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DOES “THE WHOLE WORLD BELONG TO THE BONGS?”: NEGOTIATING THE
DIASPORIC CARTOGRAPHIES AND (CONTRA)ACCULTURATION IN ANJAN DUTTA’S
THE BONG CONNECTION

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims to analyse how the cartographies of diaspora affect the process of acculturation, with respect to Bengali director Anjan Dutt’s movie, *The Bong Connection* (2006). Colonial mimicry in the postcolonial world is a ‘writing back’ (Ashcroft) on the discourse of colonization. The paper is about how the immigrants/Bongs ‘connect’ in the movie, who are the upper middle class Bengali immigrants striving to be a part of the mainstream American societal identity construct. The ambivalence of the borderlines of a Nation/State (cartography) is observed metaphorically to result in the ambivalence of their diasporic experience. This dual play of liminality or marginalization problematizes and disturbs the equation of acculturation or contra-acculturation in the light of globalization.

Keywords: Acculturation, Mimicry, Diaspora, Cartography, Globalization, Glocalization, Intertextual, Ambivalence.

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Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed recognizable Other, as a *subject of a difference that is almost the same but not quite* (italics original). Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference... (Bhabha 22).

The experience of diaspora or being-in-diaspora essentially involves a deep seated desire and fantasy of looking back at one’s own cultural ethos. The concept of ‘belonging’ becomes ambiguous as it need not necessarily be a standard signifier to denote the spatial location of the signified individual. The territorial boundary as a blurred margin makes the geographical boundary exist as a line that stops the specified area of the given land but also marks the onset of the neighbouring one. The primary argument in this paper is to look at the cartographies of the lived-in-space and the space of one’s desire in the Bengali-English movie by Anjan

Dutta – *The Bong Connection* (2006). The two spaces mentioned here, get associated to the culture of diaspora and hence, the “post postcolonial reading” (Connor 1) of the movie as a text can be affiliated to what Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak calls “worlding” and Edward Said calls “contrapunctal reading” (Connor 1). The argument in the paper would probe deep into the nuances of (Contra) Acculturation that gets generated through the (in)ability of the immigrant(s) to get assimilated to the dominant culture. Hence in the “creation, publication and study of literature” (Connor 1) with regards to the myth of connection in this movie, proceed to be established as what Fredric Jameson considers as a “national allegory” (Connor 1).

Anjan Dutta’s depiction of the fictional tale of a few characters getting lost in the world of globalisation in the audio-visual medium (film) can be interpreted as not only his own critique of imperialism, but also his use of the film media as a means to rewrite the written and write the unwritten. The sequences in the film have been observed as a narration by Dutta not of any story but of an experience altogether. Diaspora involves this experience that can be expressed through certain images and signifiers, but cannot be concretised in the art of storytelling. The gaps and the fissures are addressed when the tale of experience is narrated from several points of view, which gets manifested as a reading from the margin to the centre. The overlapping narrative strain of the multiple voices speaking or articulating their own voice gives rise to the ‘intertextual’ notion; wherein the discourses on Nationhood mingle just as the national boundaries itself. Julia Kristeva’s concept of ‘intertextuality’ is a “theory of meaning and meaning production” (Buchanan 252) that gets posited by the reflection and dependency of one text on the other. Strategic insertion of some other texts and narratives in the narrative structure of *The Bong Connection* makes an interplay of the signs that have an ultimate meaning regarding the location/position(ality) of the characters in diaspora and their (contra)acculturation in/with the new world inhabited. The location of the characters are not only geographically and psychologically in the in-between space or what Bhabha calls “liminal” space (Bhabha 5), but even the emerging (continuing) process of the merging voices (both verbal and non-verbal) articulate the task of negotiation between one world (and culture) to the other world (and culture).

