

## Twitter Thread by Noah Smith



**Noah Smith**

[@Noahpinion](#)



### 1/I'm thinking about the end of Apu in the context of the national debates on immigration and diversity.

\u2018The Simpsons\u2019 producer confirms Apu is being written out of show following controversy

<https://t.co/lKzFCe1wFa> [pic.twitter.com/s34IUDUtqs](https://pic.twitter.com/s34IUDUtqs)

— NME (@NME) [October 26, 2018](#)

2/Apu's presence in Springfield represented a basic reality of America in the late 20th and early 21st century: the presence of nonwhite immigrants.

3/As Tomas Jimenez writes in "The Other Side of Assimilation", for my generation, immigrants from India, China, Mexico, and many other countries aren't strange or foreign. On the contrary, they're a fixture.

<https://t.co/hidLQijmcX>

4/But that America I grew up with is fundamentally ephemeral. The kids of immigrants don't retain their parents' culture. They merge into the local culture (and, as Jimenez documents, the local culture changes to reflect their influence).

5/Simpsons character don't change. But real people, and real communities, do. So a character who once represented the diversity that immigrants brought to American towns now represents a stereotype of Indian-Americans as "permanent foreigners".

6/As the children and grandchildren of each wave of immigrants become fully incorporated into American society, being conflated with their immigrant ancestors can lead to persistent racial divisions...which is probably why the character began to upset people as the years went on.

7/ At the same time, the advent of Trumpism, and the capture of the GOP by anti-immigrant, anti-diversity forces, will significantly curtail the immigration that defined the America I grew up in.

8/Whether this will speed the integration/assimilation of the descendants of recent immigrants, or lead to permanent racial divisions, remains to be seen.

9/But both the Trumpians and the opponents of permanent-foreigner stereotypes seem to agree on one thing: the America of the 1990s and 2000s must end.

10/The end of Apu symbolizes the end of that ephemeral, transitory, beautiful, immigrant-defined America.

Where we go from now - toward full and equal incorporation of the descendants of immigrants, or toward exclusionary white supremacy - remains to be seen.

(end)