

**“OVIDIUS” UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANTA**

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***BETWEEN TWO WORLDS:  
CONTEMPORARY INDIAN WRITERS  
IN THE ANGLO-AMERICAN SPACE***

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This dissertation aims at researching the issue of integration and reformation of the self in the context of immigration, more specifically, it analyses the struggles for integration and adaptation of fictional characters from India to the US and Great Britain as illustrated by five Indian novelists, themselves immigrants to the western space. The dissertation attempts to answer a few questions related to the difficulties that the characters face in the long and intricate process of integration: how prejudiced the host people are as regards the Oriental Indians? How does this influence integration and the construction of the hyphenated self? How helpful an ethnic group on a foreign land can be in the process of acculturation and assimilation? What is the place that memory holds in this process? Where does the Indian immigrant position himself in the centre-periphery opposition? I argue that Indians' integration and reformation of the self on the new land is a continuous process of negotiation between assimilation and marginalisation which usually ends in the construction of a hyphenated identity.

The methodology of the dissertation concerns two major directions: cultural studies and close-text analysis. The first one tackles sociological and psychological issues which explain and unveil the symbolism of man's behaviour particularised in the context of immigration and integration. The novels are investigated from cultural and anthropologic points of view, such as the impact of moving to the host land, living in between two worlds and ways of adjusting Indianness to Western traditions. On their path to integration, the characters under analysis reveal anxiety in the (re)forming the self, feelings of longing for the native land or of lack of self-esteem and recognition. The focus, in the text analysis sections, is on the way in which the characters respond to the new culture and to the host people as well as on the impact their native culture has on the western American or British one.

The concepts of migration, ethnicity, Orientalism, integration and hybridity of the self are analysed in the five novels chosen to discuss the problems which characters from different social strata, castes, gender, wealth, education, age meet and struggle with in a world completely different from their own from all points of view: cultural, social, political, economical. The five novels cover the period between 1990 and 2020. The oldest is *Afternoon Raag* (1993) by Amit Chaudhuri which shows an Indian student's life in Oxford. The plot is structured in small chapters which swap the action from Oxford to India and back, as it is preserved in the young man's memory. The main character does not have a name, because he may be taken for the author himself, as the story is narrated in the first person, in an autobiographical manner. The action takes place in Oxford where the protagonist's life as a student living in a university hostel was depicted. He spends his time with his Indian peers secluded at a top floor where only Indian immigrants live. The other students seem to reject them and to keep a distance. Thus, the Indian students start longing for their native land which now exists only in their mind. In order to heal this miss, they recreate the Indian specificity with local elements that remind them of India: music, Bollywood films, traditional food and communication in their native tongue. How deep, if at all, the protagonist's integration is under the circumstances?

In *Fasting, Feasting* (2000) by Anita Desai, the plot exposes the character of the second part of the novel, Arun, a young Indian man who left India to study abroad, like the protagonist of *Afternoon Raag*. Both are students abroad, Arun in America, the other one in England. They both experience rejection, lack of total integration and a low degree of acceptance. The first person narrator, a nameless character, finds redemption in his ethnic group's reunions which form a

separate enclave in the university hostel. Arun, on the other side, feels more lonely, because he does not belong to any ethnic group. He is accommodated by an American family during the summer holidays and thus, he is exposed to racist allusions. Will Arun integrate in the end or will he return to India as his final decision?

In *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) by Kiran Desai the main character, Biju, migrates to America. He is not a student like the nameless character and Arun, but a mere worker. He changes his work places quite often as he is not easily accepted. He works in a bakery, then, in a restaurant, in a café, trying hard to fight repudiation and rejection. He lives in the outskirts of the town together with other immigrants, including an African man, Saaeed, with whom he struggles for acceptance and integration. The novel also shows instances of another plot from India which presents an old Indian judge, who has retired from the British service. He fights for reintegration in his own society because his work for the British has made his fellow countrymen reject him. Another subplot, twisted with the one from India, presents the judge's granddaughter, Sai, who is in love with a Nepali young man, Gyan, who is torn apart between remaining faithful to his avenging ideas against Indians and his love for Sai. Which of these manage to integrate and at what cost?

