

## **Cultural Conflicts as Depicted in English Movie “ East Is East”**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research investigates the way in which characters in the movie "East is East" cope with cultural clashes and conflicts resulting from diverse backgrounds. The study's limitation is that the author uses a fictional family as a case study to examine the cultural conflicts that contribute to social inequality. The film portrays cultural tensions that arise both within families and in the wider community. The study aims to (1) identify cultural problems presented in "East is East" and (2) analyze how the characters address these challenges. To investigate this topic, the researchers utilized qualitative research methodology to analyze and interpret the subject of investigation. Specifically, they applied Sociocultural Approach theory by Lev Vygotsky, Cultural Conflict theory by Thorsten Sellin, and DMIS (Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity) theory by Milton Bennet. The film "East is East" from 1999 by writer Ayub Khan Din and director Damien O'Donnell was the source of data for this study. Based on Cultural Conflict theory by Thorsten Sellin, the study identified two types of cultural conflict that arise in the movie: Primary and Secondary Conflict. Using Milton Bennett's DMIS theory, the study also examined how the characters deal with cultural conflict, highlighting four stages: denial, defense, minimization, and acceptance.

**Keywords:** Cultural, conflicts, movie, sociocultural, approach, society

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The works of literature portray life. Social reality is a fact of life. This suggested that social reality includes relationships between societies. Events that occur both within the producer's head and across society. Describe the following relationship between literature and society. Literature is a social institution that uses a social creation as its medium of expression. Such standards and conventions could only have evolved within society. Despite the fact that literature has also copied the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual, life is primarily a social reality, therefore literature also imitates life. Consequently, because the social reality that emerges and changes always determines those in its immediate vicinity, such as the culture that already exists and develops.

The element that most closely links daily life to human existence is culture. The majority of human activities are inextricably linked to cultural factors. The goals of the Western group are knowledge-based, firmly empirical, and they go against conventional and religious

beliefs. The rational explanation of the meaning of life and the nature of the universe is incompatible with Western society's progressive philosophy. Eastern culture fosters self-knowledge and broadens cognitive understanding. Humans grow and thrive in their cultural surroundings, which sculpt their inhabitants' particular ways of thinking and acting. This way of thinking and doing is the result of cultural conditioning acquired via education, as well as direct or indirect guidance given by parents, teachers, and the larger community.

Most of the time, we are confident that the cultural institutions, mindsets, and behaviors we practice are right, fair, and typical. We assume that other people hold the same values and views as we do, and that they also have the same goals and expectations. People from different cultures may have assumptions, expectations, desires, and choices that are very different from our own because of their own cultural indoctrination, which creates problems when we interact with or touch them. Particularly for individuals working in the tourism and hospitality industries, such as managers, decision-makers, or authorities who frequently have sexual relationships or face-to-face contact with people from diverse cultures, understanding other people's cultures is essential. It's important to have an understanding of other people's beliefs, practices, communication methods, and behavioral characteristics is a part of this.

A cultural movie called "East is East" it combines two distinct cultures with a connection to literature, literary works, and artistic creations. The investigate why cultural conflicts can arise between Western and Eastern cultures through an object. This explains the connection between literature and society as social structures that rely on language for communication. The screenplay for the 1999 British comedy-drama "East Is East," which Damien O'Donnell directed, was written by Ayub Khan-Din. A mixed-ethnic British family, headed by a Pakistani father named George (Om Puri) and an English mother named Ella, is shown in Salford, Lancashire (now Greater Manchester), in the year 1971.

Cultural conflicts develop when people hold different opinions on cultural values, which is why the researcher is interested in this topic. However, based on a number of prior studies (Muslimah, 2021; Naya and Munjid, 2002; Putera, 2016; Yulita, 2012) on the impact of cultural conflicts on a variety of issues, the researchers chose this topic since family conflicts were a key cause of a lot of issues in the film "East is East." culture. Cultural conflict in this film should be studied since it not only examines the contrasts between English and Pakistani cultures and the numerous sorts of cultural conflict, but it also examines how characters deal with cultural conflict on the characters of individuals involved. By seeing this film, the audience can learn about the culture of conflict and how characters deal with it. This will increase one's understanding and awareness of culture. Researchers are interested in evaluating cultural issues and how characters react with them because of the additional value in this picture, including its themes, characters, and unusual conflict scenarios. This study will be titled "The Cultural Issues in Damien O'Donnell's (1999) Film 'East is East'".

