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### Title

Untitled - Karen Leonard replies

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historical or anthropological investigation of the Satnami past, as Dube tells us himself. His book 'constructs a history of the Satnamis'; it is not 'a mere unfolding of a chronologically sequential set of events' but 'an interpretive exercise.' But Dube's book does not resort to any such easy exorcism of history and anthropology. Here is what Dube actually says in the passage: "This book constructs a history of the Satnamis, but it does not present the past as a mere unfolding of a chronologically sequential set of events . . . [It] is an interpretive exercise, an exercise in which the perspectives of history and anthropology are each inseparably bound to the other; where archival and non-official sources are read in an ethnographic mode and fieldwork is cast as an engagement with the historical imagination" (p. 2). Whatever else may be said of the passage, it is certainly not the rejection of history or anthropology that Leonard makes it out to be.

The only attempt in the review to deal with the arguments of *Untouchable Pasts* is a chapterwise summary of the book, with each chapter assigned roughly a sentence. Since many of the book's most important arguments are made across several chapters, this is a particularly unhelpful way of trying to understand it. Furthermore, the summaries are not always accurate. Thus, according to the review, Chapter 4 is about "assess[ing] the benefits and losses to the Satnamis under British rule." Only the apologists for colonialism, and the nationalists who challenged colonialism, would even consider such an assessment necessary. Few serious historians today, and certainly not Dube, would consider such an assessment to be interesting or necessary. Similarly, the summary of Chapter 5 gets so lost in details that it fails, for example, to consider Dube's very interesting emphasis on how Baba Ramchandra's written text retained marks of orality. This is part of a larger problem. The review consistently ignores the creative and critical readings of different varieties of both oral testimonies and written records within *Untouchable Pasts*.

The review's lack of engagement with the book is particularly unfortunate since *Untouchable Pasts* is, to my mind, one of the most exciting books on South Asia to come out in recent times. It is an extremely innovative effort to combine history and anthropology in a precise way, where both are simultaneously bound up and distinct from each other. It is also theoretical in particularly interesting ways, for it "does not cast matters on a resolutely grand theoretical scale, characteristic of writings that turn theory into a touchstone of truth" (p. 4), but seeks to place its theory in relation to everyday life.

I cannot hope to provide an indication of the book's arguments and scope in this brief response. As one instance of the book's contributions, however, I would like to cite its attempt to think through the "two fetishized concept metaphors of community and state" (p. xii). Dube shows very persuasively that symbols of the colonial state were central to the constitution of

the Satnampanth, the sect that the book focuses on. Nor was it as though these signs of dominance were acknowledged only at moments of passivity, only to be erased at moments of resistance. Dube's work shows how, from a historical or anthropological perspective, the distinction between state and community that has been constructed in much theoretically influential recent writing is far too simplistic. Through its narratives, *Untouchable Pasts* reveals how the intricate relationship between state and community could be reconceived.

AJAY SKARIA  
University of Virginia

KAREN LEONARD REPLIES:

My praise for Dube's book was not grudging. I do not know the author, but I was very taken by his obvious brightness, stimulating ideas, and excellent writing, and I was sympathetic to his carving out a theoretical third position. I did not think Dube was rejecting history or anthropology, as Ajay Skaria alleges, but quoted Dube carefully to show that he sought to use methods and insights from both disciplines to construct and interpret a history of the Satnamis. As my review and Skaria's comments make clear, Skaria enthusiastically applauds Dube's "creative and critical readings" of his oral and written sources, while I, troubled by questions about methodology and what I felt was an often sketchy and confusing presentation of research findings, was unable to achieve a full understanding and appreciation of Dube's interpretations.

KAREN LEONARD  
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TO THE EDITOR:

In her review of Mark Johnston's *At the Front Line: Experiences of Australian Soldiers in World War II* [AHR 104 (February 1999): 170-71], Margaret Barter hails the book as "a welcome addition to an area recently dubbed the 'New Military History' by Paul Addison and Angus Calder in . . . (1997)." In fact, the term "new military history" has appeared in print so many times since the 1970s that, in an article in the January 1988 *Military Affairs*, Benjamin Franklin Cooling declared it to be "passé."

In the first line of his review of Gary Gallagher's *The Confederate War* [AHR 104 (February 1999): 194-95], John M. McCardell, Jr., declares: "Military history, at least among Civil War historians, has been out of fashion for some time." This statement bewilders me. By "Civil War historians," McCardell might be referring to academic historians who specialize in the Civil War era, as opposed to antiquarians or writers of popular history, both of whom produce an annual avalanche of books on Civil War battles, leaders, and so forth, but neither of whom many academics con-