The idea formulated by Bill Ashcroft that-

the diasporic production of cultural meanings occurs in many areas, such as contemporary music, film, theatre and dance, but writing is one of the most interesting and strategic ways in which diaspora might disrupt the binary of the local and the global and problematize national, racial and ethnic formulations of identity. (Ashcroft 218) -

points at the strategic ways in which *writing back* (emphasis mine) becomes an authorised discourse. This methodology, as the argument in the paper foregrounds, is technically adjusted and adapted in Anjan Dutta’s movie, by trying to connect all possible binaries left open by diaspora in the global world. The modulation of Ashcroft’s metaphor of ‘writing’ (back) is done through the lens of the camera by the director (Dutta), which can be assumed as a reflection of a counter gaze. We look (with the director) at the parallel lives (and stories) of Apu and Andy, which is reflected back or ‘written’ back over the margins of the process of acculturation. The characters of Apu and Andy (along with several others to be mentioned later) write back their own tale in the globalised world. The reflection of their gaze at the (somewhat) ‘Glocalised’ world – to borrow the term used by Ronald Robertson “by telescoping local and global to make a blend” (Ashcroft 477) – acts as an agency of not only writing back but also from multiple angles. Dutta essentially leaves no certain conclusion at the end of the film. In the return of the native(s)’ back to their own land, do we ultimately find an element of their resistance to such global assimilation? Does the ‘local’ pressurise over the ‘global’ to reach to the tightened position of taking a drastic decision to come back to one’s own place, when one had been driven by the pursuit of ambition to move to the Other’s culture? To reach to a hypothesis, my argument strongly looks at the difference in the two worlds that surrounded the two protagonists in the film. Arpan Mukherjee, commonly known as Apu, a computer software engineer (played by the Bengali actor Parambrata Chattopadhyay), leaves his job at the I.T. Sector at Kolkata to pursue his dream of settling at U.S.A. and earning in Dollars. The American Dreamⁱ that is chased by Apu as a signifier that in itself is capable of alluring so many educated Indians to make a mark in the global world and to earn in a much more valuable currency – Dollars, rather than in Rupees. Considering that “Kolkata is a sinking ship. . . a doomed Titanic” (*The Bong Connection*), Apu sets

out to become a global citizen, choosing his own exile; a state which according to John Simpson is a “human condition. . . merely adding physical expression to an inner fact” (Simpson, “Introduction”). Exile hence is an internal phenomenon, partly psychological and partly catering to one’s socio-cultural temperament. Apu’s transition to the world of diaspora is a creation of an existence in a make-belief America, that which possibly can be a solution to any competent aspirant of good living. Their conception of this make-belief America is akin to the pseudo conception that the immigrants have of the native land. The ‘Kolkata’ of their memory hardly has any relevance to how Kolkata is in reality and vice-versa for America to the would-be-immigrants. Hence, memory plays a very vital role in the adjustment to the new world, by way of Bhabha’s ‘mimicry’ and hence in this argument the entire process of exile and the experience of diaspora appears as a state of mind.

The ‘cartographies of diaspora’ (to borrow the phrase from Avtar Brah’s book of the same name), which runs in the minds of the immigrants as a nostalgia for the homeland or the ‘Desh’; calls for several aspirations, desires and view-points that the immigrants have, while making an attempt to understand the depth of their separation from the Homeland. Apu encounters several (nostalgic) Bengalis in America, who are the acquaintances of Apu’s boss Garry (played by Victor Banerjee). The Bengalis talk of the taste of ‘*Ilish Maach*’ (a fish that is iconic of Bengali cuisine), whether the ‘*Padma*’ (Bangladeshi) ‘*Ilish*’ is better than that of the ‘*Ganga*’ (of West Bengal) or not. They gossip in their own circles over Rituporno Ghosh making the movie *Dadathakur* with Dilip Kumar or not; the stealing of Tagore’s Nobel Prize is fake or not; whether Victoria Memorial will be rented for marriages or not; whether Jyoti Basu (the ex Chief Minister of West Bengal) still consumes Blue Label or not; the devastating pollution of Kolkata, the ZEE TV, M.P. Jewellers, music of Bhupen Hazarika and the movies by Satyajit Ray. These discussions are common across the cartographies of diaspora and the Bengalis everywhere talk of these, hence justifying what a character observed in the movie that “the whole world belong to the Bongs” (*The Bong Connection*), which has been quoted by me in the title of this paper. The multiple cultural codes of the Indian/Bengali way of life posits the affiliation that the Bengali-Americans have to Bengal/Kolkata/India; thereby making a paradox of the entire expatriate experience as N.R.I.s, who according to Shashi Tharoor either stand for “Never Relinquished India” or “Not Really Indians” (Tharoor 142). The full form of N.R.I. provided by Tharoor goes much beyond the simple (and original) identity of the N.R.I.s as merely Non Resident Indians.

