



## South Asians on the U.S. Screen: Just Like Everyone Else?

By Bhoomi K. Thakore

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How does the media influence society? How do media representations of South Asians, as racial and ethnic minorities, perpetuate stereotypes about this group? How do advancements in visual media, from creative storytelling to streaming technology, inform changing dynamics of all non-white media representations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Analyzing audience perceptions of South Asian characters from *The Simpsons*, *Slumdog Millionaire*, *Harold and Kumar*, *The Office*, *Parks and Recreation*, *The Big Bang Theory*, *Outsourced*, and many others, Bhoomi K. Thakore argues for the importance of understanding these representations as they influence the positioning of South Asians into the 21<sup>st</sup> century U.S. racial hierarchy. On one hand, increased acceptance of this group into the entertainment fold has informed audience perceptions of these characters as “just like everyone else.” However, these images remain secondary on the U.S. Screen, and are limited in their ability to break out of traditional stereotypes. As a result, a normative and assimilated white American identity is privileged both on the Screen, and in our increasingly multicultural society.

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## South Asians on the U.S. Screen: Just Like Everyone Else? By Bhoomi K. Thakore Bibliography

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

Thakore (Elmhurst College) is a sociologist, and in this book she is concerned with cultural appropriation (a term recently made current by novelist Lionel Schriver) and cultural misappropriation. Many scholars have accepted the inevitability of globalization, but others have pitched a culture war against appropriation. Thakore is on the side of the latter. First, she argues, South Asians are underrepresented. Then, when they are represented, they are stereotyped (as in the case of *Slumdog Millionaire*). In addition to being stereotyped, these characters are rarely three dimensional. Though Thakore comes down hard, she does not overlook work that achieves limited success. Kal Penn's character in the television series *House* committed suicide but that was to free Penn up to take a job with the Obama administration. In the end, Thakore contends, in presenting South Asian characters the screen offers them not as multidimensional but as assimilated white Americans—"just like everyone else"—the current trend toward globalization notwithstanding. Thakore uses graphs and survey reports to illustrate her argument. Of interest for those interested in sociology as well as film studies. Summing Up: Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty. (*CHOICE*)

Racialized representations in the U.S. media are not limited to 'black and white,' but incorporate all non-white groups. One group seldom studied as subject to racialized representations is South Asians. In *South Asians on the U.S. Screen*, Bhoomi K. Thakore uses data from media audiences on South Asian characters and actors and convincingly shows that most of their representations, even the ones deemed by many as "progressive," privilege white identity thus reproduce white supremacy at the semiotic level. (Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Duke University; author of *Racism Without Racists*)

Through analysis of popular South Asian characters on television as well as the responses of viewers to these representations, *South Asians on the US Screen* offers insights into the stereotypes that organize media portrayals of South Asians. The book will be of interest to those who want a better understanding of the role played by the US media in the marginalization of racial minorities. (Nazli Kibria, Boston University)

This book is a fresh and analytically incisive addition to the burgeoning sociological scholarship on racial representations in the mass media. A rich mixed-methods investigation of the historic and contemporary role of South Asians (e.g., Indians) and their representations within the American mass media, Thakore's book is an important intervention in this growing body of literature for both empirical/substantive reasons as well as the potential to develop theoretical understandings of how racial and ethnic representations operate in a colorblind/postracial society still structured by white supremacy. (David L. Brunsma, Virginia Tech)

This book is an excellent study of the racialization of South Asian Americans. Building on the work of scholars who have documented South Asian Americans' experience with racism, this book breaks new ground by looking specifically at South Asian Americans on US screens in the 21st century. Dr. Thakore shows how depictions of South Asian Americans are used to uphold contemporary race boundaries, while US television and films *appear* to be inclusive of a diverse group of people. A well-researched, thoughtful book. A must read for people who are interested in understanding racism. (Bandana Purkayastha, University of Connecticut)

### **About the Author**

Bhoomi K. Thakore is visiting assistant professor and director of the sociology program at Elmhurst College.

## **Users Review**

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#### **Ramona Johnson:**

The publication untitled South Asians on the U.S. Screen: Just Like Everyone Else? is the guide that recommended to you you just read. You can see the quality of the reserve content that will be shown to anyone. The language that article author use to explained their way of doing something is easily to understand. The writer was did a lot of investigation when write the book, and so the information that they share to you personally is absolutely accurate. You also can get the e-book of South Asians on the U.S. Screen: Just Like Everyone Else? from the publisher to make you more enjoy free time.

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