

## Acknowledgements

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## Abstract

The internationalisation of contemporary life and development of multi-ethnic societies require focus on intercultural competence. Cultural dispersal and increasing plurality of societies have led to a crisis of identity for second generation immigrants who experience a discrepancy between the cultural norms and expectations they meet at home and what they meet in the society around them. This thesis advocates the importance of intercultural competence in the obligatory education and claims that (i) the film *Ae Fond Kiss...* by Ken Loach has the potential of promoting intercultural communicative competence to lower secondary pupils, (ii) in particular by the analysis of the sentiment of conflicting identities found in this film. Different aspects of the formation of identity are explored, including essentialist and non-essentialist theories of culture and identity, along with the importance of worldview, national value dimensions and family are discussed and found useful in explaining the cultural clashes and conflicts of identity found in the film *Ae Fond Kiss....* Feelings of conflicting identities are found to be particularly difficult to some of the young Muslim Pakistani protagonists because of their parents' exclusionist mind-sets towards other groups or cultures. A method that combines the use of the film *Ae Fond Kiss...* with the Reader Response Approach is demonstrated to be capable of and appropriate for promoting intercultural communicative competence for Norwegian 10<sup>th</sup> graders. Michael Byram's theories about intercultural communicative competence are central to the discussion of how this competence can be promoted to Norwegian 10<sup>th</sup> graders.

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## 1. Introduction

Due to several factors such as new communication technology, travel, immigration patterns, and economic and political systems we live in a world of regular interaction across cultures (Tornberg 54). All modern societies have a cultural complexity resulting from “cultural processes”, and people’s dispersal all over the world (Risager *The Teacher’s n.pag.*). These processes of globalization challenge the concepts of social identities and of communication, and have in turn led to a worldwide and growing interest in intercultural communication (Byram 5). People have become aware of the fact that cultural background affects communication in profound ways and partially determines interaction with and perceptions of one’s surroundings (Samovar, Porter and McDaniel xii).

Millions of immigrants have for different reasons found their way to Europe during the last half century, and it is not easy to guess ethnic origin just by looking at somebody. Yet, recognising group identity matters to us. Many different sources contribute to the formation of an individual’s identities, e.g. nationality, ethnicity, social class and community. These sources may clash “in the construction of identity positions and lead to contradictory and fragmented identities” (Woodward 1).

Identity is a central issue in the contemporary debate within the arena of globalisation and dispersal. Some even talk of an “identity crisis” resulting from the transformation of old structures and “an increasing transculturation of economic and cultural life” (Woodward 16). This paper focuses on the conflicting identities of British-Pakistanis in the film *Ae Fond Kiss...* by Ken Loach. Young British Pakistanis’ identities, like all other young British people’s identities, are shaped and influenced by many sources. “Some of the influences are mutually compatible and they therefore reinforce each other. Others, however, conflict with each other and in consequence young people are pulled in opposite directions” (Instead Consultancy n. pag.).

Samuel P. Huntington points out that “[E]veryone has multiple identities which may reinforce each other or compete with each other” (in Samovar et al. 52). Claire Kramsch suggests that every person who has ever crossed the lines of race, social class, gender expectations, or sexual preferences has experienced conflicts of identities (in Tornberg 55). Much suggests, though, that immigrants experience more ambivalence or conflict in their different identities than others, due to the discrepancy between the cultural norms and expectations they meet at home and what they meet in the society around them. To quote Kramsch:

The realization of differences, not only between oneself and others, but between one’s personal and one’s social self, indeed between different perceptions of oneself can be at once an elating and a deeply troubling experience. There are around the world an increasing number of culturally “displaced” persons, who have grown up in one culture,

but having emigrated to another country, raise their family and are active professionally in a culture that is not their own. Their many testimonies give voice to the feelings of being forever “betwixt and between”, no longer at home in their original culture, nor really belonging to the host culture (Tornberg 54-55).

For many young British Pakistanis this means that they “do not feel like they are truly a part of the UK and struggle to reconcile the identities they derive from their parents with those they develop at work or school” (Sattar n.pag.). Marium Sattar claims that migration per se produces plural identities because the dispersal of people across the globe produces identities which are shaped and located in and by different places. Many from the older generation that “arrived in the UK during the 1960s and 1970s often did so to find work, and did not envision settling in the UK permanently, nor did they consider how they – or their children – might integrate into British society.” Sattar continues by explaining that in contrast, their children grew up in Britain and went to British schools, where the values often differed from the ones at home. “This reality has led to tension and conflicting identities for young people, who often feel closer to the UK rather than to their parents’ country of origin” (Ibid).

The internationalisation of contemporary life and development of multi-ethnic societies require focus on intercultural competence in schools, higher education, healthcare and business (Dahl 7). The UNESCO report “Learning: The Treasure Within”, described *Learning to live together* as one of four pillars in all education, in addition to *Learning to know*, *Learning to do* and *Learning to be* (Dypedahl 5). The Norwegian National Curriculum, LK-06, has given intercultural competence a more prominent role in English and foreign languages than earlier curricula, and it is beyond doubt that intercultural learning is more than a passing fancy in our curricula (Ibid). Building intercultural competence is a lifelong process. However, this thesis will deal with it in an educational perspective. This thesis continues an ongoing discussion of the need for intercultural competence in all levels of society in general, and in the educational system in particular, in addition to addressing methods for obtaining this competence.

A natural source of intercultural input in school is literature or film, and Robert Crawshaw considers art, literature and film to represent potent catalysts in developing intercultural awareness in schools (n.pag.). Richard Barsam and Dave Monahan promote films as the most powerful art form of our time, possessing the power to challenge senses, emotions and intellect, and making one see beyond the borders of previous experiences (xiii). This thesis explores the viewing of suited films in the classroom as a potential change agent for intercultural learning for lower secondary pupils, and the film *Ae Fond Kiss...* is used as a concrete example.

*Ae Fond Kiss...* portrays the age-old conflict of star-crossed lovers, and has been classified as a “frank and contemporary Romeo and Juliet” (noralee at IMDb.com, Inc.). The story is set in

Glasgow, Scotland, where Casim Khan, a second-generation Pakistani immigrant, and Irishwoman Roisin Hanlon meet and fall in love. On a deeper level this is not first and foremost a love-story, rather a portrayal of the conflicts arising as a result of hybrid identities within the multicultural society. There are conflicting identities on several levels; at the individual level, which means that some of the protagonists struggle with personal identity conflicts, and on the intrapersonal level, which in this case means that there are contradictory identities within the Kahn family and in the relationship between Casim and Roisin.

## 1.1 Thesis statement

My thesis statement is that (i) the film *Ae Fond Kiss...* has the potential of promoting intercultural communicative competence to lower secondary pupils, (ii) in particular by the analysis of the sentiment of conflicting identities found in this film. In order to support this statement, I have developed the following research questions:

- 1) What is identity and how is it formed?
- 2) How can living in a society with cultural values conflicting with the values one was brought up with affect young Muslim people?
- 3) What is intercultural competence, what does it mean in the setting of compulsory education, and how to promote intercultural competence in lower secondary school?
- 4) Does the viewing of *Ae Fond Kiss...* with a particular focus on conflicting identities in the young British Pakistanis combined with the *Reader Response Approach* have the potential of promoting intercultural competence to lower secondary pupils?

The viewing of the film *Ae Fond Kiss...* sheds light on the conflicts and discrepancy in culture and identity many British Pakistani youths experience in their daily lives, moving between their traditional Muslim families on the one hand, and school, jobs, or relationships in a Western setting on the other hand. The viewing of this film enables the pupils to challenge their ethnocentric mind-sets and reflect on alternative ways to lead a life, as well as relating to young people of a group otherwise often viewed in stereotypical or prejudiced ways.

## 1.2 Structure of the thesis

Chapter one commences by explaining the roles of culture and identity and the importance of intercultural communicative competence in intercultural situations. An understanding of identity is an essential part of intercultural communication (Martin and Nakamaya in Samovar et al. 153), and the connections between culture, identity and communication are pointed out initially in chapter two. Chapter two goes on to present different aspects of culture, including Geert Hofstede et al.'s "onion" and how a person's deep-rooted cultural values in profound ways affect

identity and communication. Karen Risager and Fredrik Barth's socio-constructive theories of culture and Hofstede's essentialist theories about dimensions of national cultures are visited, along with essentialist and non-essentialist theories of identity and how it might be formed. Some thoughts about the all-pervasive and increasingly important role multiculturalism has seen in our societies, along with the possible emergence of transculturalism conclude chapter two, before theories on intercultural learning, Michael Byram's in particular, and what the LK-06 has to say on the matter are brought up in chapter three.

The issues in chapter two and three will, along with theories of multicultural texts and film as a medium in chapter four, serve as a backdrop for the subsequent analysis of the film *Ae Fond Kiss...*, where the learning of intercultural communicative competence and conflicting identities are the leading perspectives. A concrete teaching scheme directed towards Norwegian 10<sup>th</sup> graders is designed on this background in chapter five, in order to offer an example of how to contribute to the pupils' intercultural competence. The leading concept of the teaching sequence is the Reader Response Approach, where open-ended questions, focusing on the narration of the film and the pupils' reactions and thoughts during viewing and discussion, are believed to result in the pupils' reflection and comparison and relating to the film characters. Chapter six concludes the thesis.



## 2. Communication, culture and identity

### 2.1 Communication, culture and identity are intertwined

In order to fully understand the conflicts of identity experienced by many bi-cultural youths, as for instance the British-Pakistanis, it is necessary to define identity. Simultaneously it is necessary to realize the interconnectedness of culture and communication with identity. Our background and how we define ourselves deeply influence our perceptions of and our ways of communicating with others, and the terms *culture* and *identity* inevitably surface when talking about *communication*. They are all utterly intertwined, in the sense that “culture influences every facet of all your identities”, to quote Larry A. Samovar et al. (155), i.e. culture is the source of a person’s identity; and “[c]ulture is communication and communication is culture”, if we are to believe Edward T. Hall (in Samovar et al. 22). What Hall implies is that culture is learnt via communication while communication is a reflection of one’s culture. The three terms are not easily dissociated from each other and pinned down in a few sentences. However, in spite of their complex, dynamic, multifaceted and somewhat abstract nature, several scholars have tempted definitions:

**2.1.1 Communication.** It is useful to define communication as a “dynamic process in which people attempt to share their internal states with other people through the use of symbols”, as do Samovar et al. (16). They stipulate four different functions of communication, namely to gather information, fulfil interpersonal needs, establish personal identities and influence others (15). The word communication actually derives from the Latin *communis*, which means *in common* and the verb *communicare* which means *to transmit, impart or share* (Dahl 35). According to Øyvind Dahl, communication is to negotiate meaning, and this meaning is created in interaction and exchange of tokens, symbols and actions with other people (21). Moreover, people belonging to a common social community come to an agreement on the meaning of things through a process of socialisation, and the common culture creates the framework of meaning (Ibid). Dahl and Samovar et al.’s definitions are quite similar, but Dahl’s is more useful here in placing communication in the context of culture.

As long as we communicate with people of the same cultural background, communication is fairly simple. When individuals of different cultures meet, however, actions are interpreted according to different cultural frameworks, and misinterpretations may occur. Communication patterns and content may vary considerably depending on the culture (91), and it is important not to neglect the non-verbal aspects of communication, and that facial expressions, postures or gestures may vary in meaning from culture to culture (112-120). As long as we operate within our own cultural framework, we can navigate by “autopilot” or routines. As soon as we move into an

unfamiliar environment, we need to shift to “manual steering” and try to see the world through the other persons’ lenses, which is far more challenging, according to Dahl (21-25). To be able to make this shift, intercultural communicative competence is necessary. The different aspects of intercultural communicative competence will be revisited in detail in chapter 3, since this aspect to communication is one of the main scopes of this thesis paper.

**2.1.2 Culture.** Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner think of culture as “the way in which a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas” (8). Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov consider culture to be a “collective phenomenon”, in the sense that “it is at least partly shared with people within the same social environment, which is where it was learnt”. They view culture as the unwritten rules of the social game or “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others” (6). Hofstede et al. distinguish culture from human nature on the one side and an individual’s personality on the other, where *human nature* is the physical and basic psychological functions universal to human beings. *Personality*, on the other hand, is the unique personal set of mental programming, partially learnt and partially inherited, not necessarily shared with any other human being. The distinction between human nature and culture is echoed in Confucius’s saying: “Human beings draw close to each other by their common nature, but habits and customs keep them apart” (in Samovar et al. 1)

Even though it is commonplace to perceive culture as shared in common with others, it is obvious that no two persons share identical cultural ballasting in terms of family background and membership in different social groups. Moreover, culture is dynamic and changing, and what we think we know about culture is by no means universal or applicable on large groups of people. This would be to prejudge or stereotype individuals neglecting their individuality.

In this thesis the concepts of communication and culture are of particular interest in the situations where people of different cultures meet and communicate, just as they do in the film *Ae Fond Kiss....* It is, however, necessary to think in terms of encounters between individuals with their own meanings and cultural capital, rather than encounters between different cultural systems. Fredrik Barth’s defines culture as a more personal or individual phenomenon, rather than a collective phenomenon: “Culture is a capital or ballasting of ideas and norms that a person carries because of what that person has learnt and experienced, i.e. knowledge, conventions, opinions, attitudes and values” (in Dahl 20, my translation).

