

The namesake clash of culture

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The thing about *The Namesake* is not that it is a great movie (although most avid movie-goers will be satisfied), but that it treats universal themes with such clarity that anyone who has been through the experience of leaving one's land should be able to relate, even if not from India. Directed by Mira Nair and with Kal Penn leading a great cast, the movie follows the lives of an Indian couple coming to New York in the 70s and raising children in this context.

I have a number of friends that are second generation to Indian immigrants for which reason I believe my understanding of their culture is above average, but even if that was not the case I'm sure these themes would not be lost on me: Abandoning the comfort of family life in the quest for better opportunities. Struggling to make a living without help, in a culture where all values are different. All the sacrifices that parents make for the sake of their children.

I've always said that migration is cruel to our ancestors but selfless to our children. The agony of losing loved ones being far away and the constant fight with the irrational thought that it could be avoided. The temptation of interracial relationships. The intimacy of the father/son dialog when the entire future of their lineage depends on them. The cultural pride that one feels even after leaving the country behind, assuming all great achievements from our people as our own.

In many occasions this only happens once we leave our countries. The quiet professional triumph that occurs almost in the background to all the other events in our lives. The crude attempt to follow tradition even if this means to butcher them once in a while. The cultural mix that is driven by well adapted "second generation" kids and their loose interpretation of their

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heritage in the context of their daily lives. Go see it or continue reading the chatter at one of the Indian blogs I follow.