

The National College of Art and Design

Media, Fine Art

*Cultural Integration in Film: How Second-Generation
Indian Migrants Balance Two Cultures*

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Submitted to the School of Visual Culture in Candidacy for
the Degree of BA in Fine Art Media, 2023



National College of Art and Design

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I declare that this **Critical Cultures Research Project** is all my own work and that all sources have been fully acknowledged.

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Date: 30/01/2023

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Introduction

The depiction of cultural integration by second-generation Indian migrants in cinema can offer rich insights into the experiences and challenges with which they are faced. When a family migrates from their place of origin to another country, they must learn to rebuild a life for themselves in a new, unfamiliar and possibly even hostile environment. The children of these migrants must then find a way to integrate the cultural influences from their home setting with those of the host community. As a daughter of an Indian immigrant father and an Irish mother, I believe I know first hand the importance of maintaining family traditions from each parent. In particular, the traditions of the immigrant side as if they are not actively maintained when outside of their root country, they will inevitably be lost to future generations. People like me would be denied our cultural heritage and the opportunity to appreciate and learn from our families' traditions. However, I also understand how crucial it is that second-generation migrants adapt to the environment in which they actually live. This is the reality that we, second-generation migrants, live with and it is simply unrealistic and futile to ignore the world around us, and the influences it provides.

I have struggled with my own understanding of cultural integration. Growing up, I found it hard to give time and awareness to Indian family traditions when all I wanted to do was fit in in my local area. In addition, my Irish cultural influences were stronger and practiced much more regularly, making it easier to focus on them over the traditions from my father's side of the family. Now, in my early twenties, I am realising just how much my Indian heritage means to me. I have re-directed myself to embrace and fall in love with this side of myself, and am making more of a conscious effort to incorporate Indian traditions into my daily life. At this point in my journey of cultural awareness, I find myself wondering a lot about what it means to make this decision. When

we decide to adopt a more mindful and conscious approach towards cultural integration, does it impact the degree of integration capable of being achieved?

To answer this question, I decided to look back on significant moments in my life, where I came to a greater understanding of my position in society. Watching feature films like *Bend It Like Beckham* (Chadha, 2002) and *The Namesake* (Nair, 2006) were really encouraging and eye-opening. They were proof to me of the possibilities that come from making the deliberate decision to culturally integrate. Each of these films follows a young protagonist living in the western world as they navigate the complex journey of attempting to balance two cultures. Both filmmakers, Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair, belong to the Indian diaspora and use their own experiences and understanding of integration to inform their characters.

In *Bend It Like Beckham*, we follow Jesminder 'Jess' Bhamra, an eighteen-year-old young woman living in Hounslow, an area in west London with a large Punjabi Sikh population. Throughout the film she struggles to find harmony between her family's values, which she respects greatly, and the modern British reality in which she lives. The two clashing cultures put Jess in a very conflicted position that initially causes her to feel unsettled in her own locality. As a result, she begins to try and remove the bridges between the local Indian community and the host community, in order for her to integrate more smoothly (Chadha, 2002).

Gogol Ganguli, otherwise known as Nikhil or Nick, is one of the central characters in *The Namesake*. As his parents did when they first arrived in New York from Calcutta, Gogol has to search for common ground between his Indian roots and his place of birth in America. The audience watches him struggle to realise his own identity throughout this difficult process. For most of the film, Gogol's efforts to integrate seem to be quite one-sided, as he tends to focus on fitting into American culture and less so into that of his family. He confuses integration with assimilation, and therefore seems to have difficulty finding comfort at home and prefers outside, more American

spaces. However, he eventually realises that western values alone are not enough for him and begins to remember the importance of home and familial traditions (Nair, 2006).

At some stage in each of these protagonists' journeys, they are seen to make a change in their approach towards integration. The audience can observe them both in a defining moment where they each make a conscious decision to find a balance between their two communities. In contrast to the previous subconscious efforts they were making without even realising, their move into a more mindful and calculated attitude seems to improve the degree of balanced integration they are able to achieve.