Risager also finds a more dynamic and practice-oriented concept of culture applicable, because it “focuses on modern society and its conflicting cultural and identity-related problem areas” (Risager *Language and Culture* 51). She views symbols as created and recreated in the “negotiation” between people in interaction, culture is however, “not a matter of the single individual, but of individuals in interaction” (Ibid 49).

Hofstede et al. and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's understanding of culture is the *functionalist* or *essentialist* one, in the conception of culture as "something" that has a particular essence and that can be used as an explanatory factor regarding people's actions and attitudes. When both the functionalist/essentialist approach and the dynamic, socio-constructivist approaches to culture make the basis of this thesis's understanding of culture, it is because they both contribute to the understanding of intercultural encounters. The exclusion of the traditional functionalist/essentialist approach would render difficult the discussion of culture beyond the individual level and the notion of national cultures or culture on a more general level.

There is a common notion of different levels of culture. A renowned simile of cultural levels are the layers of an onion, and this is how Hofstede et al. explain it: *Symbols*, such as dress, language and status objects form the outer skin of the onion and are visible through manifestations in a society, the next layer, *heroes*, are persons or imaginary figures with highly priced characteristics, and who serve as role models. The third layer, *rituals*, they say, is collective activities such as ways of greeting, paying respect, or ceremonies that serve no rational purpose, merely to reinforce group cohesion. Hofstede et al. go on to say that symbols, heroes and rituals are practices visible to an outsider, their cultural meaning, however, can only be interpreted by the insiders; *values* form the core of the onion and deal with deeply embedded notions of e.g. evil versus good, dirty versus clean, moral versus immoral, ugly versus beautiful, et cetera. Values are acquired early in life, and in early adolescence they are largely set for life, whereas symbols are readily exchanged for new ones, and are often copied by others (Hofstede et al. 7-10). In other words, the external culture is part of the conscious mind, and the deeper internal culture is part of the subconscious mind. The deeper foundations of a culture are hidden to an outsider, and may cause misunderstandings; one of the main reasons for such misunderstandings may be that people are prone to assume similarity between themselves and others (Dahl 19). Michael Byram contributes to the importance of the effect of different values in intercultural communication, in maintaining that even though emblematic symbols and rituals are obviously and overtly different, values are more influential because they are taken for granted, unconscious and unanalysed. They are only raised to consciousness when contrasted with other groups (36). What this model implies is that a new culture cannot be judged or understood on the sole basis of what meets the eye at first glance.

In the context of viewing the film *Ae Fond Kiss...*, it is essential to remember that the surface culture of the protagonists of whom one is a British-Pakistani and the other is a British-Irish, may be very similar, in the sense that they e.g. speak the same language, both dress in a Western manner, and go to clubs at night. Large parts of their respective cultures, however, lie under the surface, and are potentially irreconcilable.

## 2.2 Identity

Even though most people know how to use the word *identity* in everyday discourse, it proves quite difficult to give a short and adequate definition that captures all its present meanings. In popular parlance, the definition of identity would be how a person defines *who he or she is*. More scholarly definitions have been put forward by for instance James D. Fearon, who argues that identity is simultaneously a *personal* and a *social* term: i.e. both “some distinguishing characteristics that a person takes a special pride in and views as socially consequential but more-or-less unchangeable”, and “a set of persons marked by a label and distinguished by rules deciding membership, and (alleged) characteristic features or attributes” (2). We see that Fearon includes both the aspect of group affiliation and a personal level to identity. Hence, identity can both be shared by members of a particular social category or group, and be the conception and expression of a person’s individuality, or innate talents and characteristics.

This definition echoes the divide between theorists who adopt essentialist and non-essentialist approaches to identity. The *essentialist approach* views identity as rooted in recoverable bonds of kinship and a shared history; hence identity is fixed and transhistorical and dictated by biology and innate qualities (Woodward 3-4). Identity is understood in terms of a shared culture, a sort of collective “one true self” held in common by people with shared history and ancestry (52). *Non-essentialists* adopt a social constructivist approach where identity is seen as a product of contingency and fluidity, of different components of cultural discourses and particular histories (4). Identity is not an accomplished fact, rather a non-stop “production”, “constituted within, not outside, representation” (51). Thus, identity “belongs to the future as much as to the past” (52). Both these approaches are necessary to shed light on the different notions of identity in *Ae Fond Kiss...* The terms “identity” and “identities” will be used interchangeably in the further discussion, remembering that an individual’s identity is made up of multiple, partially overlapping sub-identities which act in concert.

People live their lives within a range of different institutions or fields: family, peer groups, school, work, romantic relationships, and so forth. According to Katherine Woodward, one participates in these fields exercising “varying degrees of choice and autonomy” and each of the fields has a physical “setting”, but also a set of symbolic resources. For instance, people may “live out their familial identities within the field of the home”, Woodward says (21). Although one perceives oneself as the “same person” in different situations, “there is also a sense in which we are differently positioned at different times and different places, according to the different social roles we are playing and the social expectations and constraints”, Woodward claims (22). The complexity of modern life requires assuming different identities in different social situations, but

these may conflict “when what is required by one may infringe upon the demands of another” (23).

According to Byram et al., when communicating and interacting, a person does not just *speak* to another person to exchange information, he or she also sees the other as an *individual* and simultaneously as someone who belongs to a specific social or cultural *group*, for example a “teacher” and a “pupil” (5). In intercultural communication, people will inevitably see each other as members of national or ethnic cultures, for instance a Pakistani or a Brit. “This has an influence on what they say, how they say it, what response they expect and how they interpret the response” (Ibid). In short, when people communicate their *social identities* and *cultural background* are inevitably part of their social interaction (Ibid).

For the purpose of this thesis, the social aspect of identity is the most relevant, since the problems of conflicting identities, which is the focus of this thesis, arise as a result of membership of different social groups. Identity links the individual to society and gives a person “a location in the world” (Woodward 1). Modern societies, however, are marked by “dislocation” and have no clear core or centre which conserves unchanging identities, hence Woodward argues that “there is a crisis of identity globally, locally, personally and politically” because of the “breaking up of historical processes” that earlier seemed to hold “sound identities in place” (29). One result of this “crisis” is a political mobilisation, which involves “claiming one’s identity as a member of an oppressed or marginalized ethnic group” and celebrating this group’s uniqueness, often based on an essentialist hereditary claim to an identity (24). Phinney contributes that cases of discrimination might prompt members of an ethnic minority to move towards their own ethnicity, since they realise that some beliefs and values of the dominant culture can be harmful to member of minority groups (in Samovar et al. 163).

In Woodward’s view, the marking of *difference* is actually crucial to the construction of identity (35), and this difference is often marked through cultural symbols, or the surface layers of culture, as explained by Hofstede et al. (dress, language, etc.), or through classificatory systems of binary oppositions, as for the case of core values (evil-good, dirty-clean). The marking of difference may also take the form of social exclusion, or a classification of *us versus them*. Difference can even take on the negative exclusion of people defined as outsiders as for instance in the context of racial stereotypes (Woodward 35). On the other hand, difference may be “celebrated as a source of diversity, heterogeneity and hybridity” (Ibid), and is seen as enriching. Both positions are represented by characters in the film *Ae Fond Kiss*.... The following section will explore further how culture tempers social identities:

**2.2.1 In-groups and out-groups.** People intuitively categorise each other in “*in-groups*” or “*out-groups*”. The term *in-groups* refers to a sense of “we”, whereas *out-groups* refers to “they”

(Hofstede et al. 16). A person's identity marks the ways in which one is similar to others who share that position, and the ways in which one is different from those who do not (Woodward 1-2). In childhood one can learn to consider anyone as "we". Later in life, however, it becomes harder to change intuitive we-they responses or responses of exclusionism towards individuals with out-group characteristics (Hofstede et al.16). Hofstede et al. promote the idea that much of people's social activity is spent explicitly maintaining symbolic group ties, in other words, being good members of the group to which they belong. Moreover, creating groups and changing memberships is one of people's core activities in life (Ibid). "Religion, language, and other symbolic group affiliations are important to humans, and we spend much of our time establishing, negotiating and changing them" (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov 15). Every society has their own rules about the severity of abandoning one group for the benefit of another, and sometimes leaving is sanctioned by penalties. The degree of punishment differs greatly across societies, though (17). Pluralism of identities may be acceptable in Western societies, but conformity and unity have long been praised in Asian societies. The collective consciousness, rather than idiosyncratic expressions are valued (Wachman 56-57).

**2.2.2 The role of family in forming identity.** It is necessary to remember from the section of cultural layers, that core values formed in childhood die hard. According to Ting-Toomey, identity is acquired and developed through interaction with other individuals in their social group (in Samovar et al. 163), and "[T]he family is the first community to which a person is attached and the first authority under which a person learns to live, the family establishes society's most basic values", to quote Charles Colton (in Samovar et al. 53). Mary Kay DeGenova and F. Philip Rice affirm family as "the principal transmitter of knowledge, values, attitudes, roles and habits from one generation to the next. Through word and example, the family shapes of a child's personality and instils modes of thought and actions that become habitual" (54), moreover, family is the most prominent social group that exists (Smith and Mosby in Samovar et al. 53). Finally, family gives people "knowledge about historical background, information regarding the permanent nature of their culture, and specific behaviours, customs, traditions, and language associated with their ethnic or cultural group" (Ocampo, Bernal and Knight in Samovar et al. 60). In short; values that lie in the core of our culture are fundamental to the formation of our identity, and the family plays a particularly prominent role in the development of an individual's identities.

**2.2.3 Gender identity.** Gender identity marks a particular culture's differentiation between masculine and feminine social roles, and must not be mixed up with biological sex or sexual identity (Ting-Toomey in Samovar et al. 158). Family members already from birth instil gender identity in children through guidance of the proper behaviour for a boy or a girl (Samovar et al. 163). Expectations concerning masculinity and femininity differ greatly from culture to culture.



Samovar et al. draw attention to that in the Pakistani culture, with its Islamic roots, males and females have very defined and separate roles, and males are more highly valued than females, hence favoured, but more is also expected from them. In addition, males may act as decision-makers and disciplinarians of females (66).

**2.2.4 National identity and national character.** The majority of people associate their national identity with the nation where they were born. Most nations are home to a number of different cultural groups, so-called co-cultures, but one dominant group is usually in power of economic and governmental institutions and dictates the “national character” which makes the members of this nation resemble one another more than they resemble members of another nation (Samovar et al. 159-160). Byram says that in countries with formal education systems, the knowledge acquired is often dominated by the notion of a national culture and identity, and that individuals in varying degrees adopt a national identity through socialisation in formal education (35). Byram, however, questions the relevance of viewing countries as cultural entities, because in our time it is difficult to maintain the notion of national identity and homogenous cultures within the borders of a country (in Tornberg 54). The concept of cultures applies to societies, not to nations. Both Dahl and Byram bring intercultural meetings down to the individual level; where individuals interact, as opposed to the notion of representatives of national or ethnic cultures (Dahl 19; Byram in Tornberg 56), a point which also chapter 2.1.2 made.

**2.2.5 Racial identity.** The genetic variation among human beings is too small to belie a racial distinction between people. Race is rather a socially constructed idea which basically has been used to identify people as outsiders. When race is still a term commonly used, it is to classify “external physical traits such as skin colour, hair texture, facial appearance, and eye shape” (Samovar et al. 156). The three originally designated races were Mongoloid, Caucasoid, and Negroid, but many others have been added later (Ibid). More common terms today would be the rough and approximate categorisations *White* and *Black*.

**2.2.6 Ethnic identity.** Whereas racial identity is tied to a biological heritage, “ethnic identity is derived from a sense of shared cultural heritage, history, traditions, values, behaviours, area of origin and in some instances language” (Collier in Samovar et al. 157). There tends to be a duality to the ethnicity of immigrants, and their succeeding generations in particular, in the sense that they refer to themselves using “hyphenated” terms: e.g. Italian -American or British-Pakistani (Chen, in Samovar et al. 157).

**2.2.7 Worldview as a source of identity.** According to Samovar et al., the study of culture, identity, and intercultural communication must include an examination of what Alan Wolfe calls “the sacred trinity – God, family and country” (95). These three are viewed as the most influential and lasting social organisations forming the fundament of values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour

and “even today remain essential components of modern life” (Houseknecht and Pankhurst in Samovar et al. 49). The role of “family” has already been discussed, and “country” will be examined in more detail through the “Hofstedian” dimensions of national cultures presented next. This leaves the need to address the third component, “God”- or worldview – as one should rather call it, since the notion of a God/s does not apply universally. A person’s worldview “originates in [his or her] culture, is transmitted through a multitude of channels, is composed of numerous elements, and can take a variety of forms” (Samovar et al. 100). Religious and secular are the most significant of worldviews, and ideas of a God/s or of secularism have been part of the human experience since the beginning of time (101).

Different worldviews is a recurring issue in *Ae Fond Kiss...*, and the most significant worldviews involved would be the Muslim, the Catholic Christian, and the secular. The various persons’ notions of or commitment to these vary considerably, and one could argue that the protagonists Casim and Roisin both find themselves located somewhere on a continuum between Muslim-secular and Christian-secular worldviews.

