



Low and Licentious Europeans: Race, Class and 'White Subalternity' in Colonial India

By Harald Fischer Tine

Orient BlackSwan, New Delhi, India, 2009. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. Dust Jacket Condition: New. First Edition. Building on, yet defying and interrogating the subaltern studies paradigm for the understanding of South Asian history, this book re-examines some of its tacit assumptions and introduces the category of white subalternity. Harald Fischer-Tine? explores, innovatively, the intersection of the various systems of differentiation and hierarchy in British India between 1780 and 1914 that neatly demarcated the rulers from the ruled. In examining the history of white non-elite groups such as European sailors, vagrants, criminals and prostitutes, and elite efforts to either reclaim or hide them from the native gaze, this book challenges received ways of interpreting colonial rule. The study makes a strong case for understanding colonial power relations not in terms of a fixed white-over-black contestation but rather as a situational, contextual and dynamic system. It argues that racial identity, including colonial whiteness was a fluid category. It faced the constant threat of being undermined in the colony along the lines of class, gender and deviance as a result of complex stratifications within European society. Importantly, the study shows how the discourses and practices of the British civilising mission in India bore striking similarity...

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