If Apu signifies the first generation immigrant, then Andy Sen (played by Sayan Munshi), the other protagonist, Apu’s counter-ego is the second generation immigrant who comes to Kolkata to learn music and become a composer. Andy’s love for ‘*Baul*’ music and Bangla folk and his curiosity to learn it and take it up professionally, strategically places him at the locus of counter-diaspora. Andy’s sense of ‘belonging’ – irrespective of his very different up-bringing – brings him back to his roots, again coded in the form of the cultural constructs of the life at Kolkata, his ‘jethu’s’ (paternal uncle) home with three generations living together in a joint family, the Bengali food, the *Baul* music accompanied by ‘*ektara*’ (an instrument that the ‘*Bauls*’ play in West Bengal), the serenity of Shantiniketan with Tagore as the primary source of its appeal and not to mention in the least, the movies by Satyajit Ray and the studios where he used to record the songs for his films (considered the ‘Golden Era’ in the history of Bengali films). The symbolic appeal of these cultural codes remain the same for Andy, as it does to the first generation (nostalgic) immigrants whom Apu encounters as his acquaintances in America.

A question that strikes us here is that can a person who is not open to the notion of globalization be equated to what Amartya Sen calls “*kupamanduka*” or a “well frog” in his book *The Argumentative Indian* (Sen 86)? My argument asserts that if diaspora abstains one from being a “well frog”, and whether the contrary is also true in this regard. Sen notes in *The Argumentative Indian* that:

Celebration of Indian civilization can go hand in hand with an affirmation of India’s active role in the global world. The existence of a large diaspora abroad is itself a part of India’s interactive presence. . .

Indians, including the diaspora, have reason to resist external isolation as well as internal miniaturization. Indeed, the openness of the argumentative tradition militates not only against exclusionary narrowness within the country, but also against the cultivated ignorance of the well-frog. (Sen 86).

If the ignorance of the “well frog” can be eliminated through the light of diaspora by means of ‘acculturation’, then does one remain a “*kupamanduka*” when one resists to the acculturative processes? In the light of Apu, Has (Hassan Bhai Montu, the Bangladeshi cab driver who earns his living at America without even proper papers and a license) and several other immigrants like them, what functions is the glittering brightness of the First World, that which is possibly devoid of any struggle; at least catering to one’s basic sustenance. In U.S.A. (coupled with the nostalgia of going back or not), the immigrants moving in from a Third World Nation deliberately adapt means to get habituated to the New World (to the First World Culture) but cannot fully assimilate themselves; henceforth resulting in a psychological and socio-cultural troubled circumstance caused by their inhabiting the ‘hybrid’ space (Bhabha). The ‘hybrid’ space hybridises them to the point of falling into the trap created to “woo the N.R.I.s” – a phrase used by Shashi Tharoor in *India: From Midnight to the Millennium and Beyond* (1997) (originally and modified by me for its current usage in the paper).

Expatriation in the form of counter-diaspora in Andy’s life is not caused due to the expectation of any material benefit, financial security or for any better professional opportunity. The whole process runs as a paradox for Andy, who considering his advent in Kolkata as a call from the soil of Bengal; ultimately becomes a failure in assimilating himself here, just as it is the case with Apu in U.S.A. Andy – Bengali in blood, but American in up-bringing – ‘returns’ to the land that his parents left years ago prior to his birth. Herein, the second generation immigrant fulfils the task left incomplete by the first generation, even symbolised by Andy’s ‘jethu’ (paternal uncle) asking him to sign for the division of family joint property, on his (absent) father’s behalf. Andy doesn’t sign, furthering the situational absence of the immigrants. This has a symbolic effect in the movie, as even if as per Andy, “*my (his) music belongs here*” (*The Bong Connection*), but how far *he belongs to here* (emphasis mine) stands problematized; thereby complicating the whole ‘estimated’ (as inside/outside, self/other boundary) processes of ‘belonging’. The element of societal ‘de-belonging’ and being dismantled from one’s own root, causes frustration to the immigrants, who retaliate against the ‘absurdity’ of the entire situation. The absurdist notion meant by me is the one opined by Eugene Ionesco that: “cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless” (Abrams and Harpam 11). This ‘*de-rooting*’ (emphasis mine) of the expatriates or what we can call ‘*de-territorialization*’ in postcolonial terms, the very action of the expatriate can turn as a divorce between his own self and his new (cultural) surroundings. What emerges as an outcome is what at a different context was noted by Albert Camus in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) that: “his is an irremediable exile” (Abrams and Harpam11). Hence this perplexing experience gives rise to “contra-acculturation”, to the “opposite tendency” of the process of acculturation, as noted by Bhagabat Nayak, in his attempt to study the immigrant sensibility in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake* (Das 131). In the process of syncretisation, multicultural ties act as an agency of resistance, where, the home forever continues to remain a *seat of desire* (emphasis mine), challenged by the desire for assimilation in the new culture, but this latter desire cannot be concretised as the new cultural codes possess a threat. As argued by me before in considering exile as a state of mind, in theory to establish my argument, I draw in the view of Vijay Mishra, who in his attempt to theorise the Indian diaspora, considers this displacement as “imaginary” (Mishra quoted in Ashcroft 448) – in “both its original Lacanian sense and in its more flexible current usage, as found in the works of Slavoj Zizek” (ibid), which is like an image representing “what we would like to be” (ibid). Hence, boundaries of nation posit a “narration” (Connor1) as assumed by Bhabha that which gets underlined in telling the tale of the expatriate in *The Bong Connection*.

