



# Indian Accents: Brown Voice and Racial Performance in American Television and Film (The Asian American Experience)

*Shilpa S. Dave*

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Amid immigrant narratives of assimilation, Indian Accents focuses on the representations and stereotypes of South Asian characters in American film and television. Exploring key examples in popular culture ranging from Peter Sellers' portrayal of Hrundi Bakshi in the 1968 film *The Party* to contemporary representations such as Apu from *The Simpsons* and characters in *Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle*, Shilpa S. Dave develops the ideas of accent, brownface, and brown voice as new ways to explore the racialization of South Asians beyond just visual appearance. Dave relates these examples to earlier scholarship on blackface, race, and performance to show how accents are a means of representing racial difference, national origin, and belonging, as well as distinctions of class and privilege. While focusing on racial impersonations in mainstream film and television, Indian Accents also amplifies the work of South Asian American actors who push back against brown voice performances, showing how strategic use of accent can expand and challenge such narrow stereotypes.



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