These two filmmakers highlight how it can be extremely difficult for second-generation migrants to unite two different cultures. It can be especially challenging in a space that does not recognise one of those cultures or when migrants are unfamiliar with the host's ways of life. To explore these challenges further one must first understand the definition of cultural integration:

Cultural integration can be defined as a form of cultural exchange. It happens when one person or group adapts to the practices and beliefs of another group without sacrificing their own (Müller, 2021, n.p.).

The most important part of this definition is the phrase 'without sacrificing.' I see this as a crucial part of cultural integration as it is vital that a person's native ways of life are respected and remain prominent even with the introduction of new cultural traditions. Cultural integration can be further examined by looking at it from specific viewpoints. The first angle I would like to consider is how a second-generation migrant feels in an environment. It is critical that when we examine cultural integration, we recognise the position of the migrant in a space. Are they comfortable? Do they feel safe? Are they made to feel that they belong? These are very important considerations as they greatly influence the degree of integration that is possible to achieve. I will be looking at space through the lens of theorists Xing Ruan and Paul Hogben's spectrum of topophilia to topophobia, "the love and hate relations that humans establish with their habitat" (2007, i). These terms come

from the Greek words, *philia*, meaning love, and *phobia*, meaning hate. *Topos* is another Greek word, which is used generally to refer to any place (Ruan and Hogben, 2007, p. 12). The second angle will explore how different communities living in a shared space exist together. A significant theory which I will be using as a tool to examine this particular research is that of heteroglossia, which is defined by theorist Mikhail Bakhtin as “a diversity of styles and voices, assembled into a structured artistic system which arranges difference in a particular way” (Robinson, 2011, n.p.). Writers Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd discuss Bakhtin’s theories together. This concept goes hand-in-hand with cultural integration, as it expresses harmony amongst multiple groups living in one area.

This essay will outline how a second-generation migrant’s relationship to a space and their ability to create harmony between two opposing cultures within that space facilitates them in ultimately deciding to take a more mindful approach towards cultural integration; and determines whether or not this affects the degree of integration capable of being achieved.

Chapter 1 will look at the Chadha and Nair’s depiction of each protagonist’s relationship to the spaces they occupy using Ruan and Hogben’s theory. I will be looking, in particular, at what the journeys of cultural integration are like for these characters before they enter the phase of making a conscious choice to do so.

Chapter 2 will consider these characters’ efforts to create harmony amongst communities after they make the conscious decision to culturally integrate themselves equally between their Indian and western influences. I will use Bakhtin’s theory of heteroglossia to do so. This is to determine whether or not making this decision can affect the degrees of integration that is possible to be achieved.

Chapter 1: Relationship to Space

When a second-generation migrant has to navigate living in a space caught between two different cultures it can cause them to have mixed emotions towards that space. *The Namesake* and *Bend it Like Beckham* both demonstrate this struggle through their protagonists' journeys. Gogol and Jess both have complicated relationships with the areas they occupy throughout each film.

While Gogol's relationship to his parents in *The Namesake* plays a large role in determining his connections to space, it is the variety of locations he is placed in and the architecture he sees along the way that seem to influence him most.

In *Bend It Like Beckham*, Jess' relationships with her parents and her friend Jules pave the rocky path of her cultural integration within the area of Hounslow. They influence and encourage her towards and away from both the Indian and the host communities. Each of their influences seem to decide Jess' feelings towards her own locality.

1.1 Gogol - American Boy?

In *The Namesake* the story begins before the protagonist has even been born. Firstly, we meet Gogol's parents, Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli, and watch each of them as they migrate from Bengal to New York. We follow them as they struggle to adapt to a different culture and suffer feelings of homesickness, especially in the case of his mother. As they slowly settle into the western world, they start their family. This is when we meet Gogol, who is named after the famous Russian novelist and Ashoke's favourite writer.

