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{ HT PICKS } NEW READS

A NEW WAY OF QUESTIONING COLONIAL DESCRIPTIONS

Of all the world's cultures, only one — what can be termed the Western, colonial one — has offered widespread, defining descriptions of other cultures. These descriptions have been questioned by postcolonial theory and discourse, which had not, however, studied the colonial culture that produced them.

The Difficulty of Being Heathen aims to radically question colonial descriptions of Indian society. It shows how such descriptions are not factual reports about Indian society, but reflections of the Western culture's experience of Indian social realities.

Instead of providing knowledge about the society it tries to describe (that is, India), colonial descriptions refer to the experiences of those from the culture that does the describing (that is, the West).

Creating a new framework for understanding issues relating to history, politics, law, and community formation in India, this volume challenges such colonial descriptions while providing a theory about the structure of the Western experience of Indian society.



The Difficulty of Being Heathen
Edited by AP Ashwin Kumar and Vivek Dhareshwar
397pp, ₹1,280, Orient Blackswan