In many respects, the previously predominantly Christian Western world has become secularised, and though many people have some kind of church affiliation, at least on a nominal level, the majority of Western people (with the exception of Americans) define themselves as secular, and in Steve Bruce’s words; “Britain is indeed becoming secular” (60). Islam, however, remains “a total way of life”, in the sense that it “instructs people as to the best way to carry out their lives in private, social, economic, ethical, political, and spiritual arenas” (Richter, Rapple, Modschiedler, and Peterson in Samovar et al. 129) and Islam “makes no distinction between religion and society, but governs all affairs, public and private” (Ibid).

Even though core values and identities formed in childhood resist change, in a dynamic and practice-oriented view, a person’s identity is never static; Identity is dynamic and multiple, sometimes competing, but seldom exclusive. Identity is driven by emotions and “changes as a function of a person’s life experiences” (Samovar et al. 155). Moreover, the bases for people’s disparate sentiments may differ, and what proves significant to the formation of one person’s identity may not do so to another (Wachman 56). Matters of identity are not a product of logic and facts, rather of beliefs and sentiments, and convictions people have about their identity are not always rational (Ibid).



## 2.3 Dimensions of national cultures

When discussing national cultures, it is in the context of presupposing a chain of causes, such as described in connection with Hofstede et al.'s onion: *beliefs* lead to *values*<sup>1</sup> which result in *attitudes*, which again may manifest as *behaviour* or actions in society. Moreover, people are more than their culture, and culture ultimately comes down to the individual level. Nevertheless, due to matters of expediency, it is useful to look at different cultural value and belief perspectives on the national level, keeping in mind that they are referring to the majority of the dominant culture, or the “national character”. Using cultural patterns allows for a discussion of orientations such as values and beliefs collectively – as something “systematic and repetitive instead of random and irregular” (Samovar et al. 190). Stereotyping in order to classify and simplify the world around us is sometimes necessary in order to manage the complexity of our surroundings.

Knowledge of these cultural differences may prevent misunderstandings and conflicts in intercultural encounters. Several researchers have examined nationality as a criterion in distinguishing between cultural differences (Hofstede et al. 21); this paper concentrates on some of Geert Hofstede's dimensions, in the instances where these can shed light on the understanding of conflicting identities found in the analysis of the film *Ae Fond Kiss....* I.e., the focus will be on instances where British/Irish and Pakistani cultures diverge significantly and where these are of relevance to the film analysis.

***Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures.*** Hofstede has used massively extensive statistical data to explain general and ubiquitous cultural differences between people from different countries (Hofstede et al. xi). He ranked countries in charts according to scores he had given them in the different areas. Hofstede's different value perspectives are: *individualism versus collectivism*, level of *uncertainty avoidance*, degree of *power distance*, *masculinity versus femininity*, *indulgence versus restraint*, and *long-term versus short-term orientation* (Hofstede et al. 53-296) (see fig. 1). Of these, the *individualism versus collectivism* together with the *uncertainty avoidance* and *indulgence versus restraint* dimensions play the most prominent roles in *Ae Fond Kiss....*

Several other researchers have classifications which are of interest to intercultural communication, such as Trompenaars/ Hampden Turner and their seven cultural dimensions (universalism/particularism, individualism/collectivism, neutral/ affective, achievement /ascription, specific/ diffuse, sequential/ synchronic, and inner-directed/ outer-directed) (Trompenaars and Hampden Turner 11-14), Florence Kluckhohn and Fred Strodtbeck and their

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<sup>1</sup> *Belief* refers here to “one's convictions about the truth of something - with or without proof”, and *values* are “enduring attitudes about the preferability of one belief over another” (Samovar et al. 219).

value orientations (human nature, person/human nature orientation, time, activity, and relational orientation) (Hills, 1-14.), and Edward T. Hall and his high-context and low-context cultures (Hall 85-116).

When I have chosen to focus on Hofstede's cultural dimensions as my main theoretical framework, it is a matter of prioritisation. In a more extensive paper, or in future work, one could for instance make room to look into Trompenaars and Hampden Turner's dimensions of "achievement versus ascription" or "inner-direction versus outer-direction".

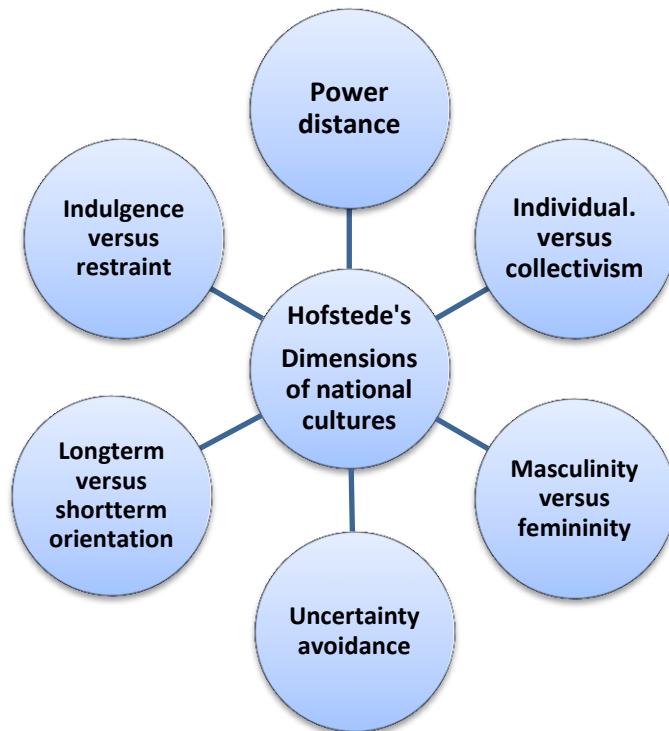


Figure 1. An interpretation of Hofstede's cultural dimensions building on the dimensions of national cultures found in part II of Hofstede et al. 2010.

However, many of the categories mentioned are partially overlapping, and in a broad perspective, one could argue that the most significant findings of cultural characteristics in *Ae Fond Kiss...* can be explained by Hofstede's dimensions, where "individualism/collectivism" is particularly prominent. Individualism versus collectivism has actually been established as a basic pattern variable that manifests itself in all human action (Ting-Toomey and Chung in Samovar et al. 198). For all the three dimensions in question, Britain and Ireland score close enough on the charts, for them to be treated as identical for the purpose of this. Here follows a brief account of the dimensions in question:

**Individualism versus collectivism.** Individualism pertains, according to Hofstede et al., to "societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after his or her immediate family" (92). Harry C. Triandis contributes to the understanding that in individual orientated cultures, "the individual is the single most important unit in any social setting [...]"

independence, rather than interdependence is stressed [...] individual achievement is rewarded, and the uniqueness of each individual is of paramount value” (in Samovar et al. 199). Daniel Goleman adds that:

[p]eople’s personal goals take priority over allegiance to groups like the family or the employer. The loyalty of individualists to a group is very weak; they feel they belong to many groups and are apt to change their membership as it suits them, switching churches, for example, or leaving one employer for another” (Ibid).

Collectivism, also known as group orientation, as the opposite of individualism, “pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty” (Hofstede et al. 92). People of collectivist cultures are marked by their strong concern with relationships and “[t]hese relationships form a rigid social framework that distinguishes between in-groups and out-groups” (Triandis in Samovar et al. 200). Harry C. Triandis cuts to the core in explaining that:

Collectivism means greater emphasis on (a) the view, needs, and goals of the in-group rather than oneself; (b) social norms and duty defined by the in-group rather than behaviour to get pleasure; (c) beliefs shared with the in-group rather than beliefs that distinguish the self from in-group; and great readiness to cooperate with in-group members (Ibid).

Individualism is accurately summarised by Peter A. Andersen et al. in saying that: “Individualistic cultures emphasize personal rights and responsibilities, privacy, voicing one’s own opinion, freedom, innovation, and self-expression” (in Samovar et al. 198), whereas collectivist cultures in a nutshell emphasize “community, collaboration, shared interest, harmony, tradition, the public good, and maintaining face” (Ibid).

According to Hofstede et al., “face” is a concept known from collectivist cultures, and “*losing face*” is damaging to the social relational harmony in the in-group, it is actually damaging to the entire group (110). The counterpart in an individualistic society, they say, is *self-respect*, but this is defined from the point of view of the individual, and not from the environment (Ibid).

Therefore, in individualistic societies, such as Britain and Ireland, people are more concerned with maintaining their self-respect, whereas in collectivist societies, such as Pakistan, one is concerned with maintaining harmony and stability in the in-group, and saving others’ face and mutual face to secure membership in the group, and thus gain face for the whole group.

As pointed out earlier, identity is multiple, but Hofstede et al. claim that “[t]he degree, to which identities can be multiple, depends on culture” (23). In fact, the degree to which identity can be multiple, relates to the individualism-collectivism distinction, and individualistic societies allow people to have more pluralistic identities and easily change these. “In collectivistic societies [...] one conceives oneself rather as belonging to one community [...] and one’s sense of identity

derives mainly from that group affiliation” (23). Collectivist cultures place particular premium on sustaining stability and harmony within the in-group, since membership in the group largely dictates identity and status (Samovar et al. 218). The strong emphasis on in-group affiliation results in the exclusion of other groups of people, sometimes even in inconsideration and hostility, and is referred to by Hofstede as *exclusionism* (98). Individualism reserves the opposite cultural tendency; *universalism*, in “treating people primarily on the basis of who they are as individuals and disregarding their group affiliations” (Ibid). According to Hofstede’s findings, Great Britain and Ireland (along with large parts of Northwest Europe and North America) tend strongly towards individualism (nr 3 and 15 respectively, whereas Pakistan has among the lowest scores (70), and is therefore among the most collectivist societies (Hofstede et al. 95-97).

Christianity and Islam’s implications for orientation towards individualism and collectivism are of special interest and significance to the interpretation of *Ae Fond Kiss*.... One can say that Christianity discovered individuality in the sense that it stressed personal conversion and a one-to-one bond with God (Samovar et al. 113), whereas in Islam, people are seen as members of tribes, communities, or families and their actions often reflect their collective nature (200).

**Uncertainty avoidance.** Uncertainty avoidance relates to to which extent unpredictability, uncertainty and ambiguity are tolerated. In order to cope with the predicament of uncertainty, cultures with high uncertainty avoidance provide predictability through resisting change; concentrating on providing stability through established social conventions, emphasising consensus, and intolerance of deviant ideas or behaviours (Samovar et al. 201). In short; what is unknown or different is perceived as dangerous (Hofstede et al. 201).

Weak uncertainty-avoidance cultures are less constrained by social protocol, i.e. more tolerant of the unusual, likely to give the benefit of doubt to unknown situation, people and ideas, instead of feeling threatened. “What is different is curious” and rules are viewed as more flexible (Ibid).

Pakistan ranks relatively high on Hofstede’s uncertainty avoidance chart (nr 35), and this aligns well with their reverence of old traditions and resistance to modernisation. Samovar et al. explain that Muslim countries, such as Pakistan see their own poverty as a product of Western values and modernisation (94), and look to the past’s traditions resisting change and modernisation.

Britain and Ireland assume two of the lowest positions on Hofstede’s uncertainty avoidance chart (68 and 69) (Hofstede et al. 192-194). This might be seen in connection with the West’s secularised worldview. Islam and Christianity both offer people the ultimate certainty of a perfect life after death and victory over opponents. High uncertainty nations, like Pakistan rely

heavily on their God as a provider in daily life, as did formerly Christian societies. The secularisation of Western societies can perhaps be seen in correlation to the low need for uncertainty avoidance, hence no need for a saving God.

*Indulgence versus restraint.* Hofstede et al. define *indulgence* as a “tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and human desires related to enjoying life and having fun” (281), whereas *restraint* reflects “a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms” (Ibid). This means that in an indulgent culture, there is a feeling of liberty to live one’s life as one pleases, without social restrictions which fetter one’s choices, and in cultures characterised by restraint there is a perception that one’s actions are limited by social norms and prohibitions. Britain and Ireland rank number 14 and 21, respectively, tending towards indulgence, whereas Pakistan is ranked the positively lowest, number 93 on Hofstede’s chart, and is thus utterly characterised by restraint (Hofstede et al. 282-85).

Hofstede et al. have found there is a strong correlation between rich countries and individualism, weaker uncertainty avoidance, and indulgence (144), whereas poorer countries show correlation with collectivism, high uncertainty avoidance, and restraint (286). This is also reflected in the relatively rich Britain and Ireland which are largely characterised by individualism, low uncertainty avoidance and indulgence, and the relatively poor Pakistan, which tends towards collectivism, high uncertainty avoidance and restraint. In fact, to speak in very broad terms, one could here talk of main distinctions between typical Western values and typical Muslim values.

Different factors dictating culture and identity and different aspects of culture and identity have been explored. The rest of chapter 2 addresses two different models of coping with globalisation and diversity in society, or two different scenarios of how identity is preserved or developed; multiculturalism and transculturalism.

## 2.4 A multicultural world

Resulting from the increasing *globalisation* there is a rapid movement of ideas, capital and people throughout the world; regardless of location, language or culture, we are all interconnected in manners scarcely imaginable a few decades ago. The entire world is at our doorstep, and the societies we live in are becoming ever more diverse and consisting of elements from a growing variety of different cultures.

The term multiculturalism refers to societies containing multiple ethnic cultures, it is not, however, the same as cultural diversity, which here simply means the presence of different cultures within the same society. “Rather, it is a particular *approach* to dealing with the challenges of cultural diversity and, in particular, to bringing about the advancement of marginalised or

disadvantaged groups” (Andrew Heywood 1). This approach implies “a positive endorsement, even celebration, of cultural difference, allowing marginalised groups to assert themselves by reclaiming an authentic sense of cultural identity” (Heywood 3). One could talk of an emphasis on difference over equality.