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

### **The Research Design**

This research uses a qualitative research design and a descriptive approach. The goal of qualitative research is to discover a phenomenon's meaning, understanding, concept, features, symptoms, symbols, and descriptions. It also promotes the use of a variety of methodologies, is natural and holistic, prioritizes quality, and is narrative in nature. In a nutshell, the purpose of qualitative research is to discover a phenomenon or topic through the methodical application of scientific methodologies. Another approach to describe qualitative research is as "an unfolding model that takes place in a natural situation and allows the researcher to develop a level of depth from great involvement in the actual events" (Creswell, 1994, p:18).

As a result, the author employed qualitative research to develop study suggestions on the cultural conflict in the film "East is East." The author's research method is descriptive qualitative, in which the author observes and pays attention to the thing to be investigated and evaluated. The author then documents the films that have been watched and attentively evaluated firsthand. This study employed descriptive methods, which do not apply treatment, modification, or change to free variables, but rather describe a condition as it is. This study presents the findings of an analysis based on watching the film "East is East" and learning

about the cultural clash shown in the film. The obtained data is evaluated and interpreted, and the conditions that transpired are presented.

## **The Source of Data**

The data is the outcome of researchers recording facts or statistics to collect information. The data for the study came from the movie "East is East," which was written by Ayub Khan-Din and directed by Damien O'Donnell. It ran for 1 hour, 36 minutes, and 50 seconds and was released on November 5, 1999. (United Kingdom).

## **Analysis Data**

There are some steps that the writer does in collecting the data in the research, first, downloaded the movie "East is East" movie by Damien O'Donnell in the internet and took the script from the 'Scripts.com'. Second, watched the movie repeatedly and carefully to understand it comprehensively. Third, identify the sentence that included the cultural conflicts and the ways of characters dealing with cultural conflict in the "East is East" movie by Damien O'Donnell. Fourth, read the script and marked the words or sentences that related to formulation of problem in this research. The final steps is read some guiding books that are closely related to the topic of this writing.

### **1. Data Reduction**

Data reduction is a component of the analysis. Researchers can arrive at final, verifiable results by deleting superfluous information and structuring the data. The researcher categorizes the issues, cultural conflict, and strategies used by characters to deal with cultural conflict in the film "East is East" based on the theory applied.

### **2. Data Display**

Argue that better data visualization, including various types of matrices, images, networks, and charts, is essential for carrying out significant qualitative analysis. Everything about it is designed to bring together data that has been logically categorized and is easily accessible.

### **3. Conclusion and Verification**

In this step, the writer draws conclusions about the research findings based on the research problem and theories employed.

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. RESULT

#### 1. Cultural Conflicts Depicted in East is East Movie

After doing the analysis, the researchers found several cultural conflicts that occurred in the movie 'East is East' by Damien O'Donnell, with reference to the Culture Conflict theory of Thorsten Sellin; Primary and Secondary Conflict.

##### a. Primary Conflict

The primary conflict is a cultural conflict that emerges when core ideas clash. In other words, it is a clash between two or more people who hold opposing cultural beliefs. When cultural aspects such as symbols, language, values, beliefs, norms, customs, tools, architecture, works of art, habit, religious system, and so on are not matched with cultural elements from other cultures, primary conflicts can emerge.

Many cultural issues were included as key conflicts in the film 'East is East,' which will be examined more below. The fundamental conflict in this film, which occurs first, is one of belief. That that is considered to be true is referred to as belief. Belief is the conviction that something exists, is true, or is good. In this scenario, every society has a culture that they regard to be true and real, such as in areas of religious beliefs, politics, or even other aspects. Hence, in terms of religious and cultural views, a person can presume that whatever he believes to be true is what he must follow and actualize in his or her life, because they live in that belief.

**The conflict between George and Nazir's eldest child when he was about to marry off his son but his son didn't seem happy.**



(00:05:33)

Dialogue 1: Abdul: Looks great, Dad.



(00:06:16)

George: Tradition, see, Son? All our people wearing this. The watch. Here. Says your name in Arabic. See? Nazir. Son. Today you make me

feel very proud.

In the scene above, it can be seen that there was a primary conflict related to matters of belief, namely beliefs about traditions that are considered true. When George is about to marry his eldest son Nazir to a Pakistani woman, he tells his son while fitting the wedding property to Nazir that it is their tradition and everyone wears it, but George doesn't know that his son doesn't really want the wedding. Instead of wanting to make his child happy, he tries to convince his son, but his son has a different belief than him. It can be seen from the look on his son's face that he looks unhappy and doesn't want this marriage. His father believes that the tradition he wants to do is what he thinks is right, but that is not the same as his son's belief. It can be seen in the next scene that a conflict ensued.

