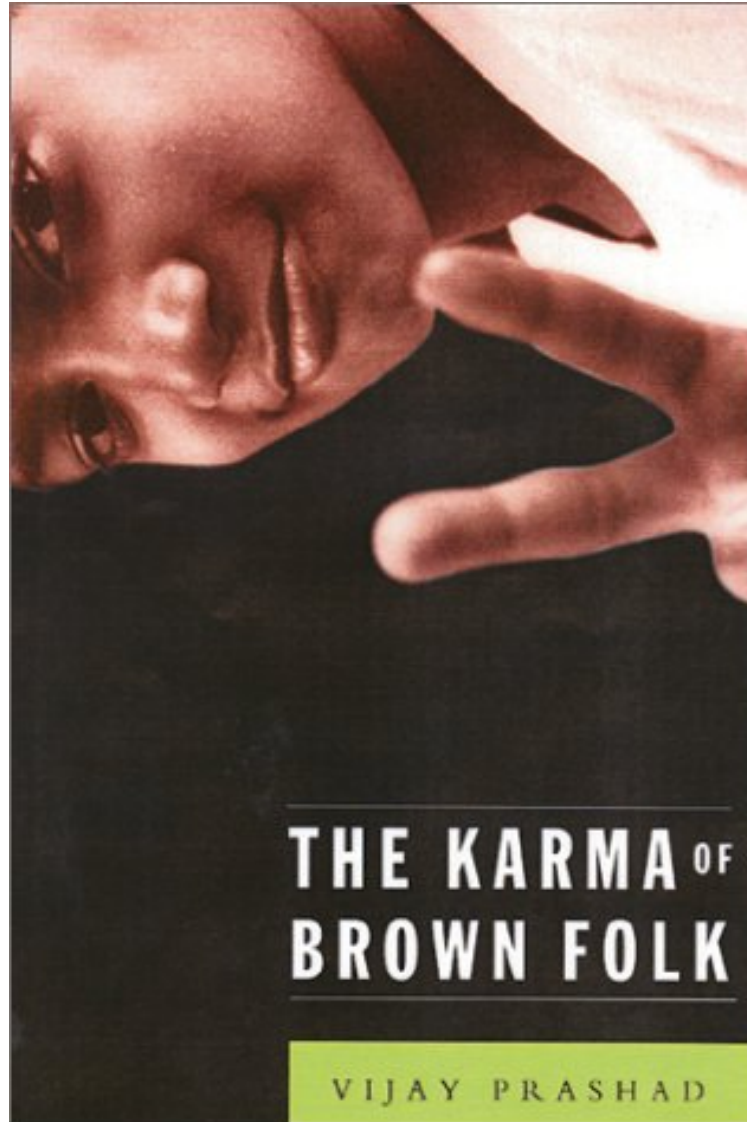


(Download free pdf) The Karma of Brown Folk

The Karma of Brown Folk

Vijay Prashad

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Vijay Prashad : The Karma of Brown Folk before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Karma of Brown Folk:

13 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Cramming Two Books into One By L. Cunningham The major problem with Prashad's work is a good problem: it seems that he is combining two books into one. The first part of the book is dedicated to a fairly extensive history of how Indians and Indian culture has been viewed in the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries. The second part of the book explains the model minority myth that has developed since the 1970s. While the two concepts are certainly related, each would be better served in its own work with less time and

space devoted to the other. Personally, I found Prashad's argument to debunk the model minority myth the more compelling of the two arguments. For the first time, it helped me to understand why so many South Asians (particularly Indians) are successful in the United States. Basically, the immigration policy in the United States has assured that there will only be well educated, intelligent South Asians in the United States. That's slowly changing now, but the model minority myth remains very prevalent, even in relative well educated circles. 26 of 29 people found the following review helpful. A must read for ALL south asians

By A Customer
This is a book, that you will either love or hate--no middle ground. I personally love this book. Vijay Prashad's book provides a honest, critical analysis of south-asians in America. It is sharp in its criticism of Hinduvata's influence in shaping Indian identity; just as keen in debunking the model minority myth. It is a superb rebuttal to D'Souza, and other neoconservatives and the ways in which white america uses south asians as weapons against blacks. Prashad draws on Orientalism of America, and how this affects the ways in which desis are viewed and the ways in which they act in the racial landscape of America. Finally, Prashad asks of desis to commit model minority suicide--something every desi needs to explore critically. This book must be read by all south asians in US, to whom it is so passionately argued; whether one agrees with Prashad's arguments or not, there is something informative and worthy of consideration for desis of all political affinities. For others, it is a parochial account of the Indian immigrant experience, which makes it a bit difficult to understand, but nevertheless something you need to read and try to understand; definitely a must read for black-americans, for this book calls for a black-asian (brown) solidarity that is worth exploring. The fate (Karma) of ALL brown folks in white america, needs to be shaped by such a solidarity. I especially recommend this book to South Asian teens, who are caught in the midst of finding their identities, and jumbling to reconcile desiness with their americaness. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very insightful