Even though most societies on a national level have adapted this approach to multiculturalism, there is considerable controversy over the applicability of the term (Bloor 271). Multiculturalism has different meaning to different people. In popular parlance the term is often linked with the *liberal perspective* on multiculturalism; which is the prevalent one and “places an emphasis on tolerance and respect for all faiths and beliefs, and states that all views should be accepted unless they endanger the freedom of others” (293).

Multiculturalism is often contrasted with the concepts of assimilationism and views society as a “salad bowl” or “cultural mosaic” rather than a “melting pot”. Assimilation in this respect would mean that immigrants adopt the culture and values of the host society, hence become similar to the native population, whereas the concept of “salad bowl” or “cultural mosaic” here means that immigrants maintain their original cultural characteristics.

Truly multicultural societies consist of people from different cultural groups who respect and learn from each other, who interact unimpeded, yet manage to maintain their own characteristics. *Integration* is the goal of a multicultural society, as opposed to assimilation, according to Sir Bernard Crick. He believes in the co-existence of various communities and unimpeded movement between them (BBC). Integration is here seen as the inclusion of and “the bringing of people of different racial or ethnic groups into unrestricted and equal association in society” (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language). This means they become full members, rather than remaining a separate group, without becoming similar to the society in question by complete adjustment.

One could claim that the endorsement of multiculturalism is at the expense of cohesion in society, and the concept is challenged from different quarters, and in many respects true multiculturalism is more of an ideal than a reality, in certain instances even viewed as undesirable. The earlier “consensus of multiculturalism” is broken, and there is a discussion whether it is responsible “of bridging or dividing societies” (Draft Workshop Proceedings: “Debating Multiculturalism 2”). In one of his first speeches as prime minister of the UK, David Cameron<sup>2</sup> in 2011 claimed that state multiculturalism was a failure and that “under the doctrine of multiculturalism, different cultures have been encouraged to live separate lives” (Kuenssberg, n.pag.). He argued that the UK needed a stronger national identity in order to create cohesion in

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<sup>2</sup> He is one of several prominent voices in the European political mainstream, including also Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy, who claim that multiculturalism has failed to counteract fragmentation and extremism (Draft Workshop Proceedings: “Debating Multiculturalism 2”, preface).



the society and to prevent people from turning to “all kinds of extremism”. Simultaneously, he criticised Muslim groups that promote Islamist extremism and called for less of the passive tolerance of recent years and much more “active, muscular liberalism”. “A genuinely liberal country believes in certain values and actively promotes them”, Cameron said. He continued: “It says to its citizens: This is what defines us as a society. To belong here is to believe these things”, and listed freedom of speech, freedom of worship, democracy, equal rights – regardless of race, sex or sexuality as core values (Ibid).

It is timely to question the link Cameron establishes between multiculturalism and extremism, and he was subsequently criticised by the leader of Britain’s Islamic Society, who claimed that extremism is not a result of multiculturalism, rather an array of other factors (Ibid). Living as a member of a minority group in a society with different values than one’s own, might, however, lead to a political mobilisation, or a wish to “mark the difference” and “claim one’s identity” as a minority member, as discussed in chapter 2.2, and thus focus on differences and incompatibility rather than common features and community.

Many Muslims have suffered the fate of negative stereotyping and prejudice, and have, especially after September 11, 2001 and the London bombing in 2005, often been faultily judged as religious extremists or even potential terrorists. However, Cameron in his speech touches upon an important issue, namely that acceptance of value pluralism can lead to *value relativism* and implicitly warns against it, because it, in his view undermines the sense of national identity and the *cohesion* in the society deriving from a common set of core values. The UK government is known to have embraced a policy of community cohesion based upon “shared values and celebration of diversity” (Draft Workshop Proceedings: “Debating Multiculturalism 2” 26.). Dahl reminds us that a certain amount of cultural relativism is necessary to be able to decentre and avoid ethnocentrism, but when taken to extremes, leads to a liberalism and indifference which disables the assessment of quality, moral or degree of development. Any phenomenon is judged just as good or bad as the next one (28-29).

Cameron’s concern is to create a common basis of core values for all UK citizens, the inviolability of human rights and democracy, but the question remains if this is possible. Karen Risager argues against the feasibility of Cameron’s vision: “Nation states attempt, generally speaking, to maintain an awareness of a common national culture and identity, though, in fact, cultural complexity reigns” (The Teacher’s, n.pag.). Risager does, on the other hand, admit that a sense of national identity or national culture might have positive aspects, since it can help support a feeling of community and solidarity in a population that transcends social and ethnic boundaries, besides, national political structures constitute an essential framework for representative democracy (Risager Language and Culture n.pag.). Both Michael Byram and Risager point to

certain values that must be held in universal reverence, and postulate respect for human dignity, equality of human rights, and democracy as fundamental values and basis for social interaction and intercultural communication (Risager Language and Culture n.pag.; Byram et al. 9). Thus, Cameron receives substantial support of his position of wanting to defend the values he lists on a national or even global level.

However, it is vital to remember that denying the importance and value of diversity would be to deny what it means to be a human being: “Recognition of difference is therefore a key part of the assertion of our common humanity, for human beings cannot be conceived outside their culturally or religiously diverse settings” (Draft Workshop Proceedings: “Debating Multiculturalism 2” 41-42). Thus, a policy of recognition and tolerance of diversity is inevitable. It is however, crucial to set a boundary upon this “recognition” of difference or “tolerance” to only be applied to those cultures that are themselves tolerant and respectful of others. This would exclude religious fanatics and terrorists.

The *cohesion* in social communities that Cameron and the UK government advocate in lieu of multiculturalism would include features such as a sense of common belonging or cultural similarity. However, modern societies have seen a development towards “globalisation” of culture and identity, where cultural diversity inadvertently leads to the hybridisation and assimilation of identities, and not mere conservation of traditional cultures. Many would argue that the term *multicultural societies* is no longer appropriate, and instead speak of *transcultural* societies or an emergent global culture as a result of the present globalisation.

## 2.5 Towards transcultural identities and societies?

The term *transculturation* was coined by Fernando Ortiz in order to describe the convergence of cultures, and he described the phenomenon as:

a set of ongoing transmutations; it is full of creativity and never ceases; it is irreversible. It is always a process in which we give something in exchange for what we receive: the two parts of the equation end up being modified. From this process springs out a new reality, which is not a patchwork of features, but a new phenomenon, original and independent (In Gira, Interdisciplinary Research Group on the Americas, n.pag.).

Bird and Stevenson report of the emergence of an increasingly larger, homogeneous group, “at least within the world business community” (in Samovar et al. 11):

This group neither shares a common geographic location, socioeconomic class, religion, native language nor a national culture. Yet they share a common set of values, attitudes, norms, languages, and behaviours. With one foot in their native culture and one foot in the global arena, they are members of a distinctly identifiable and emerging global culture. In some cases, they appear to share more in common with others active in the global village than those of their own national culture (Ibid).



Many children of immigrants feel a dual pressure; they should be loyal to the parents' old world and fluent in the new, accepted and blending in on either side. This may result in a perception of falling short in both camps, "shuttling between two dimensions that have little in common" (Suárez-Orozco in Edwards n.pag.). According to Carola Suárez-Orozco," these youth must creatively fuse aspects of two or more cultures—the parental tradition and the new culture or cultures. In so doing, they synthesize an identity that does not require them to choose between cultures but incorporates traits of both cultures" (Ibid.). This synthesis or merging of disparate cultural identities results in the creation of new identities, i.e. transcultural identities which show a converging trajectory or increasing similarity across cultures.

Modern societies are transforming as the world becomes metaphorically smaller. The one thing we can rely on is that society will continue to change in varied ways, and whether we endorse multiculturalism or not, plurality still reigns. Frequent cross-cultural encounters face us with the requirements to expand our ability to communicate efficiently with the various people of different cultures who surround us. This leads onto this thesis' next step; namely intercultural learning or intercultural competence.

Multiculturalism and transculturalism are important to the discussion of this thesis, because they offer prescriptive remedies to the shaping of people's *identity* in the process of globalisation (Bloor 271). Multiculturalism promotes diversity and discourages assimilation, whereas transculturation envisions a trajectory of converging identities on a global level. One could argue that multiculturalism in some ways is consistent with an essentialist approach to identity, in the sense that it looks to preserve ethnic minorities and their customs and traditions, whereas transculturalism is consistent with a non-essentialist social constructivist view of identity in synthesizing new identities on the basis of new developments and new experiences.

### 3. Intercultural competence

Cultural plurality requires a certain competence from us all, if we are to make the most out of our daily encounters with people of different cultural backgrounds than ourselves. There is perhaps the potential of misunderstanding, xenophobia and alienation, but also of invaluable knowledge, personal growth and insight. Intercultural sensitivity is not something that comes natural, though, but is something one can learn. Discussing intercultural competence is important here for two main reasons: to be able to discuss the intercultural aspects in the film that will be analysed, but more importantly as a theoretical framework for the teaching scheme in chapter 5.

#### 3.1 Definition

Ragnhild Elisabeth Lund argues that the term intercultural competence has become a fashionable buzzword, although few seem to have an exact idea of the “pedagogical implications” in compulsory education (1). There are many different perspectives on intercultural competence; here follows a small selection of influential scholars’ considerations. Martine C. Gertsen and Anne-Marie Søderberg define intercultural competence as “the ability to communicate appropriately in a given situation, with people of different cultural conditions than ours” (in Dahl 175, my translation). This is a good starting point, but is not specific as to what this “ability” entails.

Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner claim that one can never really understand other cultures. Therefore the focus should be on gaining a better understanding of *one’s own culture* and how to recognise and cope with cultural differences and aim to dispel ethnocentrism (1-3). These are essential aspects and align with Claire Kramsch’s claim, where she promotes the idea that it is impossible to teach about understanding, just about differences. She envisions “a third place” where new culture can be created as a function of intercultural encounters. (in Ulrika Thornberg 56). “Students need to be confronted with many cultures and multiple perspectives”, Kramsch says, “so that they can more easily identify and reflect on their own cultural identity as only one among many possible identities” (in Lund 4).

Lord Parekh challenges our tendency towards ethnocentrism; i.e. to view our own habits, values and ways of life as the only natural and obvious choice. His view is that “no culture is perfect or represents the best in life”, and that people of one culture therefore “can benefit from a critical dialogue with other cultures”. He adds that multiculturalism challenges us to be open, self-critical and interactive in our relationships with each other (BBC NEWS).

Despite our tendency towards ethnocentrism, there is no one best way to lead a life and no culture is inherently better than another. Realizing this means that one has the ability to decentre, and successful interaction in a multicultural society means a certain level of adaption to the other

cultures, admits Øyvind Dahl (176). But how far should this adaptation go? Dahl discourages unconditional adaptation to the other culture, and promotes rather a clarifying of one's own perspective, simultaneously trying to gain knowledge and understanding of both one's own and the other's cultural conditions and traditions (Ibid).

Risager sees the acquisition of intercultural competence as “an aspect of the lifelong socialisation process, or - to express it in more constructivist terms - a lifelong project. From early childhood and throughout our lives, we learn more and more about dealing with social and cultural differences and relating to them in developing our own identity” (The Teacher's n.pag.). Risager suggests “that an intercultural competent person is one who knows and cares about global issues” (in Lund 3,) “and who sees him- or herself as a world citizen rather than a citizen of a particular nation” (The Teacher's n.pag.), quite simply one who is capable of living as a world citizen in a multicultural, globalised world. She admits, however, that the definition requires clarification and suggests a classification into affective, behavioural and cognitive competences (Ibid). Risager assumes a social-constructivist approach to intercultural competence, in qualifying understanding as an “active process where one creates an understanding of what has been said from one's own perspective and own horizon. Moreover, in communicating, we create or confirm our identities”; she says (Ibid). Risager's definition is very useful since she links intercultural competence and communication to the concept of identity. Her definition also picks up on the current development of transculturalism. All the mentioned scholars have valuable input as to what intercultural competence means. It is, however, my choice to look to Michael Byram when defining intercultural competence, since his research in this field is the most comprehensive and the most influential in Europe.

Byram's theories on intercultural competence draw on Dell H. Hymes's and Jürgen Habermas's concepts of *communicative competence* and Michael Canale, Merrill Swain and Jan Ate van Ek's concepts of *interculturality in foreign language teaching* (in Byram 7). Byram brought the two theories together and adapted them into what he coined as *intercultural communicative competence*, hereafter referred to as ICC or just intercultural competence, remembering that the communicative element is always implied. Byram claims that:

the “intercultural dimension” in language teaching aims to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping<sup>3</sup> which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity. It is based on perceiving the interlocutor as an individual whose qualities are to be discovered, rather than as a representative of an externally ascribed identity. Intercultural communication is communication on the basis of respect for individuals and equality of

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<sup>3</sup> According to Byram et al., stereotyping involves labelling or categorising particular groups of people, usually in a negative way, according to preconceived ideas or broad generalisations about them – and then assuming that all members of that group will think and behave identically. Stereotypes can undermine our sense of who we are by suggesting that how we look or speak determines how we act (21).

human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey 5).