The following scene's principal conflict and argument is around greeting variants. As previously said, greeting is a language, including body language and verbal language, that people use to establish conversation. Greetings are used to show respect for the other person as well as to start or end a conversation. It is possible to do so either directly or indirectly. Greetings are often conveyed immediately when people meet in person. Cultural realization in the system of ideas can be seen in rules or customs for speaking to others. Greetings are part of the realization of culture, which is the span of the concept system. People's perspectives and welcomes may change depending on their distinct ethnic backgrounds.

#### **The differences in how to greet in each religion.**



**(00:12:01)**



**(00:12:12)**

Dialogue 6: Pastor: Hello, George, how you doin'?  
George: Very good, thank you for ask.  
Pastor: Good man. Well, God bless.  
George: Allah go with you.

The scene above show the primary conflict that differences greeting between George and Pastor who will leave after receiving help from Ella and Annie. When Pastor asked about

how George was doing he said he was fine, but when George was about to say goodbye, he said a greeting in his belief that is “God bless” that’s mean may God always bless you in Christian way, but George replied again with a greeting from his belief that “Allah go with you” that’s mean may Allah always with you in Islam way, that made the Pastor leave in a state of confusion. Conflict arises when greet one another using the manner we choose but other people don't greet us in the same way. This difference in greeting causes primary conflict between the two different cultures because they have different ways of greeting between the two. Because this primary conflict also includes conflicts related to basic things, such as language, namely greeting.

The following primary dispute was one about clothing. Clothes and style are cultural realizations that are categorised as artifacts because they are human-created objects. Individuals from different cultures normally dress differently and have different styles, which are known as traditional clothes; they must be proud of their attire, which often generates problems amongst them.

**George scolded his daughter for wearing inappropriate clothes.**



**(01:12:54)**



**(01:13:10)**

Dialogue 8: George: Why you wear bloody short skirt, Meenah?

Ella: It's her school uniform. She has to wear it.

George: She not in bloody school now! On Sunday you wear Saree. Your aunty Riffat send from Pakistan.

Meenah : Can't I wear me trouser suit?

George: No bastard hear what I say?! You pucking deaf? No bloody look at your mum! She no bloody help you! I telling what to do! Understand?!

It can be seen from the scene above, is a primary conflict consist clothes, the conflict started when George saw his only daughter wearing a school uniform with a short skirt, then

he was angry with his son why he was wearing clothes like that which he thought he should wear long and closed clothes, when in fact it was the school uniform his son was wearing, but because George said it wasn't school time. George also ordered Meenah to wear a Saree (A sari is a women's garment from the Indian subcontinent, which consists of an un-stitched stretch of woven fabric arranged over the body as a robe, with one end tied to the waist, while the other end rests over one shoulder as a stole, sometimes baring a part of the midriff). But Meenah tried to answer her father's wishes by saying "Can't I wear me trouser suit? Dad?" after hearing that her father grew even angry and cursed at Meenah, Meenah tried to ask for her mother's defense, but her mother was silent and her father felt he was the one who always had to follow all that his want.

#### b. Secondary Conflict

The secondary conflict was defined as clashes between lesser civilizations inside the larger cultures. It could also be seen as a struggle between tiny cultures within a larger culture, or a conflict between individuals within a single culture. Many subsidiary battles are also shown in the film East is East. It is possible that the researcher would discuss as follows.

#### **The conflict when Earnest greets George with Assalamu'alaikum.**



(00:52:01)



(00:52:05)

Dialogue 14: Mr. Moorhouse: Let's send the buggers home! Enoch's talking next Tuesday at the Salford Hall! Sign the petition on repatriation and -'Ere, look,there's one now. Got his bags packed.  
Earnest: Salaam-alacum, Mr Khan!

Mr. Moorhouse: Shut up, you little bastard!

Can be seen in the scene above consist secondary conflict because the conflict between a grandfather and his grandson where they are from the same culture, but the conflict started when Earnest tried to rebuke George by using the Muslim greeting habit, and that made

Earnest's grandfather angry and cursed his grandson and told his grandson him to be silent for having reprimanded George for passing. In this context, this includes conflicts of different ways of thinking from different cultures, because according to individuals it is something that is right, but for other individuals it is not.

## 2. Ways of Characters Dealing with Cultural Conflicts

After discovering various cultural problems that occur in the film *East is East*, the researcher discovered how each character in the film interacts with the cultural conflicts that occur. As a result, the researcher applied Milton Bennett's DMIS (Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity) theory to examine how the characters in the film *East is East* deal with conflicts induced by cultural differences. According to DMIS, each individual or group passes through six stages while dealing with cultural differences: denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and intergeneration.

