

# Outsourced movie analysis

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The movie starts off with a company known as Western Novelty outsourcing Todd Anderson's department, leading to Todd Anderson being sent to India to train the employees of a new call center for the company. If Todd refused to co-operate, he would risk losing his stock options. Todd had no choice but to co-operate. Todd was totally not prepared for the culture shock that he was soon going to encounter due to the last-minute nature of the trip.

Upon arrival in India, he was soon bombarded with Indian people speaking a foreign language that he did not understand. A language barrier existed when he asked the Indian nationals where is the train station in English, with the Indian nationals not understanding what he was saying and thus, Todd was not able to express his thoughts effectively to the other party.

In a bid to get out of the situation as soon as he can, he was greeted by a taxi fraud, as the Indian national put his luggage into his auto-rickshaw and attempted to drive and rush Todd into his auto-rickshaw and not the taxi vehicle. Personally, I have fallen for similar scams before, when I bought a coffee from a shop which didn't state the price and I was charged \$13 when I could usually get the same type of coffee for \$4. I believe that the shop tends to target and charge tourists extra for the same cup of coffee the locals have.

Afterward, he arrived at the train station and was shocked to see the train full of people and yet, there were people trying to get on and squeeze in the moving train. Todd adapted to the situation and got on the train with the help of a few Indian nationals. If this situation were to happen in America, Todd would have waited for the next train, but for the Indian nationals, they

would try their best to get in the train, even though the train was in motion and full.

This shows me that there is a difference in manners between America and India nationals through the way they behave under the same circumstances. Soon after reaching the destination, Todd was approached by a guy called Purohit and was addressed as ... (Appendix 1). Purohit may have misinterpreted Todd's foreign accent and pronunciation, which lead him to mishear his name as 'Toad'. When Todd arrived at the accommodation and was provided with snacks, he helped himself to the snacks using his left hand and licked his fingers afterward.

The faces of the hosts looked disgusted and kindly told him that he was not supposed to use the hand that he placed into his mouth back into the food. He was also advised not to use his left hand to eat as it was considered 'unclean', unsanitary and disrespectful in their culture, as the left hand and water is usually what people use to clean themselves within the bathroom. Personally to me, Todd's action was understandable as he did not really do his research regarding the Indian's culture and norms, however, him licking his fingers in front of the hosts may be a tad bit disrespectful.

Subsequently in the movie, Todd was brought to the new call centre and was shocked to see that the supervisor's room did not have any glass barricade separating the room from the agent's cubicle. The first cross-cultural key concept between India and America would be Individualism. Todd, from the United States was characterized as the employee who would put himself above the rest and would not try to associate with his colleagues.

At the start of the movie, the employees from the United States are seen to have a big personal space for themselves and the boss has his own big and individual personal room that is segregated from the other workers. This personal space is representative of the culture individualism in the United States.

However, in India, we see that employees are interacting with each other and helping out each other. This can be seen where Asha takes over the desk when Purohit and Todd was out, and the smaller desks for closer working conditions. However, through the process of the movie, Todd seemed to be transforming from a worker that did not care about the welfare of his colleagues to be someone that cares.

This can be seen from the flooding incident where he and his employees had to work together to solve the situation. He even called the guy that he gave his meals to for electrical help. After a few days when the glass was still not delivered and installed, Todd was agitated even more when he had a conversation with Purohit regarding the MPI...(Appendix 2).

In the later part of the movie, Purohit went to buy a meal, plated it and offered it to Todd. Judging from this and the information from Hofstede, India has a high power distance score of 77, much higher than America's power distance of 40. Power distance is the extent to which power is unequally distributed in a collective, an example of power distance would be Todd and Purohit, where Purohit is the underling of Todd.

When Purohit was scolded, he was seen to be very apologetic and went to offer clean food to Todd for his choice of words and the feelings of Todd slipped his mind. This shows the amount of respect he has towards Todd, his senior. Whereas the power distance of America is low, there is little respect to people with higher status in the same field. This can be seen where Todd called Dave as a 'corporate slime ball' for not stating the goal of the MPI clearly. Judging by the way Todd and Dave conversed over the phone and the language they used to converse with each other is informal, this represented a low power distance.

When he held a meeting to discuss the problems associated with their service affecting the MPI with the employees, he mentioned that the employees should learn more about America. During the meeting when the employees were enquiring about certain products, he used a lot of jargon and answered their questions vaguely, as if they had experienced the America's culture personally. I am perplexed when I heard the statement he made, regarding the employees to learn more about America when he himself did not learn about India, I felt that Todd have double standards and it is unfair.

Later on, Todd was seen traveling to a distant fast-food outlet known as 'McDonalds' in America but was known as "MacDonnells" in India. Todd wanted to satisfy his cravings for a cheeseburger and console himself regarding the break-up with his girlfriend. After his trip there, he was stunned to find out that the McDonalds in India did not sell cheeseburgers.

