

Deconstructing the Stereotype: Reconsidering Indian Culture, Literature and Cinema

By Kaustav Chakraborty

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Stereotypes are mere 'pictures in our heads'. Prejudice and suspicion against all that is perceived of as 'different' give rise to cultural stereotypes. Creating stereotypes also involves connecting the created categories with values, equipping the categories with an ideational label. Thus, stereotypes often contain the presupposition that one's own group represents the normal, or even universal and that one's own culture and ist socially construed concepts of reality is superior and normative in relation to other cultures and world-views. The stereotypes are not just one person's private attitude but are always shared with a larger socio-cultural group. Stereotypes result in simplifications that prevent people from seeing the 'otherized' individuals as they truly are. This book, aims at transgressing the boundaries of the strategically generated stereotyped image of a homogenous Indian culture. Rather, by highlighting the marginalised issues related to class, caste and gender, this book, by citing examples of select Indian literary and cinematic representations, argues that the stigma related to the non-conformist /alternative/minority identities, is baseless and fraudulent.

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About the Author
Dr Kaustav Chakraborty has been teaching at Southfield College (formerly Loreto College), Darjeeling as an Assistant Professor in English and presently he is the Head of the Department. His recent publications include an edited volume entitled Indian Drama in English, published from Prentice Hall. He has been an associate of Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla. Currently he is engaged in a Major Research Project sponsored by University Grants Commission, New Delhi. His areas of interest include Postcolonial Literature, Queer Studies, Tribal Literature and Culture.

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