Byram's definition of ICC is interesting in the context of this thesis, since it picks up on the concept of identity, and it adds to the understanding of the importance of different identities in ICC. In addition, he is specific about what people are to learn. In Byram's view, ICC in the classroom concerns:

- helping learners to understand how intercultural interaction takes place,
- how social identities are part of all interaction,
- how their perceptions of other people and others people's perceptions of them influence the success of communication
- how they can find out for themselves more about the people with whom they are communicating (Byram et al.10).

In order to provide a detailed description to be used as the starting point for teaching in the foreign language classroom, Byram<sup>4</sup> refined the traditional notion of teaching *attitudes*, *knowledge*, and *skills* into five main areas, or *savoirs* of ICC (Byram 34-38).

### 3.2 Byram and the five *savoirs* of ICC

Byram sees the role of the language teacher to comprise developing skills, attitudes and awareness of values, just as much as to develop knowledge of a particular culture or country:

- *Savoir être* (Attitudes)
- *Savoir* (Knowledge)
- *Savoir comprendre* (Skills of comparison, interpreting and relating)
- *Savoir apprendre/faire* (Skills of discovery and interaction)
- *Savoir s'engager* (Critical cultural awareness) (Byram et al. 7-9)

*Savoir être*, or the attitudes of ICC, implies "curiosity and openness", readiness to rethink beliefs and disbeliefs about one's own and others' cultures. This means to readily let go of ethnocentrism and seek to decentre<sup>5</sup> (Byram et al. 7). *Savoir*, or knowledge, in ICC means knowledge about other peoples and cultures. Byram argues, however, that it is not possible to anticipate all the knowledge language learners need about other cultures, due to cultural plurality and multiple social identities. Whatever is taught, it is inevitably insufficient. Therefore, *savoir* also means knowledge of how social groups and identities function and what is involved in the processes of intercultural interaction (8). An individual's knowledge about the ways in which his/her social identities have been acquired and how they colour the way they perceive other persons or groups is a successful basis for interaction. This knowledge must be combined with

<sup>4</sup> Byram developed these together with Geneviève Zarate. The French terms are remainders from Byram's co-operation with the Francophone Zarate (Byram, M. and Zarate, G. *Definitions, objectives and assessment of sociocultural competence*. 1997.)

<sup>5</sup> To decentre is to seek to see the point of view of others.

procedural knowledge of how to act in specific circumstances, and the skills of *comprendre*, *apprendre* and *faire*.

*Savoir comprendre*, or having the skills of comparison, interpreting and relating, implies being able to interpret ideas, expressions, documents or events from another culture and relate them to ideas, expressions, documents and events from one's own. Comparison and shift of perspective might lead to the discovery of misunderstandings and misperceptions of someone with another social identity. We see that Byram's shift of perspective coincides with Kramsch's and Lord Parekh's notions of decentring. *Savoir apprendre/faire* is, through "discovery and interaction", "to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills" during communication and interaction (Byram et al. 8).

Finally, *savoir s'engager* means a critical awareness of oneself and one's values, as well as those of others, because values are part of a person's social identities. This implies to critically evaluate perspectives, "practices and products in one's own and others' cultures" (Byram et al. 9). However open and tolerant one seeks to be, one's own beliefs, values and behaviours are deeply rooted in a person, "and can create reaction and rejection" (Ibid). "Because of this unavoidable response, intercultural speakers/mediators need to become aware of one's own **values** and how these influence views of other people's values" (Ibid). Byram stresses respect for "human dignity and equality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction" and fundamental values in language teaching (Ibid).

According to Byram et al., the essence of the intercultural elements in teaching SLA and ICC "is to help language learners to interact with speakers of other languages on equal terms, and to be aware of their own identities and those of their interlocutors" (4). Their hope, they say, is that language learners in this way will become successful intercultural speakers who are able to both communicate information, and to establish a relationship with people of other languages and cultures (Ibid). Byram et al. explain that:

..the "intercultural dimension" in language teaching aims to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity. It is based on perceiving the interlocutor as an individual whose qualities are to be discovered, rather than as a representative of an externally ascribed identity. Intercultural communication is communication on the basis of respect for individuals and equality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction (5).

We see that Byram assumes the same dynamic approach to culture and identity as Risager. To sum up, teaching ICC to pupils, in Byram et al.'s words, implies:

...to prepare them for interaction with people of other cultures; to enable them to understand and accept people from other cultures as individuals with other distinctive

perspectives, values and behaviours; and to help them to see that such interaction is an enriching experience (6).

The goal is not mere toleration of diversity, but to reach an understanding that diversity is a source of new insights and enrichment unattainable in a homogenous society.

### 3.3 ICC and the English subject

An important part of the process of acquiring Byram and Zarate's *savoirs* is expected to happen in our English classrooms, the classroom constituting one of three "locations" for ICC learning; the others would be fieldwork and independent learning (Byram 71). Our EFL teaching does not need to assume the sole responsibility for the teaching of ICC, but the experience of "otherness" and "the unfamiliar" is central to foreign language teaching, along with the requirements of engaging in communication in another language (Byram 3). The English language has spread world-wide through exploration, colonization, education and even more so in recent years due to the advent of the Internet. There are now many times more non-native speakers of English than native speakers and English is the world's most popular *lingua franca*. This is what makes its position unique and invaluable as a tool in intercultural communication (Ronowicz and Yallop 11-13). Therefore, the English subject is perhaps the most central subject for ICC learning in school.

### 3.4 ICC in the English subject curriculum in the LK-06

The Norwegian National Curriculum, the LK-06, also underscores the importance of ICC in the English Subject Curriculum and states that "when using the language in communication, we must also be able to take cultural norms and conventions into consideration" (Norway n.pag.). Here we recognise the ICC skills stipulated by Byram. In stating that the English subject is to "contribute insight into the way we live and how others live, and their views on life, values and cultures" (Ibid), we recognize Byram's knowledge aspect. The LK-06 goes on to say that: "It will give insight into how individuals think and live in the English-speaking world. Communicative skills and cultural insight can promote greater interaction, understanding and respect between people with different cultural backgrounds" (Norway, n.pag.). This, together with the statement "cultural competence contributes to the all-round personal development and fosters democratic commitment and a better understanding of responsible citizenship" (Ibid), link to Byram's ICC of attitude. Finally, "[W]orking with various types of texts and other cultural expressions is important for developing linguistic skills and understanding how others live, and their cultures and views on life" (Ibid) refers both to skills and knowledge.

It is well worth noticing that when the LK-06 brings up “insight into the way we live” as one of the scopes of teaching English, this is very much in line with what Byram says, individuals’ knowledge of their own cultural background is part of the social identity which they bring to the ICC situation, and “mutual perceptions of the social identities of interlocutors is a determining factor in the interaction” (32). Through comparison one becomes more aware of one’s own culture, “much of which is unconscious and taken for granted” and new knowledge and comparison hence strengthen rather than threaten one’s own cultural identity (113). The LK-06 is here also in line with Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner and Kramsch and what they contributed to the definition of ICC.

Although the curriculum clearly states the need to focus on intercultural questions, the syllabus lacks a clear understanding of what intercultural competence is. Magne Dypedahl claims that the ICC goals are less concrete and harder to evaluate than many other goals on the syllabus, nevertheless, equally binding (6). Besides mentioning “using the language in communication”, and “[W]orking with various types of texts and other cultural expressions” and literature in English as a means to “instil lifelong joy of reading and provide a deeper understanding of oneself and others” (Norway n.pag.), the curriculum is otherwise very vague as to content and methods in ICC teaching. Anyway, the passages above point to using literature, texts, or other cultural expressions as possible means to work on ICC in Norwegian classrooms, but the main focus is on literature.

### **3.5 Promoting ICC in the EFL classroom through authentic and multicultural texts**

According to Donna Norton, learning about other cultures allows children to relate to them as real people, with feelings and needs similar to their own, instead of viewing them as stereotypes (in Nodelman and Reimer 170). Caroline Hunt agrees and considers knowledge and tolerance among the fundamental goals of a multicultural society. She suggests that greater knowledge about other cultures leads to greater toleration of those unlike ourselves (Ibid 175). This echoes Geert Hofstede et al.’s claim that knowledge of cultural differences may prevent misunderstandings and conflicts in intercultural encounters (2010). Samovar et al. add to this by reporting evidence that children with positive face-to-face contact with other groups usually maintain fewer negative stereotypes than those denied such contact (172) and that in effect, personal contact and education are the only two agents capable of dispelling prejudicial views (176). In their view, intercultural encounters have the potential of being explicit learning experiences that help people learn more about themselves and, at the same time, other cultures.

Most time in school is obviously spent in the classroom, and how should one work on ICC there? Real encounters and interaction with people from other cultures would arguably be the best



way of building ICC and breaking down stereotypes and prejudices, but that is usually not an option in Norwegian schools. The second best method would be to invite people of other cultures to our classrooms or using real time communication technology in order to have the face-to-face interaction Samovar et al. speak of. Perhaps we should try to do that more often. Byram offers much in the sense of learning objectives, but is less specific as to how these objectives should be reached. However, one of the most traditional ways of building ICC or *savoirs* in our pupils is the reading of authentic literature from other cultures, just as stipulated by the LK-06. Authentic stories and narrations are not exclusive to literature; the film medium has the same qualities.

According to Aly Anwar Amer, authentic stories are motivating for learning in addition to acting as a change agent for developing intercultural awareness, empathy, tolerance and emotional intelligence (63). Anne-Brit Fenner claims that the reading of authentic literature might count as a personal encounter with a foreign culture because the authentic literature represents the personal voice of the culture (16). Perry Nodelman and Mavis Reimer warn against what they call “cultural appropriation” or “voice appropriation”, which is the “act of claiming or appropriating the right to give voice to what it means or feels like to belong to a particular group” other than their own (175). There is always the danger of misrepresentation or of perpetuating stereotypes, and authenticity is a way to avoid cultural appropriation.

Diana Mitchell advocates the use of multicultural texts, and defines multicultural literature as literature that calls attention to peoples and voices not traditionally written about or included in the body of literature most frequently taught. She argues that we should focus on filling in the part of the picture that is missing (200). Renee Hobbs adds that many of the stories, especially of the past represent the point of view of the winners, or those on top of the social, political, and cultural hierarchy (73), and one could infer that the use of the multicultural texts Mitchell speaks of completes the picture of a society otherwise dominated by mainstream cultural expressions. This echoes Byram’s simile where building ICC is like filling blank spaces in a jigsaw-puzzle (75).

Møller et al. presuppose good literature and the teaching of literature to consist of a mix between the known and the unknown. If there is nothing in the text that rings familiar or that we can relate to, it remains estranged and incomprehensible; and if there is nothing new to it, it is simply redundant or boring. It is only the duality of the familiar and the unknown, they say, that elicits new knowledge (17-18). Rudine Sims Bishop (in Wolfe 160) agrees and points out that multicultural literature for pupils should serve as a *window* onto lives and experiences different from our own and a *mirror* reflecting ourselves and our cultural values, attitudes and behaviors. This means that a multicultural text used in the EFL classroom should contain both familiar elements which establish a connection to the pupils’ cultural background, and unfamiliar and



exotic elements which portray the cultural “Other”, in order for the children to both relate to the individuals depicted and acquire new knowledge. Bishop (in Nodelman and Reimer 174) also advocates texts that contribute to an understanding and appreciation of persons of colour and their cultures and that offer a positive vision of a diverse society and a multicultural world.

In sum; ICC is nothing that comes natural, but must be learnt, and the English subject is one of the essential arenas for this in Norwegian schools. Adequate methods for building ICC would be direct or indirect contact with people of other cultures, alternatively the use of literature – or other texts - as points of departure to work on Byram’s *savoirs*. The texts should be *authentic*, i.e. represent the personal voice of the culture, they should represent *the voice of people not traditionally heard*, and provide both a *window* into the unfamiliar, and also a *mirror* reflecting the familiar.

Much research provides support of the recommendations of using literature and texts as a means of building ICC, namely because of the narrative elements which enable the pupils to gather information, and invite them to react and relate; the following passage discusses the adequacy of narrations in the form of *films* of doing the same. The film medium’s particular rhetorical qualities combined with the Reader Response Approach will manage to affect the pupils and work as a change agent for ICC on a personal level that does not only involve knowledge and skills, but also attitudes. A person’s attitudes build on values and beliefs which involve deeper emotions and personal reactions. The Reader Response Approach’s focus on relating to characters and events combines especially well with the film’s rhetoric and ability to engage people on a personal level.

## 4. Film in the classroom

### 4.1 Film versus literature

This thesis considers film as equally capable of constituting the personal intercultural encounter Fenner speaks of through literature and the literary mirror and window described by Bishop. The following section seeks to justify this position.

Literature has a high status among many scholars who have written extensively about its unique qualities which evoke emotions, give insight and allow us to teach cultural awareness (See for example Perry Nodelman and Mavis Reimer (1992); Shelby A. Wolf (2004); Aly Anwar Amer, Rosemart Stones (1999); Diana Mitchel (2003)). Much indicates, though, that film is capable of the same, and in certain instances may be even superior to literature. Bo Steffensen points out the development of the art of printing as a presupposition for the strong relationship between the written text and narration. With the last century's innovations in electronic or screen media, such as film, television and the computer, these new media have taken over many of the functions of setting the cultural agenda, previously monopolized by literature (243).