The movie plays a dual action to strategically create borders between lands and lives of the characters as well as blurring them to make the (filmic) textual play interesting. What Elleke Boehmer noted in case of the “migrant novel” (Boehmer 243), can be used for Anjan Dutta’s movie, as the (inter) textual play remains the same for the readers/audience. Boehmer asserted that the “multivoiced migrant novel gave vivid expression to theories of the ‘open’ indeterminate text, or of transgressive, non-authoritative reading” (Boehmer 243). As a chronicler of multiple tales (multiple voices), the textualization of the film becomes a postmodern articulation of its “open” (ended)ness. If Andy and Apu are placed at the end from where they had started off at the beginning (both coincidentally making their entries and exits on the same day), a complete circular motion is not to be found here, irrespective of this fact. The smoothness that is apparently found at the end, doesn’t

remain so, if questioned that - *what happens after the end?* (emphasis mine). Apu comes to Kolkata with a promise for a new job, managing the Salt Lake office of an M.N.C. and Andy goes back to U.S.A. (maybe) to meet Mira Nair, who was about to make her famous movie *The Namesake*, based on Jhumpa Lahiri's novel of the same name (again harping on the theme of diaspora and bringing in references to Lahiri's novel or Mira Nair's movie as postmodern metafiction); for creating the background scores. But as viewers we do not find them 'settled' with their new jobs or at least seeing the promise being fulfilled to them. The end remains ambiguous hence attempting to (re)tell a new tale of the lives torn in – to quote a phrase by Shashi Tharoor – the "multipolar world" (Tharoor 1).

Hassan Bhai (or Has), the Bangladeshi cab driver makes an American living with the desire to return to his mystic homeland – "Chittagong" (pronounced by him in a Bangladeshi accent and not the way the Indian-Bengalis would pronounce it).ⁱⁱⁱ Being not so well educated as Apu, Has has no option but to be a cab driver and the defiance of certain laws of immigration have set the cops behind him. This proves that the entire middle class had been provoked by the 'American Dream' to fulfil one's desire of earning more and improve their personal position. Tharoor comments in his article "American Desi" about:

the working class Indians (who) found their way into the United States for the first time from the end of the 1970s, toiling on construction sites and as farm labour, taking over newspaper kiosks, operating rundown motels, cooking and serving in Indian restaurants, and driving taxi cabs. Many arrived (or stayed on) illegally. . . (Tharoor 2).

Has, criminalised in the eyes of the American law gets shot in his leg by the chasing cops and falls into a pool of water (symbolising his death) with his only possession of his infant daughter's photograph. The background score with the following lyrics has significant effect on the lives of millions of immigrants (legal or illegal) like Has:

*"O Sujan Majhi re,
Kon ghate ba lagaiba tomar nao. . ."*
(O Good Boatman,
Tell me to which shore shall I take my boat to!)
(Translation mine)