In *The Namesake* (2011) by Jhumpa Lahiri the main characters, Ashoke, Ashima and Gogol, pass through different stages of integration and adaptation to the new world. Ashoke is the intellectual immigrant who is in search of a better position at the university and of his peers' recognition and appreciation. He does not have the financial worries which a worker has to face and he does not meet overt racism. Nevertheless, nothing shows that he is happy with his new roles and his new life. He suddenly dies of heart attack on a foreign land which makes the readers question his choice for migration, integration and reformation of the self. Ashima, his wife, experiences the state of in-between-ness more than her husband. She is a housewife with no roles to accomplish in the new society. Rarely does she communicate with the host people, thus no ties are to be joined between the immigrant and the new land. She is the voiceless character who speaks only in Bengali at ethnic reunions. She longs for India and she continues to live in this dream-like world. After her husband's death, she decides to return to India. Only then does she realise that she cannot name India her home anymore. After 30 years of living in America, she becomes reluctant to leave behind the whole world which she has created around her house, community, children, even her car which she cannot drive easily in her native, patriarchal world. Gogol, their son, is an example of the integration of second generation immigrants. Things change with him, he does not long for India because he does not see it like his own country, but his parents' country. To him, America is his country in which he wants to be treated like a native. He wants to look like an authentic American and to erase all the features of Indianness. He reluctantly participates to the Bengali reunions, as he cannot find his place among them. He even changes his name from Gogol to Nikhil in order to produce a change in the other people's way of seeing him. He wrongly believes that the host people may accept him more willingly. The later events in the novel prove that one can change name, country, community, but one cannot become another person. When Gogol meets an American girl, Maxine, he realises that their relationship does not work because of the different cultural mentalities. What is the relation between names and personality and how does it function in the construction of a hyphenated identity?

The most recent novel by Salman Rushdie, *The Golden House* (2017) is a parable of present day America in the context of immigration and integration. An Indian family, made up of Nero Golden, the father of three sons, Petya, Apu and D, use a different method to integrate in the American society. Their approach to integration is the complete denial of the past which, they believe, will make them be more easily accepted. Uprooting their existence has severe

consequences on their personality. Nero is an underworld immigrant who has made a fortune from illegal work. He thinks that he can buy the Americans' acceptance by charity work. He feels lonely, not understood by his family and society and he lives secluded in his house and garden outside the world that has not accepted him. All his sons end up by having personality problems. D oscillates between being a man and a woman. Apu, the artist, longs for returning to his roots because he cannot find his place in the western world. Petya develops agoraphobia that leads to his closing up in his room. What exactly has impeded the characters' integration in the American space?

This research is grounded on a few theoretical concepts and views related to integration that will be analysed and applied to the texts in the case-study parts of the thesis. Edward Said's concept of Orientalism which frames the idea that the west had created an imaginary portrait of the Orient as the Other, the mysterious, the unknown is a starting point. To what degree this stereotypical image is still present in the novels at the beginning of the twenty-first century is a question this thesis has attempted to answer. Changing the home space for a new, unknown space which exists only in the characters' imagination before migration offers many possibilities to analyse the two spaces and how they influence the reformation of identity and the construction of a new one. Terms like "fragmented locations" (Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City*, 29), "world of strangers" (Lyn Lofland, 3), "Thirdspace" (Edward Soja, *Thirdspace*, 41) are used to describe the shifts in the consciousness of the immigrants when swaying home country and host country both physically and imaginatively. Robert Tally identifies, in his study *Spatiality*, a feeling of anxiety when the immigrant changes places, which gives him "a pervasive sense of alienation" (11). Bertrand Westphal considers that the difficulty in integration consists in adjusting the "ethnotypes" (*Geocriticism* 144) to the host country, because the immigrants in general, and the Indians in particular, come with their traditions and customs as cultural heritage, which is not only less known, but also poorly understood in the host country. The home land with its spirit is preserved in the immigrants' mind and becomes part of their consciousness, according to Tadhg O'Keeffe. He claims that the process of memory makes out of the native place something "cognitive and mnemonic" and, and thus, "inalienable" (*Landscape and Memory* 4).