This may be news for Todd, but India does not sell cheeseburger as they consider cows to be sacred in India which is part of their culture. This tells me that McDonalds have adapted to the national business environment in India which consists of their unique culture and have replaced the sales of cheeseburger in India with alternatives.

McDonalds has also renamed their establishment in India with " MacDonnells, for easier pronunciation for the natives of India.

When Todd stopped resisting the changes and let himself go, as what the other American guy did, he found himself embracing and the Indian culture and himself.

He was seen smiling and having fun in their Celebration Of Colour and found serenity within himself. This was a form of cultural acceptance, when he joined in on this Celebration Of Colour, which is known as the Holifestival to Indians. With his new found self, Todd figured out the mistake with the new call center which is him trying to run it like an American office .

To tackle this issue, he asked about the employees on how to improve their welfare and as a result, the employees brought items that boost their productivity, such as pictures of their family. He also set up a plan to reward employees with goods of Western Novelty if they improve the MPI the most for any given day.

I feel that this kind of plan is particularly useful in motivating the employees to be more productive, especially when the employees want the merchandise, this gives them a goal to strive towards and get rewarded in

turn. All in all, the most important part of this plan was Todd's initiative to seek first to understand than to be understood which he did not do so at the beginning.

While Todd and Purohit were conversing over drinks, Todd mentioned that he does not stay with his parents, and only sees them a few times a year. This left Purohit puzzled as to why Todd doesn't visit his parents frequently, and why Todd hates his boss but does not want to change his job.

In Indian culture, Purohit may have accustomed to seeing people live with their parents, thus when Todd who has been accustomed to the American culture told him that he does not do that, Purohit is shocked as he expected everyone to live with their parents. Purohit might have accidentally stereotyped the American Culture to be in line with Indian Culture.

During a meeting, Todd taught the employees of how Americans use reductions in sentences and made them practice the use of reductions. In turn, the employees made him dance along to traditional Indian dancemusic. Both parties were learning about each other's culture while having fun interacting with each other.

When Todd thought everything was going into the plan, things suddenly took an unexpected shift when a shipment from Western Novelty has been sent to the wrong city. Todd and Asha then leave the call center and head towards the other Gara Puri in order to salvage this deal and the incentives.

During the car trip, Todd asked Asha what was the totem that he kept seeing around, Asha replied: " That is the goddess of destruction". To Indians,

destruction is a good thing, one cycle ends so that another cycle can begin. After reaching the destination by taking the car and the ferry, Todd and Asha managed to track down the goods and got it back to the ferry with the help of the locals. Afterward, Todd stopped by a temple to gain more knowledge about the Indian culture and got refreshments when they were approached by a stranger informing them that the ferry back was not happening.

The stranger convinced them to stay over at a hotel, and they were told that there was only one room that was available and that was the Kamasutra Suite which was supposedly for couples. Suddenly, Asha and Todd were arguing over who's fault was it. Miscommunication and misinterpretation existed between the two when Asha asked Todd to make a request to the goddess of destruction.

What followed by was the breakdown of the ferry and the availability of the hotel suits was limited to only the Kamasutra Suite, which lead to Asha blaming Todd, as a result of his actions they have to spend the night together. Todd might have misinterpreted the meaning of "destruction is good" for any situations but that was not what Asha meant.

Communication was compromised and ambiguity was present.

After they got back, Asha broke the news that she was engaged to be married since she was 4 years old and she is going to be married soon, and Todd was shocked that someone as marvelous as he has an arranged marriage set for her.



Ever since Todd saw the helper in his accommodation offering food across the wall, he started giving his leftovers across the wall as well. One day, he was brought by a guy across the wall and was offered food as a form of appreciation. This was a really touching moment, as the people had little to none to offer, but they still tried to compensate him in their own way.

Todd's boss, Dave came down as an unexpected visit to check on Todd and the call center, thinking that Todd might have rigged the MPI indicator. When they entered the call centre, they were greeted by a flood that was caused irrigation by the farm next door. The flooding caused the number of working stations to drop and Todd had to do something if he had any hopes of going home. Todd decided to shift the work station to the roof with the help of everyone. At the end of the day, they achieved the MPI of 5: 57, which is lesser of what Dave wanted.

Suddenly, Dave told Todd that he will outsource the company to China instead, leaving the employees of the call centre jobless. However, the employees were not worried about it as they have attained a set of skills and are able to get employed easily. However, Purohit was anxious as he would not be able to marry his future wife as he lost his job. Dave tried to convince Todd to go to China and teach the future employees, but instead was referred to Purohit as his substitute to go to Shanghai, China. This way, Todd is free and Purohit will be able to get a job.