Steffensen also claims that the classic antagonism between pictures and text is highly exaggerated (244). Both film and literature are to be regarded as a form of text in the broader sense of the word, and both often take on a narrative character and have the ability to convey facts, thoughts, ideas and emotions. Hence, the *Reader Response Approach (RRA)*, originally developed around the reading of literature, is also applied to the viewing of films in this thesis, since it focuses on the very same narration and the ideas, opinions and emotions that it elicits from the pupils. The specifics of RRA will be returned to in chapter 5 when introducing the teaching scheme.

### 4.2 Pedagogical advantages concerning the use of film in the classroom

Teachers may argue that the viewing of films is an “easy way out” as a pedagogic tool replacing a literary experience. There might actually be some truth to this claim, since watching films for decades has been used as a break or a reward, even as a pass-time or babysitter in classrooms. Renee Hobbs found that these habits interfere with developing more imaginative, innovative and fruitful uses of film, and gives films in school an undeserved bad name (5-6). The fact that people find films entertaining is by no means a pedagogical drawback, and most pupils are motivated by the thought of viewing a film. But to be able to make the most of the viewing experience, the teacher needs to be aware of the possibilities films offer, and work with them instead of using film as a mere pass-time.

As a matter of fact, there are many other good reasons to include films in one's teaching. First, modern pupils are visually oriented (Golden xiii), in the sense that they spend far more time on so-called visual media than on reading. In fact, modern children spend about four hours and twenty minutes in front of the TV each day (Hobbs 5). Contrary to what one might think, most teenagers do not abandon movies and television for the Internet, instead, teens watch more TV and movies than ever (Ibid), and visual media are vital parts of young people's culture.

Second, Steffensen argues that the modern screen media mediate the gap created by the "dead" text's distancing nature, which led to distance between people. The modern media situation has recreated the "living word" of speech as it used to be before the proliferation of books, and thus draws us closer together again, i.e. where the written word earlier caused individualistic distance (257). In other words, the use of modern screen media, such as films, is a social activity, something we can "do" together which creates common ground in a more efficient way than literature is able to.

Third, films have the potential to excite and involve. The multimodal screen media's stimulation of several senses simultaneously makes them, as also Steffensen points out, very fascinating and convincing to the audience; they manage to blur the lines between fiction and reality (264). Barsam and Monahan agree, and find that films are the most powerful art form of our time (2), able in subtle ways of engaging "viewers' emotions and to transport them inside the world presented onscreen" by challenging senses, emotions and intellect (3). The visual vocabulary of film is "designed to play upon those same instincts that we use to navigate and interpret the visual and aural information of "real life""; they say (Ibid). This makes film highly capable of displaying reality the way we know it from first-hand experience, by for example mimicking a viewer's perspective with the camera positioning and soft transitions in the cutting (Engelstad and Seip Tønnesen 13). These are useful qualities and the right film would have the rhetorical power to convey desired information and pave the ground for shaping ICC attitudes.

Last, one could actually argue that film is superior to literature, especially when it comes to depicting appearances, facial expressions, gestures and body language. These are very important cultural expressions, and "a picture says more than a thousand words" in these respects. Moreover, if rhetoric means to move an audience with words or speech, the film's rhetoric would be twofold convincing, since it combines speech, sounds and the visual element. The element of sound is a vital ingredient and a great asset to films. The importance of the aural aspect of the screen media tends to be underestimated, according to Steffensen (244). Music and authentic spoken language varieties are examples of important cultural manifestations that are harder to bring across in text. The film also offers ample possibilities to work on *listening* to the authentic spoken language.

Films are much more than entertainment. Films are capable of giving us new knowledge about the world, or making “us see beyond the borders of our previous experience”, to quote Barsam and Monahan (xiii), and “[T]he movies we see shape the way we view the world around us and our place in that world” (2). Hobbs maintains that most of what we know about the world actually comes from mediated experience through what we have heard, read or viewed (72).

In sum, the pedagogical advantages concerning the use of film are many and film is powerful and influential as a medium, capable of affecting its viewers. Carefully selected films have the power to promote intercultural competence. Pupils need help, however, to be made aware of and to interpret what they see and experience. This can be provided through well-designed questions or tasks in class, and will be the objective of the teaching scheme in section 5. Before going into the analysis of *Ae Fond Kiss...*, there will first be general background information on British Pakistanis, information that will serve as a backdrop for my analysis of attitudes and behaviour in the film.

### 4.3 British Pakistanis

According to Jørgen Sevaldsen, Ole Vadmand and Jan Erik Mustad, Britain’s ethnic minorities are a complex group of people mainly of Commonwealth origin (254). British-Pakistanis are the second largest ethnic minority population in Britain, second only to the British-Indians (Wikipedia British Pakistanis), and more than 90 % of them are Muslims. But as is the case with members of all religions, they vary in their religious practice. In 2007 more than half of British Muslims were born in Britain (Richardson 1). British Pakistanis are British citizens with ancestral roots in Pakistan, including people who were born in Britain and are of Pakistani descent or Pakistani-born people who migrated to Britain.

British-Pakistanis are the poorest in Britain, next to the British-Bangladeshis. Many, however, have successful businesses and middle class lifestyles. Among the self-employed, the majority work in the transport industry or in family-run businesses in the retail sector, as is the case with Casim’s father, who has a local grocery store. Pakistanis form the largest ethnic minority group in Scotland, representing nearly one third of the ethnic minorities. About 20,000 live in Glasgow, with large Pakistani communities throughout the city (Richardson 1). Casim Khan and his family in *Ae Fond Kiss...* represent a typical family in one of these communities.

Immigrants often group together in particular regions to form ethnic communities. “In these areas, people’s sense of ethnic identity tends to remain strong, because traditional cultural practices, beliefs and language are perpetuated” (Samovar et al. 157). With the passing of time, their offspring often move to areas of greater ethnic diversity, and inter-ethnic marriages often result in their feelings of ethnic identity to become “diluted” (Ibid).

According to Instead Consultancy, British society, as all Western societies, harbours anti-Muslim prejudice, and such prejudice has existed for centuries, “but has in recent years become more explicit, more pervasive and more dangerous” (n.pag.). These changes have led to a need to combat Islamophobia. This does not mean, however, “that all aspects of Islam are beyond criticism”, such as for instance forced marriages, rather that disagreeing ideas should be well informed and vented with respect (Instead Consultancy, n.pag.). This view aligns well with the criticism of value relativism Cameron aired in 2011.

However, schools have essential roles to play in promoting mutual respect and an atmosphere of openness and tolerance (Instead Consultancy n.pag.). Robin Richardson agrees, and has found that the dominant portrayal in Western media and Western consciousness contains the often unspoken and underlying stereotypical assumptions that “all Muslims are much the same, all Muslims are essentially different from all non-Muslims, Muslims are morally and culturally inferior to non-Muslims,” and “Muslims are a threat to non-Muslims” (5). The film *Ae Fond Kiss...* addresses these exact assumptions, and seeks to expose their irrationality and prejudicial and faulty premises.

#### 4.4 Close analysis of the film *Ae Fond Kiss...*

**4.4.1 Summary.** The intercultural narrative has emerged as a recognisable literary and filmic genre which deals with issues such as living in a multicultural environment and the loss and reconstruction of personal identity (Crawshaw n.pag.). One could readily define *Ae Fond Kiss...* as an intercultural narrative, with implicit focus on intercultural clashes, conflicting and hybridising identities. On the explicit level it is first and foremost an inter-ethnic love story between the young, second-generation Pakistani DJ Casim Khan and the young Irish music teacher Roisin Hanlon. Casim and Roisin have to fight for their love, against conservative Catholic officials on the one side, and Casim’s Muslim family on the other side. Although some might find that the plot bears resemblance to a contemporary cliché variation over the traditional Romeo and Juliet-theme, it is rather a realistic and unsentimental story of a couple whose relationship is condemned by others. In addition they have to overcome seemingly unsurpassable cultural differences in their own value systems. Instead than just another sweet love story, this is a critical movie which expresses different aspects of living in a multicultural society.

*Ae Fond Kiss...* has a typical filmic narrative with a linear story and an initial presentation of the protagonists in the Khan family with mother, father, Casim and his two adolescent sisters still living at home. The story is set in Glasgow, Scotland, and Roisin and Casim happen to meet when he comes to pick up his younger sister, Tahara, after school. Tahara goes to the Catholic secondary school where Roisin is teaching music. This is when we first hear the song that gave the

film its title. The film title *Ae Fond Kiss...* lends itself from a Robert Burns song about parting: “Ae fond kiss, and then we sever; Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!” (Wikipedia Ae Fond Kiss). The song’s melancholic and rueful sentiments appear to anticipate a short and sweet affair with a subsequent separation.

Despite their profoundly different backgrounds, Casim and Roisin fall in love and start a romantic relationship. The first part of the story is kept in a light and humorous tone, but as the plot thickens, problems and conflicts surface: Casim cannot be seen with Roisin alone – that is not *comme il faut* for a Muslim. Casim’s family are already planning his marriage with his cousin Jasmine, something Casim holds back from Roisin. When they steal away on a romantic holiday week-end to Spain, he finally comes clean, and Roisin is very upset. He promises to call off the wedding, however, when they come home. Out of fear of his parents’ reaction Casim fails to tell them about his relationship with Roisin. Roisin cannot accept a relationship based on a lie, and opposes Casim with an ultimatum. Thus, after Casim has told Roisin he cannot “match” her, and a relationship is much more than love, the song is played again as a soundtrack over shots of Roisin crying and Casim driving away in his car, again hinting at a pending break-up.

Casim is not the only one in the Khan family who tries to juggle his Pakistani and British identities. Tahara is fighting her own battle, and the story peaks with a confrontation at the Khan house, where Tahara desperately pleads to go to journalist school in another city, and Casim finally tells his mother he cannot marry Jasmine. This is the story’s classical “point of no return”, as described by Sylvi Penne (190), where the conflicts escalate and can no longer be swept under the carpet. Casim subsequently goes to stay with his British-Pakistani friend, Hammid, who himself is living with an ethnically Scottish woman. He advises Casim against sacrificing the entire family for “a nobody” and “just a bird” among many. Family and the Muslim community come first, in his opinion. Hammid does not see his own cohabitation as a problem as long as he is able to keep it secret from his family.

Roisin and Casim make up, however, when she learns from Tahara that he has come clean with his parents and moved out of their house. Casim’s family are appalled and angry to learn that he is dating a “goree” (a White girl); their eldest daughter Rukhsana’s marriage is cancelled because of this, and loss of face in the community is pending. Casim then moves in with Roisin. Roisin on her side has no immediate family, or so she says, but has to face the harsh disapproval of her parish priest, who refuses her the letter of approval which would enable her to secure a permanent position, unless she breaks off her relationship with Casim, or he is willing to convert to Catholicism.

Meanwhile, the conflict between Casim and his family continues to escalate as Casim’s sister Rukhsana plots to wreck the relationship between Casim and Roisin to save her own

marriage plans, while parents Tariq and Sadia plead with Casim for family honour and to comply with their arrangements. Their final scheme is to fly in prospective bride Jasmine with her family behind Casim's back, contriving Roisin to witness the scene where Casim and Jasmine meet outside the Khan's house. Roisin storms off in tears, but when Tahara, who sympathizes with her brother, tells Casim all, he rushes to Roisin's side, leaving his family shattered. The story ends with a reunion of Casim and Roisin at her place, but the conflicts between Casim and his family are not resolved.

The film was released in 2004, scripted by Paul Laverty and directed by Ken Loach. The main cast were Atta Yaqub as Casim, Eva Birthistle as Roisin, Ahmad Riaz as Tariq, Shabana Bakhsh as Tahara and Ghizala Avan as Rukhsana (Hill 239).

**4.4.2 An intercultural perspective.** There are many ways of looking at films, depending on the perspective one holds, and one interpretation cannot claim sovereignty over the next. Barsam and Monahan explain that no critical perspective is inherently better than another because films are so diverse in their nature that no single approach could ever do them justice (xiii). The key chosen to interpret this film does not lie in the film-specific or formal aspects such as structure or technique, rather in the performance of action and dialogue as the story unfolds on the screen, i.e. the subject matter of the film, since this is what is interesting for ICC learning in class.

The director Ken Loach himself also sanctions a non-formal and non-symbolic viewing of his film: He has aimed for economy and naturalism of the environment or milieu in the scenes; “economy of camera movement and positioning - economy of lighting; everything is reduced to the bone” (in *Making of*). In other words, he refers to that the camera should be positioned in a place where it does not have to move around. There is no use of a dolly; the camera is on a tripod constituting a natural observational height, as if it were “an observer looking into a room”. Psychoanalyst Jaques Lacan (in Braudy and Cohen 660) postulates a “primordial mirror” often referred to in connection to films, in which “the child perceives its own image, and its ego is formed by its identification with its own likeness”. If cinema is this mirror, the identification of the spectator would be with “perception itself”, that is with the *camera*. With the unobtrusive, impartial camera we become accidental spectators happening to watch what goes on.

Moreover, the lighting is as naturalistic and inconspicuous as possible. To achieve this Loach has taken key decisions early in the process, especially in choices of locations, so he does not have to fight the natural lighting and architecture of the locations. The architecture is to give good light and access for the camera, Loach contends (in *Making of*).