By Shai Rosa
I loved this, I learned enough to pique my interest about the history of Indian- American relations and I definitely gained a better understanding of the dynamic of being a race with a less established identity in this country (as opposed to Black and White). The author really knows his stuff and his perspective speaks to what I already understand about racial relations in America for people of color. He pulls no punches and shines a light on the complex intersections of culture.

What does it mean to be a model minority? "How does it feel to be a problem?" asked W. E. B. Du Bois of black Americans in his classic *The Souls of Black Folk*. A hundred years later, Vijay Prashad asks South Asians "How does it feel to be a solution?" In this kaleidoscopic critique, Prashad looks into the complexities faced by the members of a "model minority"--one, he claims, that is consistently deployed as "a weapon in the war against black America." On a vast canvas, *The Karma of Brown Folk* attacks the two pillars of the "model minority" image, that South Asians are both inherently successful and pliant, and analyzes the ways in which U.S. immigration policy and American Orientalism have perpetuated these stereotypes. Prashad uses irony, humor, razor-sharp criticism, personal reflections, and historical research to challenge the arguments made by Dinesh D'Souza, who heralds South Asian success in the U.S., and to question the quiet accommodation to racism made by many South Asians. A look at Deepak Chopra and others whom Prashad terms "Godmen" shows us how some South Asians exploit the stereotype of inherent spirituality, much to the chagrin of other South Asians. Following the long engagement of American culture with South Asia, Prashad traces India's effect on thinkers like Cotton Mather and Henry David Thoreau, Ravi Shankar's influence on John Coltrane, and such essential issues as race versus caste and the connection between antiracism activism and anticolonial resistance. *The Karma of Brown Folk* locates the birth of the "model minority" myth, placing it firmly in the context of reaction to the struggle for Black Liberation. Prashad reclaims the long history of black and South Asian solidarity, discussing joint struggles in the U.S., the Caribbean, South Africa, and elsewhere, and exposes how these powerful moments of alliance faded from historical memory and were replaced by Indian support for antiblack racism. Ultimately, Prashad writes not just about South Asians in America but about America itself, in the tradition of Tocqueville, Du Bois, Richard Wright, and others. He explores the place of collective struggle and multiracial alliances in the transformation of self and community--in short, how Americans define themselves. Vijay Prashad is assistant professor of international studies at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.

From Publishers Weekly
Taking a cue from W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* which poses the question, "How does it feel to be a problem?" Prashad's book on race relations asks Asians, "How does it feel to be a solution?" An assistant professor of international relations, he shows how neoconservatives have used the success of South Asian immigrants (though most of the book deals with Indians) to argue that America now offers a level playing field and that if other minorities, particularly African-Americans, have not achieved as much success, it is due to their own lack of initiative. Yet Prashad demonstrates how the U.S.'s extremely selective immigration policy (from 1966 to 1977, for example, 83% of Indian immigrants to the U.S. were professionals) has led to the myth of the "successful race." In the same vein, Prashad also argues that "sly Babas" (or "Godmen"), like Deepak Chopra, perpetuate the idea that Asians are a pliant, spiritual group and do a disservice by peddling "opiates that comfort" rather than challenging people to alter the causes of their distress. Throughout his book, Prashad repeatedly reproaches society for forgetting the poor

Achastising Bobby McFerrin, for example, for releasing his song *Don't Worry Be Happy* at a time of great

economic insecurity, and castigating the medical community for not doing enough to control preventable diseases common among the poor. Though Prashad includes many revealing insights about South Asians in America, at times his book seems more like a scattered collection of anecdotal lectures than a cogent analysis of race relations among minority groups in our nation. (Mar.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. Fascinating reading . . . a keen eye-witness . . . Prashad has a genius for selecting the precise detail that makes observations spring to life. -- A. Magazine: Inside Asian America