### a. Denial

This phase displays the thinking of individuals or organizations who believe there is only one culture. Individuals at this level are unaware of the existence of cultures other than their own. Those in the denial stage are uninterested in the concept of cultural differences because they do not acknowledge the existence of different cultures.

#### **George tried to convince his son that this was not a good thing**



**(00:19:26)**



**(00:99:31)**

Dialogue 16: George: You can't have this thing.  
It no belong to you.  
Not our religion, see?

This stage is the stage where someone will deny the existence of cultural differences, and they don't want to accept that culture at all. So it can be seen from the scene above that when George tried to convince his son when his son Sajid was afraid of being circumcised, George said "it doesn't belong to you. Not out of religion, see?"

George here emphasizes that he does not accept the existence of other religions that he accepts, because according to him the religion he believes in is the most correct regardless of the surrounding environment. It can also be seen that George doesn't care what his child wants, he still forces his child to do it, even though his child doesn't necessarily want it. It can also be seen that George is not interested in the differences between the culture he believes in and other cultures.

b. Defence

In this case, an individual or group of individuals recognizes the presence of another culture while maintaining their own as the best and most important culture in the world. People regard other cultures as threats at this point, so they try to safeguard their own.

**George tries to convince his son to do what he thinks is right.**



**(01:15:44)**



**(01:15:56)**

Dialogue 18: George: Son, you no understand 'cause you...no listen to me. I trying to show you a good way to live. You no English. English people never accepting you.  
In Islam everyone equal, see? No black man, no white man. All Muslim – special community.

At this stage is the stage where someone recognizes the existence of other cultures but they still believe that their culture is the best that has ever existed. This stage also an individual will consider another culture is a threat and they try to protect their culture. It can be seen from the scene above conveyed by George above, namely “English people never accept you. All Islam – Special community”. This is how he tries to convince his son that the culture he holds is the best and he thinks that other cultures will not accept his son, George does think that other cultures exist, but he still thinks that his culture is still the best. This is where a person recognizes the existence of other cultures, but still thinks that his culture is the best of the others. Then they also feel that other cultures are a threat.

c. Minimization

A person or group of people has reached the point where they accept cultural variety and no longer feel threatened by it. However, they anticipate parallels among the already-existing cultural disparities at this point. People at this stage want to impose their cultural values and want to modify other cultures so that they resemble their own in order to be accepted by other civilizations.

**George talks that he feels humiliated.**



**(00:26:01)**



**(00:26:17)**

Dialogue 21: George: Just ‘cause the man English... no mean they not good Pakistani. I know people think this.  
Ustadz: No, Zaheed.  
George: I hear what they say about me.  
Ustadz: Zaheed, until your sons join the community fully, they will be a worry for you.

The next character’s way of dealing with cultural conflict is related to minimization when someone assumes that there is another culture and accepts it without feeling threatened, but they still try to find similarities between their culture and other cultures and try to find similarities with other cultures. Like in the scene above when George says “Just ‘cause the man English... no mean they are not good Pakistani. I know people think this” he thinks that even though he is an English man it doesn’t mean he is a bad Pakistani, which is where giving the meaning that he thinks that he is an Englishman he accepts these cultural differences but he also still thinks that he is not a Pakistani which is not good. George accepts the existence of other cultures in him and does not feel threatened, but he still tries to make these two cultures have similarities in terms of values.

d. Acceptance

People have already come to accept and admire parts of diverse cultures at this time. People are now reconciled to the fact that, although having different beliefs and

social mores, people from different cultures are still human beings on level with them. Nonetheless, this does not indicate that a person agrees with the preexisting cultural disparities. They only acknowledge and accept those other civilizations rather than promoting them.

### George tries to accept the differences in his family



(00:22:21)



(00:49:31)

Dialogue 22: Ella: Want a cup of tea?

George: I'll have half a cup.

At this stage people will accept and appreciate the differences from the culture. But that doesn't mean they agree with the existing cultural differences, they just acknowledge and accept the other culture. It can be seen from the scene above that when finished arguing and knowing that George had to accept that he had a different understanding of his wife and children, so he went to his tavern and tried to reflect on what had happened. It can be seen in the picture that he seems to be sorry about what happened and he is probably trying to accept what his children want. Then Ella came over to lighten the mood by asking what they always do when they fight. That was probably the reason he had tried to accept the differences, because he just left and didn't say anything after arguing with his wife and children.