For most of the film we watch Gogol reject Indian traditions. He seems to only want to fit into the world outside of his home and his family's customs and, therefore, he focuses almost entirely on American culture and ways of life. This puts him in a position where he is

uncomfortable at home as he tries to deny his connection to the traditions that get practiced there. The tension we see on-screen between Gogol and his home environment in the earlier stages of the film suggests that Gogol has feelings of topophobia towards the house he grew up in. We do not see this tension when he is outside his home, however, indicating the presence of topophilia when he occupies these spaces. Perhaps it is easier for him to put all his efforts into one culture rather than trying to blend two. Ruan and Hogben's explorations of topophilia and topophobia address why this might be. It is within the human condition to want to simplify our lifestyles and, therefore, reduce what we identify with down to the values and spaces of one community. This can involve attaching ourselves to particular places. Ruan and Hogben speak to the complications of being of a mixed identity and how this can cause migrants to simply abandon one of those identities altogether in an attempt ease the struggle to feel recognised by, and as part of, both communities (2007, p. 31). In Gogol's case, the areas he gravitates towards seems to be everywhere outside of his home, the typical American spaces with which he regularly interacts. This attitude of choosing to conform to one culture over the other can come with its own problematic effects as it "...exposes the danger of the loss of self that might be caused by an over-identification with the environment" (Ruan and Hogben, 2007, p. 32). By pushing away from his Indian background in favour of a more western lifestyle, Gogol also distances himself from his own family and the love and stability of belonging to a secure family unit. Throughout the film we see his father, in particular, make several attempts to have heartfelt moments with his son. For Gogol's high school graduation, Ashoke gifts him a book by Nikolai Gogol. Ashoke wants to create a conversation around this and to tell Gogol the important story of how he got his name. However, Gogol is completely uninterested and dismisses both the present and his father. He fails to see that he and his father are deeply connected. Gogol assumes his parents cannot possibly understand the position he is in as a second-generation migrant trying to navigate two different spaces. However, we, as the audience, have more of an insight into

the reality of this than Gogol himself as we have watched his parent go through a very similar experience after moving to America at the beginning of the film. Gogol's failure to recognise this causes a cut off between them that, consequently, leads to his inability to successfully integrate between American and Indian cultures. It is not until much later in the film that he realises he was mistaken and can begin to build a stronger connection with his family's traditions (Nair, 2006).

Throughout the first half of the film, we observe several moments that seem to bring Gogol a little closer to his Indian heritage. While not the moment of realisation for Gogol where he decides to make the conscious decision to culturally integrate, they are still very significant and, perhaps, may have accelerated the eventual lightbulb moment for him. The Ganguli family make multiple trips to India at different stages in Gogol's life. One of most noteworthy of these trips occurs just after Gogol has finished high school. Ironically, he is not seen to struggle to take on and appreciate the culture here, like he would in his own home back in America. Instead, he thrives in this space, finding comfort and independence in it. At one point Gogol leaves the house to go for a run, sending his family into a panic that he will get lost on the streets and not be safe. He does not, however, see this as an issue and takes off confidently as if knowing the geography of the area well. We see a very different side to Gogol in this setting. Unlike his sister Sonia, who complains about the heat and the clothes during their time in Bengal, he takes everything in with enjoyment and ease. Without realising it, Gogol finally has love for a place that is not dominated by western culture. This is the first moment of topophilia for him for a space that largely practices Indian culture.

Architecture also plays a crucial role in Gogol's journey towards cultural integration. While on this visit to India the family takes a trip to Agra to see the famous Taj Mahal. Fig. 1 shows a still from *The Namesake* in which the Ganguli family stand together and admire the beauty of the

mausoleum in front of them. Gogol becomes completely mesmerised by the tragic story and delicate designs that the building offers.



Fig. 1, Nair, 2006.

Once again, we can see the irony in this as Gogol, who has always made a point of rejecting Indian culture, falls in love with the country's most iconic landmark. He goes so far as announcing to his parents "Hey guess what? I think I'm going to major in architecture!" (Nair, 2006), after seeing the impressive attraction. Gogol's naive failure to recognise how strongly he is connecting with his own heritage in this moment can be summed up by how humankind in general responds to dramatic architecture: not by viewing it as a space, but rather as art. For this reason, he does not see the Taj Mahal as a threat. Whereas he views his own family home as a danger to his individually, a place where he will get trapped and be forced to practice Indian traditions. The Taj Mahal is not a

potential habitat for Gogol so he can never be trapped inside it or by its laws (Ruan and Hogben, 2007, p. 29).