The fact that the boatman is addressed for "*paarer aasay boisachi. . .*" (or an expectation for the shore), leads to a decentering of the charms that led the immigrants to pursue global dreams; in the consumerist material world. The 'shore' as the iconic 'homeland' constantly shifts – being a 'polysemic' (to borrow a phrase from 'polysemy' coined by Julia Kristeva) entity; where a sign has the capacity to contribute to multiple meaning(s) in a large semantic field. The 'shore' or the '*paar*' (in Bengali) is the same seat of desire as the homeland. The 'boat' or the '*nao*' is symbolic of the agency of the diaspora/immigration on which the individual pining for the 'shore' (home) sits; amidst all threats of the water or the new land inhabited in diaspora. The song sung by Andy in the nightclub at Kolkata – Someplace Elseⁱⁱ – when challenged by Sheela (Apu's girlfriend for whom later Andy develops an emotion) goes as –

*O Majhi re. . . O Majhi re. . .
Dekhecho ki tumi taare,
Nouko aamar chele belar,
Kaagojer. . .*

(Asking the boatman or the '*majhi*' whether he has seen his paper boat, a reminiscence of his childhood days, sailing in the water or not.)

(Translation mine)

Paper as a material for the boat is quite vulnerable and hence the risks faced by it as a part of the singer's childhood fancy is obvious. Hence, the entire process of moving from one place to another (and imbibing another's culture) is a childish illusion – as illusory as the dream promised by the great American Dream.

The 'Bongs' as an identity for the upper middle class educated Bengalis or the bourgeoisie remains a debatable marker in the film. Who exactly are the 'Bongs' and why one wishes/hates to be associated with this tag, remains a question. What emerges from the movie is the fact the 'Bongs' are not the ordinary Bengalis

who are happy with their daily schedule, rather they are the *Global Bengalis* or the ones wishing/aspiring for the globalisation but are not yet a part of it. If 'Bongs' refer to the educated upper middle class Bengalis, then my argument would support the link that this class of Bengalis have with being a part of diaspora. Memories and nostalgia remain the *connecting* (emphasis mine) factor for the 'Bongs', enumerated through symbols like photographs – as in the case of Hassan's daughter's photograph in his final moment and the assertion made by Andy's 'jethima' (elder paternal aunt) that: "Toke toh chobi tei boro hote dekhlam!" (I saw you growing up only in the pictures because of the distance) and other tokens like Apu carrying Sheela's earring with him as a memory of her and returning that back after his return to Kolkata. The other factor that *connects the Bongs* (emphasis mine) and keeps them as homogenous group across the world is their obsession with 'maach' (fish) and the Bengali meal of rice of fish. As Nilanjan Bhattacharya, the Calcutta based film maker opines in his article "What the Fish!" published in *The Telegraph* that "the fish has remained an intrinsic part of the Bengali's daily gastronomy" (*Telegraph* 22). The Bengali lust for 'fish' makes it not only an edible commodity in *The Bong Connection*, but even stands as a cultural signifier that ties all the Bengalis across the world. The 'fish' consumed by the immigrants gives them the feel of being in their homeland, just as it does for the people of the homeland itself. This "dialectical politics of the Bengali food" (*Telegraph* 22) quintessentially remains the *un-globalised* (emphasis mine) factor in the globalised world.

A recent article posted (in the internet) titled – "For Bongs, Its Never 'Maach' Ado About Nothing" (Maman 1) the 'connection' between 'Bengalis' and 'fish' (as food) has been humorously dealt with (by parodying the title of the great Shakespearean play, *Much Ado About Nothing*). My observation on this ground coincides with the writer that such is the implication and importance of a piece of fish in a Bengali meal, that it seems true to comment that "for all Bengalis, a meal without fish is as incomplete as Hindi movies are sans melodrama!" (Maman 2). In *The Bong Connection*, the fish symbolically resides in the collective psyches of all Bengalis, irrespective of being immigrants or not, serving the dual purpose of being an agency of nostalgia and 'belonging'. For some, the tag of being a 'Bong' seems a derogatory manifestation of being a Bengali, but any essential conclusion cannot be drawn in this regard. Ashish Chakrabarti's reported news in *The Indian Express* in the 1999, titled: "Bongs? No We're Bengalis From Kolkata" (*Indian Express* internet ed.) articulates that the gradual extinction of the Bengali language and culture in Kolkata (challenged by the cosmopolitan environment) makes the Bengalis 'Bongs' to the outside world. But this view posited, remains open ended only to be observed by me that in the world of fast changing and fading identities, the assertion of being a 'Bong' is not like a tag carried forever and ultimately there is no strategic demarcation ethnically between a 'Bengali' and a 'Bong'. Like Bengalis, 'Bongs' also 'connect' with the world, have a culture of their own and are ready to be a part of the global culture; and the fact that acculturation is not fully possible (hence giving rise to Contra – Acculturation) becomes a remarkable area to comment that had the Bengalis (as Indians) got completely assimilated to the Western (American) culture, then in this world of consumerism, every soul (in the Third World country) would have been 'Americanized'! This assertion has a lasting impact on the ongoing developments in postcolonial literatures.

