture of resistance, and it thus offers new insights into the relationship between the colonial state, the culture of imperialism, and the mechanics of hegemony.

Dube does so by venturing into everyday sites where colonial power relations were inscribed outside the domain of institutionalized power politics between the colonial state and its subjects. In fact, Dube's thesis is that we must look outside the arena conventionally designated as "political" (p. 38) to find the semiotic and spiritual stitches that have been sewn into the patchwork of colonial culture. He takes readers on a double-sided journey to the very places of cross-cultural exchange where colo-

nial power was negotiated as an everyday dialogue, and he situates those places in a broader historiographical field in which archival research speaks to current theoretical preoccupations in the field. In this manner, he casts questions such as the role of evangelization in the formation of subaltern Christian subjects and the role of legal discourse in the mobilization of new readings of sovereign personhood in creative and challenging ways to uncover the manufacture of a colonial modernity that was in itself an act of fraught translation.

Dube is interested in the ways in which colonial modernities (in the plural) emerged to take on new, localized, "home cooked" manifestations that were not merely mirrors or projections of a monolithic European modernity but carried with them an enduring "difference" in their quintessentially south Asian manifestations. His work on the Christian converts among the *satnamis* of Chhattisgarh demonstrates how evangelization overlapped and reinforced the legitimacy of colonial rule but also how missionaries and converts alike were deeply entangled in everyday cross-cultural performances that shaped a distinctively vernacular Christianity. Clothing styles, food practices, and the use of church social space became public performances of cultural negotiation, in which empire and modernity came together in domesticated symbiosis. In fact, Dube looks at how "communities of converts also reworked the saturated signs that defined the hegemony of the mission project in everyday arenas" (p. 54) through the retention of notions of purity and pollution and the Indianization of evangelical ritual. Yet converts were also able to recognize that European mores in everyday practices were also signs of power, and hence they were able to deploy symbols of modernity for their own political ends.

These evangelical entanglements act to destabilize any singular or monolithic conception of colonial dominance, but they do not address the precise dynamics of how missionary activity outside the institutional ambit of the "political" is linked to even the symbolic workings of the British colonial state. What Dube loosely calls "Euro-American evangelism" deserves closer historical scrutiny in this sense, since the field of vernacular Christianity he charts so beautifully in colonial Chhattisgarh was influenced significantly by German and American missionaries who were the bearers of a civilizing process not driven by the imperatives of British modernity. Nevertheless, these compelling encounters also act as an entrée into a deeper engagement of the ways in which colonial entanglement was encoded in legal discourse. Dube demonstrates how colonial law's conception of the "individual" did not address issues of cultural and gender difference among south Asian communities nor address the multiple ways in which "personhood" was also expressed as a public body. Hence colonial subjects often framed their own resistance to colonial legal frameworks and decisions by mobilizing popular legalities and cultural heritage as a means to defend collective personhood as a legitimate paradigm of entitlement.

In the second part of the book, the author extends these specific archival interrogations concerning vernacular Christianity and legal entanglement and situates them in a broader analysis of post-colonial interpretation and contemporary cultural analysis. He navigates the reader through the arguments of some eminent south Asian historians such as Sumit Sarkar, Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee, and Dipesh Chakrabarty to chart the ways in which the spiritual domain of culture has often been the arena for

the expression of vernacular resistance to colonial power. These sharp historiographical dissections also lead the author to question naturalized representations of spiritual culture in the more recent post-colonial context, in which arrogance has replaced resistance as a strategic device to further political ends. The discussion on the contested meanings of Ayodhya, the rise of Hindutva, and the question of positionality seem well placed to illuminate some of the pitfalls of countering colonial modernity and Eurocentrism with notions of Hindu cultural authenticity.

In the end, this book does not flatter a heroic subaltern subject whose culture remains autonomous from the complex workings of colonial power. Rather, it seeks to show how the context of subaltern reclamation is tangled up in what Dube calls the "tattered texture of empire" (p. 34). By exploring the relationship between colonial modernity and post-colonial interpretation, Dube unpicks these epistemological tangles and interrogates these deeply woven cultural knots with a very sharp needle. As a result, the book is an engaging and refreshing unravelling of these threads in ways that will ignite interest for those new to post-colonial studies, as well as provide new sign-posts for those already familiar with the field but wanting to stretch the paradigm beyond orthodox interpretations of colonial dominance.

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ETHERINGTON, Norman (ed.) — *Missions and Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. 332.

The meaning of the "British Empire history" has expanded considerably in the last 60 years. The traditional (whigish) narrative, captured in the *Cambridge History of the British Empire* (1929–1959), stressed the political evolution of the Empire from a centrally administered territory to a series of self-governing dominions. Subsequently, the five-volume *Oxford History of the British Empire* (1998–1999), emphasizing informal areas of the Empire (Asia and South America, for instance) and free trade economics, outlined a history of Empire that was broader, both geographically and thematically, than the Cambridge series. The volume under review here, part of the *Companion Series* to the *Oxford History*, expands the meaning of Empire still further. Moving beyond politics and economics, Norman Etherington's edition argues that religion, specifically mission Christianity, shaped the politics of Empire and the everyday lives of people throughout the Empire. At its weakest, this edition offers outdated analyses of important themes and falls short of answering a key question of the volume, how the relationship between Empire and missions played a part "in a larger drama — the spread of modernization, globalization, and Western cultural hegemony" (p. 4). At its best, *Missions and Empire* brings the diverse history and scholarship about missions to a general audience and offers a strong case for adding religion to politics and economics in examinations of major shifts in the history of the British Empire.

The 14 chapters that follow Etherington's introduction can be broken into two