According to Peter Burke and Jan Stets' *Identity Theory*, immigrants pass through a process of identity verification which gives them acceptance or not in the new society. The two authors claim that immigrants (i.e. Indians) should pass through three stages in the process of self-verification: "self-efficacy or a sense of competency, self-worth [...] and self-authenticity" (117). If immigrants confront their Indianness with the Western traditions and they get a positive answer from the host people, then they will feel valued and appreciated. However, up to the last step towards integration, they have to recreate and reinvent themselves in order to become 'authentic.' This is the most difficult thing to be achieved and that is why they can only partially integrate in many cases. The ultimate purpose, integration, is achieved by adjusting the "extrinsic culture [...] dress, manner, patterns of emotional expressions and minor oddities" to the host culture, according to William Vickery and Stewart Cole in *Intercultural Education in American Schools* (43-44). However, the scholars claim that the "intrinsic cultural traits [...] religious beliefs and practices, literature, historical language and [...] a common past" (43-44) can hardly be adjusted to the new culture. This could be one of the reasons why immigrants use "mimicry", a term also described by Homi Bhabha in "Of Mimicry and Man" (85). Mimicry is a form in which immigrants try to look and behave like the host people, hoping, consciously or unconsciously, to gain their acceptance and to integrate more easily, if this is what they wish to do. Integration should be a two-way process. Just as the ethnic groups accept the way of life of the host people, the latter should understand the ethnic groups' necessity of moving forward and backward between their own land

and culture and the adopted land and culture. Is pluralism the solution of a balanced living or drastic impositions of the domineering society on the dominated new-comers?

The thesis is organized in five chapters. The First Chapter, *Theoretical Considerations: Orientalism, Ethnicity and (Re)construction of Identity*, is focused on illustrating the key-concepts used in the close-text analysis. When the characters of the novel migrate to the Western space, they face rejection caused by the host people's prejudiced mentality. This is mainly triggered by the ex-colonizing people's racist views on the Orient. The same idea is supported by Edward Said in *Orientalism*, in which he claims that Asian people are characterised as being "uncivilised" (3) because of their provenance from a country formerly colonised by a Western one. Thus, the Indian immigrants, of the five novels, especially the ones who are workers, students, mafia business men, jobless, and housewives are described as being looked down at by the host people from the Anglo-American space. Biju, for example, the character from *The Inheritance of the Loss*, feels extremely embarrassed when a group of young American ladies turn back their noses in disdain because he is said to smell of curry. Intellectual people, however, like Ashoke (*The Namesake*), who is a university assistant, does not seem to be mistreated, or at least he is not exposed to direct offence and rejection. His social status requires the others a censured attitude.

That is why, immigrants choose to form ethnic groups abroad because in this way they feel protected against outside rejection and hostile attitudes. In their diasporic bubble, they feel free to recreate their home space and its atmosphere by using traditional cultural elements, such as native food, music, communication in their native language(s), myths and literature (re)telling, and accomplishment of Hindu rituals. An analysis of the formation of diaspora is provided by Sudesh Mishra's study, *Diaspora Criticism* in which he states that the dislocated people succeed in forming new structures of being and of identity through the creation of Diaspora. Here, the uprooted ethnic communities find spiritual redemption and social healing for their trauma. Besides the huge positive effects of the ethnic group, there is also a negative outcome, the fact that it deepens the gap the ethnic Indians and the host people, which hinders full integration. Immigrants rather tend to look for protection in their community group, than try to solve the problems of adaptation. Additionally, Indian people cannot cope easily with the adjustment of their "ethnotypes" to the new culture, according to Bertrand Westphal's study *Geocriticism* (144). The Orient specificity is too 'specific' to match any British or American traditional pattern. The Hindu 'oddities', their polytheist religion, their sari, Panjabi suits, bindhis and vegetarian diet seem to be too strange for the modern citizens of the Western world.

Orientalism and the side effects of the ethnic group reverberate and impact over the reformation of identity. The Indian immigrants start to feel caught between the two worlds, the two spaces and the two cultures. They neither look like authentic British or American citizens, nor like genuine Indians anymore, especially if they belong to the second generation of immigrants. This situation creates the feeling of "in-betweenness" (Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 9), because the immigrants do not know anymore which culture to pledge full allegiance. It also becomes hard to them to decide which place to call home, the one left behind in India or the new one in the adopted country. They feel closer to the native country by affection, because they spent their childhood and youth there, if they emigrate as full adults, but the reasons to leave their homeland, whether financial, political or otherwise, keep them stuck in the Western world. Homi Bhabha calls this atypical way of living between two worlds, "unhomely lives" (9) because the immigrants cannot call home either of the two places. This could be associated to what Edward Soja describes as "Thirdspace" (11). This encounter of the two spaces at the level of imagination has got features from both places and it does not give an objective value to either of them.