Anjan Dutta in his attempts at film making remains a Calcutta based film maker, at times dealing with the lives of the Indians trapped abroad in diaspora and their isolation. But a host of upcoming Diaspora film makers (originally from India but settled in the West) are making challenging attempts at the new *genre* of film making, that is partly realistic and partly psychological; due to the importance of memory in diaspora. Bedabrata Pain's much acclaimed movie in the International Film Festivals, *Chittagong*, which is about the Chittagong up-rising lead by Masterda Surya Sen in Bengal, remains "an ambitious attempt to straddle two worlds and make a mark in India and International Cinema" (Dua 7). Movies like this and many others like Prashant Bhargava's *Patang*, Richie Mehta's *Amal* and Prashant Nair's *Delhi in a Day* remain a "cross-pollination between the diaspora and the Indian film makers" (Dua 7). New York based diaspora film maker, Bornila Chatterjee, who has made films like *Lets be Out*, *The Sun is Shining*; sums up this entire experience of being a Diaspora film maker that "the sense of being an outsider and at home" (Dua 9) influences the way such films are made and that requires a keen sense of observation on the part of the film maker concerned. The

movie, *American Desi* (2001) directed by Piyush Dinker Pandya, about some second generation Indian-Americans, becomes akin to what Dutta tries to do in *The Bong Connection*, as if:

Seen through a Foucauldian lens, this is an obvious example of a modern disciplinary regime in which racism renders itself invisible, omnipresent and internalized within individuals where it retains its power rather than part of collective issues where the power of cultural assumptions are called into question (Peterson 11). Questions regarding racism and homosexuality are even addressed by Dutta in the movie paradoxically through the views of Garry, Apu's boss, who has a primary motto in life (and even suggests the others) to stay away from Blacks and Homosexuals.

It is the 'desification' (emphasis mine) that acts into the entire politics of contra-acculturation in the strategically (un)mapped global world. Contra-acculturation forces act in a way that brings the immigrant back not only to the homeland (psychologically) but even to his/her own self; once again reflecting the gaze back at the global world. There is a constant affirmation to as well as a negation of the World Culture, making the modes of contra-acculturation act as an influential force in this non-transition, hence establishing the immigrants as the iconic Apu (a character in Bibhuti Bhushan Bandopadhyay's trilogy of novels and artistically filmed by Satyajit Ray, even parodied by Anjan Dutta in this movie) as the 'Unvanquished' or 'Aparajito', ready to be influenced but not ready to assimilate (fully). The impact of this localises the global world and globalises the local world. Hence, a subtle conclusion that I can draw from the arguments presented would be that (though) "the whole world belong to the Bongs", but the Bongs belong to no world in particular (emphasis mine).

Endnotes:

¹ The American Dream is a national ethos of the United States; a set of ideals in which freedom includes the opportunity for prosperity and success, and an upward social mobility achieved through hard work. In the definition of the American Dream by James Truslow Adams in 1931, "life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement" regardless of social class or circumstances of birth.

<http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/fii-view/the-american-dream-is-nowmyth_723062.html> accessed on July 12, 2012.

ⁱⁱ Apu's encounter with Has at the cab harps on the similar situation in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*, wherein Gogol encountered a Bangladeshi cab driver in America who drove Gogol to his destination. The implication of meeting a fellow Bengali (irrespective of religious differences) remains the same in both Lahiri's novel and Dutta's movie. The Bengalis (Bongs) "connecting" is highlighted here.

ⁱⁱⁱ Someplace Else is a pub at the Park Street, Kolkata, India. The pub offers various kinds of drinks and food for its customers. Ever since it opened on 19 August 1994, Someplace Else, the British style pub at The Park, Kolkata has dominated pub culture in the city. Unlike other pubs in India, it is the only pub which also hosts quality live music every single night.

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