“What the camera is doing is always subordinate to what the camera is showing”, Loach says. Loach argues that when all formal elements are reduced to a bare minimum, the focus is given to what actually happens in front of the camera. He continues that the goal is for the viewer



not to be aware of the camera, the lighting, or other signs of the crafts of the film-makers profession, because they are all utterly naturalistic and really play second fiddle to actions and dialogue. Rather than using an omniscient and artful narrative language, all prominence is given to “real” people living their ordinary lives in front of the camera, Loach explains (in *Making of*). Loach’s utterly realistic approach actually goes beyond filmic verisimilitude, in placing “particular premium on both acting and writing that draws on lived experience” (Hill 183).

In an interview Loach stated that he was committed to the realist mode of storytelling in all his films, because he finds that style of performance the most interesting, and advances in most art forms come when people just “try to get close to the bone of what is really going on”, “the core of our experience”, as he called it. “I think art gets decadent when it becomes obsessed with form and style and all the rest” (Loach in Smith, n.pag.). In screen writer Paul Laverty, Loach feels he has found someone who sees the world in a similar way. “He’s very to the point and on the ball. What can I say without lapsing into cliché? His work is very accurate to the surface details of how things are” (Mottram 22-23). Hence the screen play and the directions both work together to produce an utterly realistic style, with focus on content rather than form. On the other hand, it is important to remember that a film is always a construct, representations and fabrications (Braudy and Cohen 660). One should remind the pupils that this is not a glimpse into the lives of real people, but a reflection of how things might be for many people in the real world, and that their experiences might be representative and valid also outside the boundaries of Glasgow or Britain.

Therefore, in the closer analysis of this film it is natural to focus on the subject matter of the film, rather than looking for formal and symbolic clues to an interpretation, and in accordance with the scope of this thesis I will take an intercultural perspective. In the following I will look at instances of conflicts of identity in *Ae Fond Kiss*... which can be explained on the basis of the differing value systems between Pakistanis and the British/Irish. Questions of identity and different approaches hereto will run as a thread throughout the discussion, picking up issues of multiculturalism/transculturalism, the cultural dimensions of Hofstede, and world view/religion. When referring to concrete scenes in the film, it is referred to the 100 minutes long 2004 DVD recording *Ae Fond Kiss*... distributed by ICON. In order to give exact references, the time of the start and end of the film sequences referred to are given in parentheses.

**4.4.3 Family and society.** We know from the discussion of identity that family is the “principal transmitter of knowledge, values, attitudes, and habits” (De Genova and Rice in Samovar et al. 54), and “the most prominent social group that exists” (Smith and Mosby, in Samovar et al. 53), hence, it is most likely that the Khan siblings’ Pakistani identity remains strong despite the fact that they were born in Scotland. As mentioned earlier, immigrants are known to form ethnic communities in particular areas of towns or cities, and people in these areas



perpetuate traditional cultural practices, beliefs and language and hence uphold a strong sense of ethnic identity (157). Father Tariq attends community meetings and observes old Muslim traditions, but the Khan siblings' feeling of an ethnic Pakistani identity is less strong than their parents', because they are second generation immigrants. Close contact with other ethnic groups and input from more diverse cultures through schooling and work have served to dilute their ethnic identity, introducing new Western impulses. Their Western style in clothing and their impeccable Glaswegian accent are the mere outer skin of Hofstede et al.'s proverbial onion and do not mean they have fully adopted Western values; it just proves that their identities are complex. To be able to understand their core values and the full extent of their different identities, it is necessary to look deeper.

From the discussion of identity, we know that identity is very individual, and experiences which prove defining to one person may not do so to the next. Rukhsana, Casim and Tahara are siblings who grew up in the same family, and family background is tremendously important to the forming of identity, yet the three siblings' degree of assimilation to society outside their family, is quite disparate. This goes to show the individual and hybrid nature of the forming of identities. Even though the three siblings have had much the same upbringing, disregarding their disparate genders, their identities have developed in different directions.

Supposed multiculturalism is consistent with an essentialist approach to identity, whereas transculturalism is consistent with a non-essentialist social constructivist view of identity; the older sister, Rukhsana along with the parents, illustrate the multiculturalist view of society in maintaining their traditional Pakistani culture as their main source of identity. From earlier we remember that the most defining attribute of their culture is collectivism with a focus on the group over the individual. Moreover, the religion Islam permeates their daily lives, even though they by no means are fundamentalists. Casim and the younger sister, Tahara, seem to have acquired transcultural identities, through synthesising elements from both of their ethnicities.

Tahara and Casim, just as everybody else, have multiple identities, but since they are multi-ethnic Asian persons living in Britain, their identities are even more pluralistic than the average ethnic Briton's. The fact that they come from a Pakistani Muslim family, with values and culture diverging significantly from the Western British values and culture, adds to the complexity of their identities. It is usual and natural to all people, to some extent, to live with competing and conflicting identities, without causing dramatic problems in everyday life. The main crux of the matter and the key to understanding Tahara and Casim's conflicts of identity lies in their collectivist upbringing combined with the fact that though their family values are collectivist, the society which has surrounded them throughout their lives is an individualistic Western society. The strong in-group/out-group and exclusionist attitude the parents hold towards non-Muslims,

however, renders pluralism of identities much more problematic to Tahara and Casim. It is as if the Pakistani identity and the British identity are contradictory when it comes to respect and acceptance, in the sense that there is much mutual prejudice and racism from representatives of each side towards the other. Muslims also have an out-group status with many Western people, though the exclusionism is not as pronounced in an individualistic society. Tahara and Casim find themselves with one foot firmly planted in each camp, and this leads to the dichotomy of the downplaying of their Western identities in the family sphere, and leading a more openly Western life outside the family or out of range of the prying eyes of the Muslim community, yet showing pride of their Muslim ancestry.

Tariq and Sadia do not look benevolently on Tahara and Casim's adoption of Western values, and Sadia considers Rukhsana to be "the best" of her three children, particularly because of the fact that she is "domesticated", as she puts it, meaning that she is the one who conforms the most to the Pakistani ideal of a submissive daughter (21:10). On many levels the Khan parents are successfully integrated into British society; Tariq runs a local grocery store which serves all ethnicities, not only the Pakistanis. Moreover, Tariq's warm and friendly tone of co-operation with the British construction workers building an extension on his house is a reminder of the predominantly peaceful everyday interaction between the Pakistanis and the British. On the other hand, they do not accept inter-ethnic relationships between their children and non-Pakistanis, and they, the females in particular, cannot participate in British society on equal terms with the British. In this sense the parents exemplify a case of "failed multiculturalism" in the sense Cameron spoke of, because in order to preserve their own cultural identity, they deny their children to freely partake in the society around them, and there is no profound sense of belonging to British society. They "live separate lives", apart from other youths in their society, for instance unable to attend the school of their choice, or to go to a club. Tariq, Sadia, and Rukhsana, with their wish to maintain their old traditional cultural values, to some extent fail to contribute to the *cohesion* in society which Cameron advocates. True multiculturalism with unimpeded interaction between all parts is perhaps not possible in societies where cultures and values mutually exclude the acknowledgement and profound respect of the other, as is the case with Western liberalism and Islam.

Tariq, as the head of the family, sees his family falling apart because the line of age-old traditions and family values is ruptured. Because the younger generation fails to adhere to age-old cultural values, there is a crisis within the family that sees no resolution throughout the course of the film, and will perhaps not be mended with the course of time. A grief-struck Tariq is seen to smash the windows of his newly finished extension of the house intended for Casim and Jasmine. The tight leash on which Tariq holds his son is sought to be rationalised with additional reasoning

than the mere exceptionally strong family bonds of a collectivist culture, in order for a Western individualist audience to fully appreciate the gravity of his loss when Casim chooses Roisin over his family. We learn that Casim is named after Tariq's twin brother who was lost in their childhood in the British-sponsored partition of India in 1947, and to lose Casim to a *goree* in Britain is to lose his precious brother all over again. Without this justification, a Western audience would not understand his feeling of devastation when Casim resolves to follow his own mind, because, in our individualistic culture, we encourage our children to liberate themselves of parental control and make a life of their own. It is a goal rather than a disaster.

In the following, I will focus on Tahara and Casim in particular, because they are the two protagonists who have adopted the most to Western culture and therefore have developed a more pronounced Western identity, and when still maintaining parts of their Pakistani identity, have developed more conflicting identities. When Roisin is examined as well, it is not because she has conflicting identities to a significant degree herself, but her relationship to Casim brings out cultural clashes between them, something which might prove fatal to their relationship in the end.

**4.4.4. Tahara.** In one of the first and defining scenes in the film we see Tahara give a speech, probably in a mock political debate, in the assembly hall of her school (02:48-04:21). The context is clearly given on a big white board behind her, stating that: "THIS HOUSE BELIEVES THAT THE WEST'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM IS FULLY JUSTIFIED." Tahara boldly proclaims: "I reject the West's definition of terrorism, 'cause it excludes 100 000s of victims of state terror [...] But above all I reject the West's simplification of a Muslim."

Tahara's speech serves to draw attention to the stereotypical view the West holds for Muslims, in pointing out the absurdity in counting 1 billion Muslims in 50 countries as one and the same: "Imagine to lump all Christians; the Pope, George Bush, Henry Larson and Willie the Janny in one person. –You'd laugh –Why? – Because it's dumb!" This scene sets the theme of the film right from the start. Through a somewhat obviously didactic manner attention is drawn to the similarities between "us and them", as if to say "we are one and the same", Muslims are just as diverse and complex as people from the West.

Tahara's speech immediately draws attention to the complexity of identity felt by British Pakistanis. Even though Western society might be keen to label her and pin her down in simplistic, stereotypical terms, her identity eludes any simple and predetermined definition, because of its hybrid character. In her speech, Tahara goes on to list some of the different aspects to her identity, all essential in defining how she perceives herself;

I am a Glaswegian, Pakistani teenager woman, *woman* of Muslim decent –who- [She starts to unbutton her shirt] supports Glasgow Rangers in a Catholic school. [She removes her shirt to reveal her Rangers' fan T-shirt.], cause I'm a dazzling mixture, and I am proud

of it! I call on this House to defeat this hypocritical motion! [-referring to the board proclaiming support of the war on terror.] Bring it on! Yeah!

We see that Tahara, for a teenager, is extraordinarily self-assured and aware of the complexity of all the different identities which combined constitute her integral self. Moreover, she seems at peace with this complexity, actually embracing it with pride. We see that she marks her *difference* in a positive way, “celebrating it as an enriching source of diversity, heterogeneity and hybridity”. Her clearly Asian facial traits are obvious signs of her “difference”, but she refuses to let herself be defined by her ethnicity only: she is “a dazzling mixture”, her indigenous Glaswegian accent and Scottish school uniform symbolise her Scottish identity, and her Rangers’ t-shirt is a symbol which adds another twist to the complexity. Tahara is actually courageous, almost in contempt of the reactions she knows will come; the fact that she comes clear as a Rangers’ fan in a Catholic school is contradictory of the tradition that Catholics support the Celtics (the other of two major football teams in Glasgow), whereas Protestants support the Rangers. She is not afraid to provoke her audience, and for a moment, we are left to believe that she will take off her shirt to expose her breasts, but are relieved and amused to find her football T-shirt, which to some fellow students obviously is just as shocking.

Tahara is shown to stand up and defend her Muslim and Pakistani descent, as in this case, but also to proclaim her right to make her own individual choices as to education and plans for her own future in the face of her father in subsequent scenes. Tahara with her multiple and complex identities, deriving from her multi-ethnic upbringing, in a sense illustrates actual transculturation. She embraces her hybrid forms of cultural identities “with one foot in her native culture and one foot in the global arena” (Samovar et al. 11) “synthesizing [an] identity that does not require [her] to choose between cultures but incorporates traits of both cultures” (Edwards n.pag.). This synthesis will probably eventually cost her the in-group status with her family and Pakistani community, and thus in her case, and on certain levels, a choice between cultures is inevitable.

*Tahara and choice of career.* Indeed, Tahara’s transculturation does not come without costs. As long as she can juggle her Pakistani and British identities without conflict and keep them on separate arenas, she is appeased. When it comes down to having to choose between her own desire to go to journalist school in Edinburgh, or conforming to her parents demands to stay at home and study to become a doctor, she chooses to stand up for her own choice. In a scene, (51:36-54:10) the family is gathered in the kitchen when Tahara pulls out a letter from the University of Edinburgh where she is offered “an unconditional place”. Her father gets angry and points out that there are four or five universities in Glasgow, and she cannot go somewhere else to live unsupervised as a Muslim girl: “What’s the community going to say? You never mentioned and got permission in the house to go for an interview. If you could go without permission; what

would you do when you are there?!” An upset Tahara responds; “The whole part of this is so I can... I’m gonna miss out on a whole different life. I don’t wanna do that!” She wants to get away from her parents’ authoritarian supervision, but as a girl that is particularly difficult. Whereas Tahara needs a chaperone to and from school, Casim could easily go on his alleged trip to London without any questions. There are different rules for males and females.

In tears, Tahara goes on to accuse her parents of the predicament she is in; how can they not understand that she was bound to be affected by the Western way of life?: “Why did you even get married and come here and have kids? What’s the point of having kids here? We’re Western! I’m sorry, but I’m not from Pakistan!” If it were not for their Pakistani tradition, she would not find herself in the position of not being able to follow her dream, which was handed to her on a silver platter by the University. Western parents would probably jump at the opportunity to send their daughter to university on an unconditional place. Tahara cannot go simply because it is unsuitable for a Muslim girl to live unsupervised; “what will the community say?” With an authoritarian: “You cannae go and that’s final!” the father leaves the room and ends the discussion. His anger is probably equally provoked by Tahara’s wish to study away from home, and the fact that she as a girl speaks up to her father.