An important theoretical perspective is the one regarding women's evolution from the colonial to the postcolonial space and from a patriarchal society to a more egalitarian one in which women have stated their claims and won rights. In *Gender and Colonial Space*, Sara Mills, writes that the well-known theories of postcolonialism focus more on the psychoanalytical side of feminism, than on "[...] the materiality of invasion, discrimination, murder, rape, expropriation of land. Instead, [...] stereotype and fantasy have become the dominant realms of investigation" (126). Sara Mills expands her theory by saying that the space in which these material powers are at work leads to a materialist feminist analysis, in which not only gender abuses should be analysed, but also the social history of space. Her view has been applied to the analysis of the female Indian characters and it has revealed the impact of growing and being educated in a deep patriarchal society on their integration in a society without family, community and gender constraints.

Chapter Two, *Between Overbearing Traditions and Westernization*, analyses the impact of changing places over the immigrants in their process of integration. When Indian people emigrate they take with them their cultural traits along with the spirit of that place. Then, they try to adjust these to the new map both at consciousness and at personality levels. Frederic Jameson calls this process "cognitive mapping" (*Postmodernism* 51) by means of which he denotes the process through which immigrants place the specificity of their home country on the new land at the level of behaviour and consciousness. The characters of the novels under discussion succeed differently in creating cognitive maps, according to the different binding with the host people, based mainly on their new occupation. If they are given roles to accomplish and if they do not live too secluded in their ethnic groups, then they can adjust the two cultures and remap their specificity onto the new space. The most successful one seems to be Ashoke (*The Namesake*), the university assistant, who does not seem to be bothered by the cultural differences between him and his peers from the university. He uses mimicry to look like his colleagues, he wears suits and shoes, he drives a car, he has bought an expensive house, he pays large amounts of money for his children's education, therefore, his life seems to be similar to an authentic American man's life. Nevertheless, his sudden death of heart attack may fully answer the question regarding his integration and success in remapping and reshaping himself to the new place.

The passage from one place to another, the transgression from the home world to the host one cannot be completely accomplished in the Indian immigrants' cases. In *A Thousand Plateaux*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari compare reterritorialization with the rhizome which keeps its roots in the mother-plant (370). This association is highly suggestive for the process of reterritorialization which is demonstrated to be only partially achieved. Immigrants cannot uproot their past from India and replant their lives on the new land. They will always shift at the level of imagination between the two worlds. Characters who succeed less in accommodating themselves into the new world feel more connected with their home land. Additionally, they always yearn for returning to their home country when time permits. This is the case of Biju, Ashima, Arun, the nameless character and Apu. Only the second generation of immigrants, Gogol, Sonia, Harish-Harry's daughter, D and Petya do not overtly express this wish, but the reader does not know if it does not lie latently in their hearts.

This changing of spaces triggers another problem, the one of placing the immigrant at the periphery of the new society, irrespective of the class or caste the immigrant belonged to in his/her native country. This usually happens in the case of workers, housewives', students' and immigrants' children as illustrated by the novels. The readers are not told explicitly what happens in the Goldens' or Ashoke's cases. And there is no clue that could make the reader believe that

they were placed in a central position in the American society, in academia or the business world. The feeling of anxiety and disorientation that the immigrants feel on the adopted land is also identified by Robert Tally Jr. in *Spatiality* (2013). He describes it as a consequence to changing spaces. Moreover, immigrants are not given good positions and roles to fulfil in the society, the right to express their opinion exists legally, but, in fact, their voice is seldom heard. The feeling of anxiety and disorientation is usually coupled with the status of constant marginalization and second-rate citizenship. Immigrants from various ethnic groups feel all this differently, but Indian immigrants feel this the hard way because of the cultural heritage they carry along.

