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The Stereotypical Way

Every individual has a belief and an understanding of several issues or so topics around the world. Many of these opinions are shaped according to several stereotypes which pertain around the world. A stereotype is simply a fixed and overly simplified or exaggerated image of a certain person or thing, but in reality, its something that heavily influences one's judgement about different issues and how one would react to a situation. These stereotypes age back from the centuries ago, when a certain individual must have made a rather impulsive judgement about the same, but that judgement still seems to pertain after so long. The best way to be rid of these stereotypes is to directly address them to the most basic and primitive individuals, the youth. The youth is the future to come and if they understand the futility of these stereotypes and perceive reality as it is, one can look forward to a safer and more accepting world. In United States, the country of India is just considered a land of snake charmers, spicy food, and colors, but what majority of Americans fail to realize is that India is just more than that and is in fact a land of cultural diversity and traditions. Through *The Bollywood Issue* of the magazine *Sparkle*, the author is trying to eliminate this very conception about India and it's film industry.

We see the purpose of the magazine being defined under the *About Sparkle* portion of the magazine, and we also notice the other issues so addressed by the team such as *The Fashion issue*, where they spoke about stereotypes associated with the intricate world of Fashion, or the

stereotypes of less women working out in *The Fitness Issue*. It is clearly defined that the magazine aims at educating the youth such as when said ‘...aims at educating today’s youth about different cultures, topics and traditions around the world. The main intention is to eliminate stereotypes from the mind of the youth which may facilitate discrimination and racism...’. This quote proves our earlier point that the youth must be the target audience to make an impact on a society’s thinking. The magazine mainly addresses the topic at hand about the stereotypes associated with Indians and Bollywood in the editor’s open letter to the magazine’s readers. The editor proves the thesis mainly when he talks about how diverse the country of India specifically ‘...There are 29 states across the nation, but has over 150 languages spoken, and at the same time incorporating so many cultures in just one nation. From the very northern to the complete southern part of India, there ranges a variety of ethnicities, religions, cultures, traditions, and moreover different people...’, this shows the innumerable number of traditions and various ethnicities the rather big Indian population encompasses. He further seems to prove his point by talking about Bollywood movies, due to the advancement of this generation into the age of technology, specifically when he speaks about the example of the movie *Taare Zameen Par*. This example shows the depth and rather intellectual horizon present in a Bollywood movie, which is usually considered rare. The questions ‘...Now is that uneducated? Is that nonsense? ...’ he asks shows how worried and rather angry the editor of the magazine is about the stereotypes associated with India, which seem to persist till present day. There are more examples like this not only in movies, but in books and literature as well.

The book *Five Point Someone* by Chetan Bhagat talks about the rigorous stress and overload of work for students in Indian colleges. It’s about a trio of friends who try to handle college life and try to fight the system which seems to be bringing them down every step of the

way. The story has its difficulties but mainly leads to the social message that one must go to college to gain education and experience, rather than just get a degree for the sake of it and one must always pursue their dreams and reach for the stars. This relates to our thesis as it shows how futile the Indian education system is at times, which is much like the education system all over the world. India is usually considered as a hotspot for telemarketing workers and immense technological knowledge, but little do the people using their services realize the pain and turmoil the workers went through to assist them. Their efforts are as much as any student in any college, maybe even more, but it's often a stereotype that many Indians are uneducated, but if they are educated, that education is rather easily received. This book went to inspire a Bollywood blockbuster *3 Idiots*.

In the American Media Industry, we can see the stereotypes crystal clear with the portrayals of Indians in movies and TV Shows. Best example of this is of the character *Apu* in the TV Show *The Simpsons*, where the character is clearly based on stereotypes starting from his name itself '*Apu Nahasapeemapetilon*', since Indian names are often unconventional and difficult to pronounce for Americans. Another stereotype is about how he runs the local hypermarket in the city of Springfield. His entire character is basically an amalgamation of all stereotypes related to Indians. These negative and stereotypical depictions of Indians affect the mind of the youth and the viewing audience and they form a similar image of the same. In the movie *The Avengers*, Kolkata was shown as a city hit by blight and plagued by poverty and squalor. The country of India is much more than just Gandhi, Poverty, and filth. The depictions of India and its population in film and media play a major role in spreading stereotypes all around the world. The starters guide to Bollywood in the magazine is a positive way in promoting India, as it provides an insight to the magic of Bollywood.

The entire article about *The Magic of Love* in the magazine seems to show how the idea of love is same throughout the world, be it the *Titanic* which shows the love between a man of the lower class and an upper-class woman. It is a story about how love can empower any difficulty and what matters is the bond between the two individuals in love. We can see that towards the end of the movie, when Rose still seems to keep the spark of love alive in her heart left by Jack, amplifying the fact that love is eternal. A similar parallel can be seen with the movie *Veer Zaara*, which the author of the article also seems to mention. The movie is a story of how two lovers of completely different backgrounds, reunite and reignite their flame of love after a gap of almost 20 years. The story depicts how two lovers will always find their way against all odds and destiny will always bring them together. The similarity between the two stories rather proves the conclusion of the article ‘...The process of falling in love is one which is unique and extremely difficult to describe in words, but it is one which can be beautifully portrayed on the big screen. The magic of creating romance is not one which is so easy to achieve but if carefully understood and properly managed, it can do wonders...’, showing the similarity between both Bollywood and Hollywood movies. The editor mentioned earlier that many individuals consider that Bollywood movies lack depth, but if both Bollywood and Hollywood movies are based off the same values, and the execution of both is simply exemplary. This proves the main point that misconceptions shape how one seems to perceive certain issues, in this case movies.

Stereotypes have persisted till today's age mainly due to the fact that people aren't too accepting towards change, but what needs to be realized is that change is inevitable. It's better to progress with time and accept that our conceptions about certain topics can change, that is accept that stereotypes are meant to be broken and move on with the beautiful journey that is life, while adapting the idea of change.

Works Cited

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