While Gogol shows obvious signs of affection for Indian traditions on his trip to Bengal and Agra, it is his lack of awareness of these feelings that prevents him from continuing on with this appreciation upon returning to America. Because of this lack of self-knowledge, he is prevented from actually achieving cultural integration when he returns home to the U.S. Instead, he reverts back to his previous attitude of rejecting and feeling uncomfortable in Indian spaces, such as his family home. Up to this point in the film, he is unable to fully culturally integrate because he does not realise that he needs to make the deliberate decision to do so.

1.2 Jess' Conflicted Position in Hounslow

Director Gurinder Chadha takes a slightly different approach towards capturing a second-generation migrant's experience of space. In *Bend It Like Beckham*, there are two main spaces Jess tends to occupy, her family home and the Hounslow Harriers training pitch. Throughout the film, we watch Jess struggle to navigate her relationship with these spaces as the communities involved in each do not appear to overlap. Unlike Gogol, who deals with a similar challenge by rejecting one of those spaces, Jess can see the appeal of each of them and wants to maintain both in her life. She works hard to try to uphold her family's values while also trying to fit in in her home town. However, she is consistently seen to experience difficulty and often times fails, leading her to become completely overwhelmed and, therefore, unsettled in the area in which she lives. (Chadha, 2002).

It can be argued that Jess has a more complicated position on the spectrum of topophilia to topophobia than Gogol, as her feelings towards the spaces she interacts with are, perhaps, slightly more complex. We know she loves her family, but she is never seen to express much love for the

physical home they live in. We also know she loves the football pitch, but her feelings for it are tainted by her guilt in disobeying her family. Her mixed emotions towards these spaces are, in effect, caused by the tension that exists within them. This tension in turn interferes with how Jess identifies.

Identity ... can only be secured by first having established a relation with our surroundings. Yet, equally, identity depends on the ability to distinguish ourselves from those surroundings (Ruan and Hogben, 2007, p. 37).

Jess' lack of a stable relationship with either setting restricts her ability to understand her own identity in the context of these environments. Furthermore, she cannot identify with anything outside of these spaces as she is completely consumed by each of their demands. As a result, it could be said that, overall, topophobia presents more strongly for her as the level of discomfort that she has to put up with from these two areas is simply intolerable and negatively affects her day-to-day life.

Jess wants to be a football player but has never attempted to pursue this career, knowing her traditional Punjabi parents would not approve. It is not until her friend Jules convinces her to do so, that she joins the local Hounslow Harriers women's football club.

Jules is a very significant character in the film as she acts as a control to Jess. She has to deal with the same obstacles of being a young woman, in the same locality, with the desire to go into a male-dominated profession. Jess has an additional obstacle, however, in that she has to grapple with the cultural implications of being an Asian female. While the film's primary focus is on expressing a complex and modern look at multiculturalism, Chadha forces the audience to consider this theme from the specific viewpoint of gender (Abdel-Shehid and Kalman-Lamb, 2015, p. 146). *Bend It Like Beckham* is essentially an exploration of Jess' position in western society as a second-generation migrant. Jules reminds the audience of the important consideration of gender that Abdel-Shehid and Kalman-Lamb make here. The character of Jules highlights that gender must

always be taken into account when considering one's position in society. Therefore, the hurdles Jess has to overcome are two-fold. Without the presence of Jules, the audience might lose sight of the gendered expectations of Jess, before her race can even be considered. This increases the amount of pressure on her coming from both communities and, as a result, creates a feeling of disharmony between her and the spaces she occupies. The divide that is causing this pressure also proves to be a definitive barrier between Jess and her ability to achieve cultural integration. While she makes consistent efforts to do, so she is never able to overcome the difficult challenge due to the pressures placed on her by each community.