Chapter Three, *Memory and Integration*, analyses the way in which memory has impacted the reformation of the self. The characters' evolution towards integration has shown that memory is an obstacle in the path of adapting to the new society. This happens mainly because memory is the preserver of past events lived on the native land, of the experiences linked with the performance of rituals, traditions, and culture and of the family left behind. Of all the memories, the homeland represents the most powerful attachment. In "Diaspora and Memory", Marie-Aude Baronian affirms that "diasporic memories spin threads of continuity, many of which have no connection with the homeland anymore" (12). Therefore, not only does memory preserve the image of the native land through memory, but it also alters the real aspect of the land through imagination. That is why, the immigrants who decide to return to India after years spent abroad are disappointed with what they find back home. These are Biju's and Ashima's cases. The former is robbed and mocked at by his fellow countrymen on his way home which makes him question his people's real nature. All his goods brought from America are taken away from him, even his clothes, and he is freed to go back home naked and ashamed. Symbolically, this means that no way can the two cultures accept each other. To reintegrate on the native land, one has to cleanse the imported habits and lifestyle. Biju does no longer know what to contest: his fellowmen's uncivilised nature or the superficiality of his desire of getting rich abroad. The latter, Ashima, becomes reluctant to return home when her husband dies and when she cannot actually find any reason to remain in America. However, she does not perceive India to be her home anymore, after thirty years of living on another land, in spite of her constant longing for her native land. Even if land seems to be an immutable and stable element, it changes and becomes distorted in the immigrants' mind according to their inner feelings and desires.

The amount of time spent on the native land is another important element in the preservation of home memory for the integration process. There is a difference in the process of integration between the first and the second generation. The Indian land with its specificity is not the same for the immigrants' children who were born in the adopted country and have no memory of their parents' land, rituals, culture. They were born into a completely different culture and language. By contrast, their parents are excessively attached to their birthplace which, at times, reverberates like a fairy land in their memory. In "Dissemination", Homi Bhabha states that Indians live in "ambivalent temporalities of nation-space" (294). Thus, not only do they preserve two spaces in their mind, but they also live in two dimensions of time, the one from home and the one from abroad. The time spent on the native land becomes magic, dream-like with little connection to the foreign land lived in real time. This, of course, impacts the integration of the first-generation Indian characters on the long term.

Chapter Four, *(Re)constructing Identity in Desh (Home) and Pardesh (Abroad)*, identifies the main issues in the process of constructing the new identity. The most difficult one seems to be the adaptation of the Indian specificity to the British or American cultural values. In *Intercultural Education in American Schools*, William E. Vickery and Stewart G. Cole distinguish between



“intrinsic cultural traits” which are “religious beliefs and practices, literature, history, language, and a common past”, and “extrinsic culture” that refer to “dress, manner, patterns of emotional expressions, and minor oddities” (43-44). It is known that a person’s inner self and its features cannot be totally moulded into a new cultural pattern. Indianness, which has been described by Diana Dimitrova in “Introduction: On Indianness” as “the plurality of India’s languages, myths, religions and literature” (2), is deeply carved into the Indian’s soul and it is valued and praised above the other cultures. An example to this effect is that Arun cannot cope with eating beef, like his hosts, because he imagines he would eat the symbol of Mother India. This perception on the surrounding world has been deeply instilled into his consciousness and it cannot be erase at changing places. Even the host people know this, that is why the owner of the restaurant does not employ Biju as a waiter because he cannot make recommendations about the differences in taste regarding the varieties of beef steak, when he has never eaten any beef. However, Indians’ outlook can be changed and adapted to the European style, so that they may look like British or Americans even if they show inside signs of Indianness.

The state of in-between-ness impacts the reformation of the self which can neither be transformed into an authentic British or American one, nor remain genuinely Indian. The hybrid self that results from this concatenation tends to define itself in comparison with the standard given by the host people. Stuart Hall also supports this idea in “The Question of Cultural Identity”, in which he emphasizes the self’s constant comparison with the other, the foreign model. The self’s knowledge of itself in relation to the other leads to acceptance or rejection in the construction of identity. In the Indian immigrant’s case, the use of mimicry, another way of trying to get closer to the foreigner, hinders the (re)construction of an authentic self on the foreign land.