## 2. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to explore the cultural conflict in the “ East Is East” movie. The finding shows that the primary conflict is a cultural conflict that emerges when core ideas clash. it is a clash between two or more people who hold opposing cultural beliefs. Cultural conflict is also happen when cultural aspects such as symbols, language, values, beliefs, norms, customs, tools, architecture, works of art, habit, religious system, and so on are not matched with cultural elements from other cultures, primary conflicts can emerge. Hence, in terms of religious and cultural views, a person can presume that whatever he believes to be true is what he must

follow and actualize in his or her life, because they live in that belief. The primary dispute was one about clothing. Clothes and style are cultural realizations that are categorised as artifacts because they are human-created objects. Individuals from different cultures normally dress differently and have different styles, which are known as traditional clothes; they must be proud of their attire, which often generates problems amongst them. The secondary conflict was defined as clashes between lesser civilizations inside the larger cultures. It could also be seen as a struggle between tiny cultures within a larger culture, or a conflict between individuals within a single culture. In the results of subsequent studies that can be seen the difference is in the results of the study Amin (2007) conducted a research under the title, "Cultural Conflicts in Intercultural Communication of Paul Haggis Movie 'Crash'". In this research the writer used Speech Codes theory by Gary Philipsen, besides that, the writer used discourses analysis. She found 10 utterances of the movie, which showed the cultural conflicts because of different perception in translating language based on their culture. While the results of the study used the theory of primary and secondary conflict, the results obtained were also different.

In this study it was also found that there are several ways of the main character dealing with the conflict, namely: Denial, Defence, Minimization, Acceptance. The findings of the study suggest that characters in the film "East is East" deal with cultural conflicts in several ways, including denial, defense, minimization, and acceptance (Bennet, 2008, 1986). This is consistent with previous research on intercultural communication, which suggests that individuals often experience discomfort and tension when interacting with individuals from different cultures. These findings have important implications for intercultural communication, suggesting that individuals must be aware of and sensitive to cultural differences, while also being willing to accept and appreciate other cultures. So from the discovery of the second problem formulation in this study, the difference between this discovery and discussion and previous research is the work was written by Yulita Eva Setiawan (2012) Sanata Dharma University. The research entitled "The Culture Clash of The Chinese American in Amy Tan's The Bonesetter's Daughter". This research discussed about clash culture between China and America using Sociocultural Historical approach. The result of the analysis shows that, conflicts regarding the matter of culture happened because of the different characteristics between Lu Ling and Ruth which then results in 48 misunderstanding of cultures. Then what distinguishes it from the discussion above is the character where all characters have their respective roles in dealing with the problem of cultural

conflict that occurs using DMIS theory, namely the six stages of Denial, Defense, Minimization, Acceptance, Adaptation, and Intergeneration. Whereas in previous studies using the sociocultural historical approach.

#### **D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The key conflicts discovered were 11 conflicts with various problems and situations such as, where is the conflict between British characters that have disputes with Pakistani characters due to differences they have? Like in the struggle between George and his son Nazir, who has different views, then with his son Tariq, who has physical distinctions, as well as variations in customs between the two Western and Eastern cultures, which lead to conflict. Then there are secondary conflicts that were discovered; there were four conflicts with different problems in them and examples, such as when Aunt Annie cursed at each other among her neighbors who also came from the same background as her, namely British, then there was also when Earnest was with his grandfather when he greeted George with greetings but his grandfather cursed at him and scolded him, then there were also times when Earnest was with his grandfather when he greeted George.

The researcher also discovered that the characters in this film have their own way of dealing with the cultural problems that arise between them. When coping with cultural problems, they went through five stages: 1) Denial, when George sought to convince his son that this was not a good thing. 2) Defend, specifically when George believes in other civilizations but believes his culture is the best. 3) Minimization, specifically when Ella attempts to embrace her husband's culture without feeling threatened by it, while George is also attempting to correlate his culture with his wife's culture. 4) Acceptance, George attempts to accept his family's differences.

After performing study on Damien O'Donnell's *East is East* Movie, the researcher will make some recommendations for readers. First, the researcher strongly suggests that readers see this film since it has a very vital meaning regarding culture and the distinctions between them, and it also has a sense of comedy so that those who watch do not become bored. Filmmakers are quite adept at packaging films so that even though they include many cultural issues, they may still be entertaining for the audience. Additionally, the researcher expects that everyone who wants to evaluate and discuss cultural conflict subjects would do so utilizing the

idea of primary cultural conflict and secondary cultural conflict because only a few researchers use this theory and it is still not well known by the general public.

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