Jess truly embraces her Indian heritage from the very beginning of the film. Whereas Gogol's journey is about learning to accept both cultures, Jess' story starts off with her already in that position. She has great respect and understanding for her parents, even when they cannot offer the same to her. She knows she is stepping outside their realm of understanding by taking up football. At one point she announces, "This is taking me away from everything they know" (Chadha, 2002). We can really see the difference between Jess and Gogol's characters here. The reason Jess is so aware of her parents' feelings is because of the shared migrant experience they have all dealt with. Unlike Gogol, who fails to recognise the hardship his parents faced by leaving India, Jess is completely appreciative of the sacrifices her parents made to come to London. She knows their resistance is not out of malice, but rather out of love and fear for her. They have given up so much and worked so hard to make a good life for themselves and their children, and they fear that all that effort will be lost if Jess chooses a potentially unstable career.

This fear is demonstrated by Mr. Bhamra's worry that Jess will experience the same discrimination he received after he tried to join the local cricket team when he first came to Britain. This negative interaction with the host community causes him to retreat away from western social

spaces, assuming that he will never be welcome in them. In a misguided attempt to protect Jess, he tries to instill the same cautious and topophobic attitude in her as she begins a similar journey.

While Jess' understanding of her parents' past experiences and fears allows her to conduct herself with the utmost respect for family's traditions, it is also very paralysing for her. She feels forced to sneak in and out of the spaces in her life, not wanting her parents to know she is going to football training. As a result, she feels alienated by the society she lives in, as she is not truly welcome in either space as her honest and true self (Ruan and Hogben, 2007, p.32). The lack of a comfortable space to identify with and in pushes her into a realm of uncertainty towards her own individuality that ultimately creates feelings of topophobia towards her locality.

Michelle LaBaron analyses the conflict that comes from culture and how migrants connect to space, as follows: "Since culture is so closely related to our identities (who we think we are), and the ways we make meaning (what is important to us and how), it is always a factor in conflict" (LeBaron, 2003, n.p.). This conflict in *Bend It Like Beckham* can be seen in Fig. 2, a still from the film that demonstrates the clashing cultures in Jess' life. As she hallucinates that the women in her family are standing before her like a wall, as she is about to take a penalty kick, we see the theme of the film reflected in one image. The women represent the expectation that Jess adopt traditional Punjabi female roles and the disapproval they feel towards her becoming a football player. Literally, they stand in front of her as an obstacle, preventing her from achieving her dream.

For most of the journey that Jess undertakes in the film, she struggles to find her feet in her local area. She has great difficulty in her attempts to culturally integrate between the two groups during this time, which leads to a presence of topophobia. It is not until later in the film that Jess learns that in order to find a middle ground with both groups she must learn, like the film title suggests, to *bend* the rules to remove any expectations either group has of her.



Fig. 2, Chadha, 2002.

Chapter 2: Creating Harmony Between Two Cultures

Our two protagonists, Gogol and Jess, eventually come to a turning point in each of their cultural integration journeys where they make the deliberate decision to integrate as harmoniously as possible.

In *The Namesake*, this moment occurs for Gogol after the death of Ashoke. Gogol has a huge sense of regret after his father's passing and begins to reflect on the choices he has made that removed him from the family dynamic.

Jess has a similar revelation during her sister Pinky's wedding in *Bend It Like Beckham*. Interestingly, this moment comes for Jess after she has first decided to give up on trying to peruse football. However, after a surprising talk from her father, suddenly encouraging her to keep trying, she realises that with more time she will be able to culturally integrate between the two communities.

2.1 Gogol Rediscovered His Roots

There is a clear turning point in Gogol's life after the death of his father, Ashoke. Gogol is seen to reevaluate his entire existence up to that moment. He is full of regret for constantly rejecting his roots throughout his life, which ultimately distanced him from his father. Instantly realising his mistakes, he wastes no time in trying to correct them. The first thing Gogol does upon hearing the news of his father's death is to have his own head shaved, which can be seen in Fig. 3. This is a traditional Hindu sign of bereavement among male mourners. It is also a ritual that is performed after the birth of a son (Anon, 2023). Not only is this an act of respect and love for his father, but it also symbolises Gogol's newfound appreciation for his family's traditions. It is a sign that he is finally ready to reconnect with his roots. After the funeral, Maxine, Gogol's girlfriend at the time,

suggests they take a trip to clear his head. He responds by saying “I don’t want to get away” (Nair, 2006). This reinforces the complete change in his lifestyle as he no longer wants to turn his back on Indian culture and his own Indianness and instead, finally makes efforts to integrate between his family’s values and the American way of life.