In this process of negotiating integration and reformation of identity, the accomplishment of social roles becomes highly important. If Indians can find jobs and appreciation for their work, then they feel more welcomed into the new world. In *Identity Theory*, Peter Burke and Jan Stets consider that “the positive answer to identity-verification is self-esteem which is made up of “self-efficacy or a sense of competency, self-worth [...] and self-authenticity” (117). Applied to the Indian characters of the five novels, we have the example of Ashoke who is successful in the process of integration because he feels valued for what he is doing: he publishes his research which is appreciated at university level and he is less exposed to racism, if at all, in the academic environment. In contrast, the other immigrants from the novels are not given important roles in the host society and hence the feeling of exclusion and rejection. Ashima, Ashoke’s wife, remains a housewife; her encounters with her neighbours become proof of misunderstanding and disrespect. When she returns home from the hospital with her new-born, Sonia, her neighbours invite themselves to her place to congratulate her. She considers their coming inopportune because she still feels weak after giving birth. But, her neighbours do not understand what it is like not to be helped by servants and to do the housework all by yourself and not to be able to serve others. They spill carelessly Champaign on the floor without bothering about her efforts to clean it or about her weak physical condition. Thus, this meeting between the two families is a failure instead of a happy moment.

Chapter Five, *Integration and Its Struggles*, is concerned with the stages of integration which an Indian immigrant pass through in order to successfully adapt to the new society. The stages of integration can be represented in the form of a ladder whose ground step is rejection. This is the failure of the process of assimilation and acculturation and it is representative for the immigrants who could not get a job, who live in ghettos and who are marginalised at the outskirts of the society. In *The Inheritance of Loss*, Kiran Desai depicts instances of immigrants from India

and Africa who are accommodated by Saaeed and Biju in their house basement where ten people sleep in a room in their desperate search for jobs and fulfilment in the U.S. Desperate for a green card, Saaeed marries an American girl, without knowing her well. After a harsh period of looking for a job, the other immigrants decide to return at home. This happens because “adaptation is not a one-way street, but requires the host society to change as well” (3), as Gülay Uğur Göksel claims in *Integration of Immigrants*. The host people do not have a direct purpose to support the immigrants’ integration, to help them on their path towards acculturation and assimilation.

The middle step on the ladder of integration is the formation of hybrid identity which is attained by the majority of immigrants. Here are the ones who succeed in exhilarating that “Anglo-conformity”, identified by Milton Gordon in *Assimilation in American Life* (85). Anglo-conformity neither brings host people’s full acceptance, nor immigrants’ total adaptation. It is used like a strategy by the immigrants to show the dominant people that they can be like them. They do this because they are afraid of not being despised for their oddities. This is the case of Ashoke, the Goldens, the second generation of immigrants, Arun, and the nameless character. They have some roles to accomplish, they show conformity with the Western standards, however, they know deep in their hearts that they can never be authentic British or American citizens. That is why, the last step on the ladder of integration can never be attained. Not even the second generation of immigrants, who resemble their host people more than their parents, do not feel fully accepted, assimilated and integrated. Gogol, Ashoke and Ashima’s son, changes his name in his quest for authenticity, but, at the end of the tiring psychological struggle, he comes to realise that he does not feel more American now when he is Nikhil, than at the time when he was Gogol. Apart from this, he disappointedly discovers that he cannot erase the memory of his previous name from his family and friends’ consciousness. Thus, even if he is Nikhil in documents, he remains Gogol for his mum and his colleagues. Name change does not bring a new identity.

Therefore, the single solution which remains valid for the Indian immigrants is to live in their ethnic group, in a plural and multicultural society where their civil and human rights are respected. This type of “cultural pluralism” has also been suggested by Milton Gordon in *Assimilation in American Life* (85) where people should accept and tolerate one another, even if they are different and do not share the same set of cultural values. When Gogol meets Maxine’s parents at their place, he is amazed at the huge differences between the two cultures, but he keeps the impressions to himself, lest he should offend his hosts. Gogol’s meeting Maxine does not involve any change in their attitude towards each other. They remain themselves, unchanged, but respecting the other’s habits. A state of in-between-ness, of hybridity or hyphenated identity is formed. Accepting this state is important for both the immigrant and the host people. Full integration could probably be achieved with the third generation. No character from the novels under scrutiny manages to fully integrate. It may have been the writers’ purpose to foreground the struggle for, and backlashes of integration than its complete success in the lives of Indian-Americans.

Throughout the thesis, I have attempted to answer the questions raised at the beginning of this research. The facts that hinder integration for the Indian immigrant characters are, on the one hand, the prejudice of the host people, the misunderstanding of the immigrants’ culture, the biased attitude based on the stereotypical image of the oriental person. Though at first sight one would think that it is the Indians’ incapacity to cope with the adopted culture in the process of reconstructing their identity, integration is actually a two-way path. Therefore, the host people’s attitude, their lack of cooperation and understanding counts as well. On the other hand, it is memory and the rich cultural heritage that impedes the process of assimilation and acculturation.

Memory seems to help less in this process of acculturation because the immigrant finds it difficult to adjust the memories from the Indian land to the new habitat. Apart from this, memory will always send the immigrant to the other world, the one from home preserved at the level of consciousness and imagination. The immigrants' Indianness cannot mould into the Western culture, because of the existence of too many differences regarding traditions, mentality, religion and specificity. The ethnic group brings comfort and protection to immigrants. Nevertheless, it hinders integration because it does not leave too much room for immigrants-host people interaction.

The final conclusion of the research has shown that the Indian immigrants' integration depends on social strata, gender and generation. The main factors involved in this process are memory, land, racism, ethnic group and the host society. The Indian immigrants' reformation of identity and their success towards integration have been researched based on a few scholars' theoretical concepts such as Orientalism, the spirit of a place, the state of in-between-ness, hybridity of the self, mimicry, reterritorialization, hyphenated identity and spatiality. These theoretical concepts have been compared, expanded and debated on with a view to analysing the degree in which general knowledge about emigration and integration can be applied to fictional characters.

The novelty of the thesis consists in the original way in which the five chosen Indian novels have been analysed according to some critical concepts such as migration, Orientalism, racism, ethnicity, in-between-ness, hybridity of the self, hyphenated identity and integration. It has been demonstrated that there are some important elements which reverberate over the reformation of the self and the Indian immigrant's integration in the Anglo-American space. The particular issues which I have brought into discussion refer to space, memory, caste, profession, gender and age. It has been noticed that the change of the spaces creates anxiety at the shift from centrality to periphery in the process of reterritorialization. Then, the spirit of the Indian place with its traditions and specificity is hardly reshaped according to the requirements of the Western space. Apart from this, memory comes to impede the reformation of the self, because it preserves, at the level of imagination and consciousness, the events, people and the environment which all together make the Indian live in a state of in-between-ness. The plots of the novels have shown that an intellectual will be accepted more easily, than a worker, or a jobless immigrant. In plus, the accomplishment of some social roles in the adopted country will soothe the difficulties of adaptation to the new land. Not the same course of integration is pursued by women who are jobless and highly attached to the home land. They are the preservers of the Indian traditions and the ones who succeed less in the adjustment of the two cultures. The immigrants' children experience another type of reformation of the self. They do not long for India, they are not traumatised by the state of in-between-ness, all that they yearn for is the hosts' acceptance. That is why, their process of integration arises other types of issues, such as rejection, sameness and difference at the same time and lack of authenticity. The conclusion which has been reached to is that there are some general issues regarding Indians' immigration and integration in the Anglo-American space which can be particularised according to the above criteria.

If the length of the dissertation had permitted, I would have extended my research to some other sociological perspectives which I have not mentioned in this research. It would have been interested in comparing the characters of the novels with Indian immigrants from real life. I would have liked to take interviews to Indians in the British and American space and to compare and contrast their achievements regarding integration with the picture rendered by the Indian writers as regards the emigration – integration pair. It would have been interesting to find out if real Indian

immigrants feel fulfilled as citizens in the new world and how they cope with this oscillation between the two worlds. Is the hyphenated identity enough to create a complete personality and a fulfilled self?

In India, today, more and more people speak Hindish, a new, hybrid language which has resulted from the combination of Hindi and English, the two languages that circulated in parallel during the British colonisation. Has the hybridity of language influenced the formation of the hyphenated identity? Do Bollywood films help westerners to understand the Indian 'exotic' culture? The thesis has discussed a few points that have risen at the confrontation of the two cultures: Western and Oriental and their impact on a few fictional characters. In a future research I would like to extend my research to the fictional works by writers such as Vikram Seth, R. K. Narayanan, Ruskin Bond, Khushwant Singh, Arundhati Roy, Sashi Tharoor, besides Amit Chaudhuri, Kiran Desai, Anita Desai, Jumba Lahiri, and Salman Rushdie, whose works are worth investigating.

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