Fig. 3, Nair, 2006

After this, Gogol starts to allow himself to feel more comfortable in his family home. Mikhail Bakhtin examines this web of connections in his studies, questioning: “Why is there such a deep connection between the discovery of value and the consciousness of exact physical placement?” (Hirschkop and Shepherd, 1989, p.13). In order to create heteroglossia, Gogol first has to reflect on his own relationship to each culture. In doing so, he discovers a previously unrecognised and unacknowledged love for his family and the home they live in, finally revealing feelings of topophilia towards this space. Bakhtin’s theory suggests that the adoption of a more conscious approach towards cultural integration allows Gogol to open himself up and to have a

greater capacity for difference in his life. As difference often comes in the form of location, Gogol is at last able to appreciate his home setting (Hirschkop and Shepherd, 1989, p.13).

Postcolonial theorist and Bengali born, Gayatri Spivak brings a fresh perspective to Bakhtin's research, while remaining in agreement with him:

Spivak's usage of 'responsibility' (like her dialogic understanding of 'speaking,' ...) is akin to Bakhtin's 'answerability' (*otvetstvennost*: sometimes also translated as 'responsibility'). It signifies not only the act of response which completes the transaction of speaker and listener, but also the ethical stance of making discursive room for the Other to exist (Kilburn, 1996, n.p.).

In the case for Gogol, he has become both the speaker and the listener, or, the local and the migrant. Up until now he has viewed them as two separate identities that cannot mix. This has caused a lot of tension in his life. However, his shift into a more neutral stance allows him to let both identities exist at once, finally giving room to Indian traditions ('the other') in his life. It could be argued that without even considering the broader community's involvement, Gogol has actually created heteroglossia within himself as he learns to balance both cultures.

Ashima, Gogol's mother, has an interesting reaction to her son's sudden willingness to seek cultural integration. Not only does she feel relieved that he has finally begun to accept and value Indian culture, but she also feels inspired by it. She has always struggled to fit in in America and has never truly felt at home there. After her husband's death, she decides to return to India. However, as Gogol enters the stage of making the conscious effort to culturally integrate, she decides to give it a go herself. Eventually, she announces: "For twenty-five years I missed my life in India. And now I will miss my life here" (Nair, 2006). Ultimately, she changes her mind and chooses to spend half her time in Bengal and the other half in New York, as she has finally found peace and comfort in the American environment.

The Ganguli family achieve heteroglossia by the end of the film. Through Gogol's efforts to appreciate his family's values and through Ashima finding a place for herself in America they are able to understand and allow for multiple voices and influences in their lives.

Gogol's eventual decision to not just focus solely on the traditions of one group and to instead make conscious efforts to culturally participate in two communities has a powerful outcome. It allows him and his family to finally thrive in all the spaces they occupy in their day-to-day lives. Unfortunately, this awakening comes at the cost of his father's death, inhibiting Gogol from sharing his newfound love for his Indian background with Ashoke. While this fills Gogol with regret for not coming to his epiphany sooner, it is also what pushes him to improve the degree of cultural integration he can achieve, through constant efforts.

2.2 How Jess Dismantles the Divide in Hounslow

Jess gets unexpected support from her father, Mr. Bhamra, in her progression towards cultural integration. At Pinky's wedding Jess is completely distraught after she is forced to give up on her dream in order to please her family. Mr. Bhamra cannot bear to see her in such a state and eventually changes his mind and agrees to let her go and play at a match in front of an American scout. This is the point where Jess begins to see the possibility of cultural integration, as she is suddenly able to adopt a new approach towards achieving it. While her father allows her to go to the match, not out of understanding but rather sympathy for his upset daughter, Jess can see that for the first time she has an opportunity to try and make her parents see eye-to-eye with her. At last, the audience can start to see hope for heteroglossia to be created (Chadha, 2002).

After the American scout offers Jess a scholarship to play for Santa Clara University, her friend Tony attempts to secure this for her by announcing to their parents that they wish to marry. He then goes on to say that "... there's one condition. I want Jesminder to go to college first,

anywhere that she wants” (Chadha, 2002). Despite her parents’ acceptance of this, Jess confesses that it is not an honest proposal. Instead, she sits them down and delicately tells them about her offer. In this moment, she is more mindful of her parents’ concerns and way of thinking. She knows their capacity to understand the situation and she is aware of how they typically respond to this type of information. She uses this knowledge to her advantage, as she consciously tailors her speech to suit her audience. By reassuring them and approaching her point gracefully and at a pace they can follow, they are able to listen to their daughter and see her point of view far better than they could before. Using respect, personal strength and considerate explanation Jess makes her first truly conscious attempt to integrate both cultures in her life. Not only that, but this attempt is found to be successful as her parents finally agree to let her enter her desired career with her mother saying, “At least I taught her full Indian dinner. The rest is up to God!” (Chadha, 2002).

Bakhtin proves to us that Jess’ journey towards cultural integration, while rocky, is accurate and realistic. His theory speaks to the idea of “...oppositions ‘within’ to oppositions ‘between’...” (Hirschkop and Shepherd, 1989, p. 44). We watch Jess deal with both opponents throughout the film. While it could be said that ‘oppositions between’ communities is perhaps, a more obvious battle; it is the ‘opposition within’ that Jess eventually overcomes to find cultural integration.

It is equally important to discuss Mr. Bhamra’s journey towards cultural integration. Like Ashima in *The Namesake*, Mr. Bhamra is inspired by his daughter to reconsider how he is choosing to live his life. He too experiences a defining moment where he decides to let go of his fear of his family being rejected by the host community and makes a conscious decision to allow Jess, and in turn, himself to integrate in the local area. The first-generation perspective that this sub-story offers is hugely significant. It is a reminder that the rate of cultural integration is different for all migrants in a space (Algan, et al., 2012) and that negative experiences within that space can massively alter this rate, as it did for Mr. Bhamra. Jess inspires and challenges him (just as Gogol did for his

mother) from the beginning of the film and this, ultimately, leads to him experiencing this powerful epiphany. Fig. 4 shows Mr. Bhamra playing cricket with men from both communities during the closing scene of the film. After originally swearing never to play the game again after he was left humiliated and cast aside by the local team, he eventually decides to try again after seeing Jess' success with the Hounslow Harriers. This image re-enforces the sense of heteroglossia that is reached by the end of the movie, as Mr. Bhamra can at long last integrate with the host community.



Fig. 4, Chadha, 2002

Jess' determination to have her parents understand her and remove their fears surrounding the path she is about to take, ultimately leads to her making the conscious decision to culturally integrate. After several failed unconscious attempts to do so, her switch into a more deliberate and calculated approach proves very successful for her. She is then able to break down the walls between the Indian community and English community creating a strong sense of heteroglossia that benefits everyone in the area.

Conclusion

Through looking at this research from the viewpoints of topophilia and topophobia, and heteroglossia, we are able to break down and examine our understanding of cultural integration. Through this process we can analyse it thoroughly to see if the question of whether or not it is true to say that adopting a conscious approach impacts the degree to which cultural integration that can be achieved.

The key element in both these protagonists' journeys to cultural integration, and something I have recently (and perhaps thanks to their influence) investigated first hand, is this move into conscious integration. These two films demonstrate, through their characters' trials and errors, that when one makes this mindful decision, it drastically improves the degree of cultural integration that can be achieved. Both Gogol and Jess start off their journeys in a position of conflict and tension, caught between two cultures. By the end of each film, they are able to alter their approaches towards navigating their localities to successfully integrate between both communities with which they are involved.

As an added note, I believe the stories we view in cinema can not only resonate with an audience, but influence them too. Jess and Gogol's cultural integration stories are inspiring. As a second-generation migrant, I have found their efforts encouraging and also informative. It has been truly invaluable to be able to watch them both go through a similar struggle to people like myself and to know our experiences are shared is hugely significant and empowering. They have motivated my own integration journey and helped me move into a more mindful and conscious approach towards achieving it fully.

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