The choice to become a journalist is also more controversial than becoming a doctor, which are the parents’ designs for her. The profession of a doctor is more suitable for a girl, since it involves care-taking and potentially a more withdrawn and “domestic” lifestyle than journalism, which would involve an extrovert and assertive partaking in society, more suitable for a man.

During the discussion Casim and Rukhsana support their father, while the mother keeps silent in the background. Tahara turns to Casim and calls him a hypocrite because he supports his father in wanting to keep Tahara from a Western life, when he himself is having an affair with an ethnically Irish woman behind their backs: “Casim, you are such a hypocrite! Look at me! What’s wrong? I’ll never forgive you for this!” She had expected him to stand up for her – in a Western perspective – rights to choose her own future, since he obviously has made “Western” choices himself. At this point, however, Casim has not yet found the courage to cross his parents.

If Tahara goes, and unless her parents change considerably, Tahara will be disowned. Leaving one’s own group is severely punished. It would also mean to break with her Pakistani identity, because her Pakistani identity would inform her to comply with her parents’ orders. This indicates that transculturation in reality is not compatible with all forms of culture. An eclectic pick-and-choose attitude between Western and Muslim values and practises does not go down well with the exclusionist culture of the traditional Khan patriarch. Neither does letting one’s parents or a religious community dictate one’s life comply with Western individualism and indulgence.

This scene conveys a notion of the unfeasibility of second generation immigrants maintaining their original ethnic culture, staying unaffected by society around. The Khan parents had the intention of raising Muslim Pakistani children in the Western society of Glasgow, not foreseeing the difficulty of this task. However, it is rather unlikely to remain unaffected by the culture one is immersed in and raised in, something which Tahara and Casim bear witness to with their hybridised identities. Rukhsana is proof of a different way of coping with difference. Instead of hybridising her identities, she is described to have “a political streak”, and even calls herself “Black” (2:48-4:21). Her sense of “identity crisis”, “dislocation” and “difference” has resulted in a political claim to identity as a “member of an oppressed or marginalized ethnic group and celebrating this group’s uniqueness, often based on an essentialist hereditary claim to an identity”, as described by in chapter 2 about identity (Woodward 24 and 35).

**4.4.5 Casim.** Both Casim’s family and the surrounding society have contributed to value systems and attitudes, i.e. nurtured different and even contradicting social identities within him. In childhood, his family probably dictated most of his social identities. When growing up, and with increasingly more contact with Western values and customs through education and work, his identities were shaped with his “life experience” towards a more liberal and Western outlook on life. Up until now he has been content with “being a good member to the group to which he belongs” to put it in Hofstede et al.’s words, i.e. being a good Muslim son to his proud parents, while “acting out” his British identities outside the home. His occupation as a DJ would be a typical example of the latter. When he falls in love with Roisin, the conflicts of identity immediately become more pronounced. We remember from the discussion of collectivist and individualist cultures, that in collectivist cultures, group membership is normally the primary source of identity and status. In choosing a relationship with Roisin, Casim does not only jeopardise his relations and in-group status with his family and the rest of the Pakistani community, parts of his identity and status are also at stake. Moreover, Casim’s collectivist values forbid him to have group affiliations in conflict with his Pakistani family and community, and his relationship with Roisin is of this exact nature. This makes for great conflicts and pangs of guilt.

When Tahara sneaks out of her parents’ house to go to the club where Casim works as a DJ, she expects him to understand and accept her identity as a liberated transcultural British-Pakistani woman (17:27-18:03). Casim, however, acts as her disciplinary and sends her away, or else she will compromise the entire family’s status, causing them to lose face with the Pakistani community. Women are after all supposed to be honourable and submissive, not be seen to dress up in provocative Western clothes and mingle with the opposite sex. For a man to do the exact same, is not equally problematic, though, and this is another illustration of the Pakistanis’ different, and to a Western eye, discriminative treatment of women. Tahara calls Casim on this



sexist attitude, and points out that “I’m out with my mates, just as you are.” An additional incentive for Casim to send Tahara home, would perhaps be to prevent her from realising that he came to the club with Roisin, and did not just happen to run into her there. He was in a sense caught red-handed, and wanted to save his own face, too.

When Casim ultimately leaves his family to go and stay at Hammid’s place, Hammid confronts Casim with a claim that the relationship to Roisin is just temporary. He calls to mind the duties and obligations Casim has to his family and the Muslim community. This illustrates the strong sense of restraint felt by Pakistanis. Early on in the film when we first learn that Casim is arranged to be married to his cousin Jasmine, his disposition of *restraint* and following family traditions, sacrificing his personal wishes for the greater benefit of the family comes first, rather than giving in to individualistic *indulgences*. Casim seems almost untroubled with the arrangement, his role is to comply with his parents, but this is before he falls in love with Roisin.

After meeting Roisin, Casim is not at ease with this situation anymore; on one occasion he exclaims “should, should, should...The story of my fuckin’ life” (39:30), which illustrates that he feels limited and stifled by the restrictions imposed on him. He is tired of the situation and feels inclined towards the more indulgent ways of the West. –Why should he not be with Roisin if he feels like it? –Why should he have to marry Jasmine just because his parents say so? He is starting to break free from the perceived restraints of his Pakistani culture.

Casim knows there are more expectations of him than of his sisters from the sole fact that he is male, and what is more; the only son of his parents. This pressure adds to his remorse over potentially disappointing them. He has to give “face” not only to himself, but also to his entire family. He cannot even be seen alone with a strange woman in his car, especially not a non-Muslim, hence makes Roisin duck down whenever they pass some distant cousin’s restaurant or shop along the street. Moreover, he is also tired of the particular expectations the parents have of him and his future. When sharing with Roisin his plans for his own club, Casim’s main concern is that there will be “[N]o expectations. There’s never expectations.” People may come as they will, no dress code, no restraints: “Transvestites to anoraks”, “Burkas to G-strings” (24:40-24:50). He wants to escape the numbing pressure of keeping face and *façade*.

**4.4.6 Roisin.** Roisin is a young Irish woman who immigrated to Scotland because of her marriage to a Scotsman. A paradox to ponder is the fact that even though Casim and his siblings were born and raised in Scotland, they are treated as immigrants, while Roisin, who is the real immigrant, is treated as a compatriot by the Scottish. Loach thus seems to pose the question of who the real immigrant is in this story.

Roisin comes across as a confident and assertive young lady who knows who she is and what she wants. Roisin is also a woman with warmth and integrity, who is feisty and direct and



“does not put up with nonsense from anybody”, to quote Loach (in *Making of*). The fact that she is living outside the country of her origin does not seem to cause too many contradictory feelings in her, because she is a White, Western, modern, secularised woman first, and this identity seems securely rooted in her, disregarding whether she relates to Ireland or to Scotland. Her national Irish identity does not mean that she has to straddle and negotiate vast cultural differences. Several other Loach films have foregrounded Irish-Catholics as the most disadvantaged of people in Scotland, and might invoke a history of Catholic oppression in Ireland as well as Scotland (Hill 189-190). In this context Roisin’s Irish nationality is of significance, since she actually loses her job due to the Catholic Church’s intervention.

**4.4.6 Different worldviews in *Ae Fond Kiss...*** Scotland’s national poet, Robert Burns and his poetry play a certain role in the film, other than in the title. One of the school officials in Roisin’s school reprove her for leading the pupils in the Burns song "A Man's a Man for A' That", for “the holy sacrifice of the mass”, since Burns, in her view is merely a “drunken fornicator” and highly inappropriate in a Catholic mass (29:50-30:08). The song is famous for its expression of egalitarian ideas and liberalism (Wikipedia Is There), and may actually be seen as an expression of Roisin’s worldview. Bloor explains liberalism as a political ideology or worldview founded on ideas of liberty and equality, and liberals in general support ideas such as, liberal democracy, free and fair elections, human rights, toleration, and free will (1-17). These are core values in most Western societies, and must be defended as such, if we believe Byram and Risager, and one could argue that Roisin is a representative of liberal Western values in this film. Casim is caught in the middle, between Western liberal and secular thoughts on the one hand and traditional Muslim thoughts on the other.

Many clues lead to the conclusion that Roisin is not a religious person, even though she is a Catholic: she suffers no moral remorse over her divorce from her husband. A devout Catholic would perhaps not even consider divorce from a husband Roisin describes as kind and lovely, but more of a friend and companion than a lover. Casim wants to know what is wrong with companionship, and she replies “I need more, the equal match” and “a wee twinkle in the eye”, without that she would rather be alone, she says (35:30-35:56). Her point of view is typically Western and typically secular and individualistic, as in our societies - Scotland as well as Norway- personal happiness and satisfaction is given pivotal priority, and there is no afterlife and pending punishment to take into consideration.

During their trip to Spain, Roisin and Casim compare their religions and worldviews (33:23-34:47). They discover that their religions have much in common, but also differ on central issues. This superficial discussion might be seen as a symbol of the deeper issues they have of

similar and differing identities. Roisin talks of the Catholic religion in an anecdotic and lightly mocking manner and jokingly salutes to “Hell’s furnace”, whereas Casim reserves himself from that, and changes the salute to “to Paradise”. Casim maintains that there are “still so many things [he is] proud of” in his religion. In other words; many aspects of his religion is still part of his identity, if we remember Fearon’s definition in chapter two, where identity is “some distinguishing characteristics that a person takes a special pride in and views as socially consequential” (2). Casim still identifies with his Muslim heritage. Moreover, it is important to remember that Islam “dictates a whole way of life”, and therefore, his Muslim identity pervades many other social arenas other than the religious. On the one hand, Casim is not a practising Muslim in the sense that he attends community meetings or observes prayer rituals, and having sexual relations outside marriage does not appear to bother him. On the other hand, many of his Muslim values are still deeply rooted within him, being planted there in his childhood family upbringing, such as his collectivist concern for his family and their collective face, in addition to his reverence of religious traditions and respect for his father as head of family. The word “still”, though, would imply that he felt more “Muslim” earlier.

To sum up, Roisin is a liberal, secular, emancipated, Western woman, and her Catholicism is mainly nominal, whereas Casim is torn between his religious convictions which inform him of leading a life in restraint and with the best of his Muslim community in focus, and between a longing for a more indulgent and liberal secular life.

*Catholic Christians and Muslims.* When watching the film, one is left wondering why the traditional Muslim Khan family has chosen to send their daughter to a Catholic school. Reviewers discussing this incidence on Internet sites, report that it is not contradictory or uncommon to a Muslim to attend a Catholic school, because these schools have a reputation for higher moral standards than non-denominational schools (IMDb Pro n.pag.). In this sense Muslims feel they have more in common with Catholics than with secular people.

During his research, Lavery, who was raised a Catholic, began to discover parallels between the experiences of Catholics and Muslims. “When Catholics first came to Scotland 150 years ago they were seen as aliens with a loyalty to something foreign to the indigenous population. Drunken Protestants would go and beat them up. And now we’re demonising asylum seekers...” (Mottram 22-23). By drawing parallels between the two communities – the British Pakistanis and the Scottish Catholics – the film manages to point to similarities in their reactions and behaviour, hence show a more complex and diverse picture than normally conveyed in media.

The scene with the parish priest where he scorns Roisin for sleeping with “every Tom, Dick and Muhammad”, he comes across as the biggest religious fanatic in the film, much more so than Casim’s father (1:11:06-1:13:31). This serves to illustrate that Muslims are not the ones to be

accused of fundamental or extreme religious views. This serves to give a poetic balance between the two communities; the Catholic and the Muslims, neither one is “better” or in possession of more secular rationalism than the other. It is as if to say if Muslims are ridden with old narrow-minded traditionalism counterproductive to a modern and liberal world, so are Catholics too.

**4.4.9 Casim and Roisin.** To Casim’s Pakistani identity, a relationship entails more than love between two persons; it is “much more than that”, as he says to Roisin. With this he implies that his collectivist culture prevents him from choosing a girl without his family’s approval. In fact, they have the full privilege to find him a suitable wife, preferably within their own extended family. The girl must bring honour and face to the family by being untouched and subordinate, and what is more; she must be of their culture in order to perpetuate their traditional values and customs. Moreover, a relationship is supposed to last a lifetime to provide social security and stability to the community. Casim’s arranged marriage to his cousin is irreconcilable with the Western world’s ideal of the individual’s right to freedom of choice. Similarly, to the Pakistanis, a marriage to a Western woman would be irreconcilable with the collectivist exclusionist mind-set. It would also violate their sense of *uncertainty avoidance*, since Western people are seen as unpredictable and unstable.

In the same scene Casim tells Roisin he cannot match her (48:55-51:10), and one actually gets the feeling that Casim is on to a profound truth which will reveal its full consequences later on in the relationship. One is never fully convinced that Casim and Roisin are true *matches*, not only because Casim admits to this realisation himself, but also because Roisin seems like a much more complex and emancipated person than he, and she knows what she wants in life. Casim seems to follow her lead. There is, however, a natural reason for that; a collectivist group-centred upbringing does not encourage idiosyncratic and autonomous development to the same extent as an individualistic culture would. Casim’s focus is therefore on complying with the group rather than developing individuality. In the “Grand Piano” scene (12:15-16:02) in Roisin’s flat, Casim, after having lugged a piano up a flight of stairs with the help of some friends, plays a primitive one-fingered “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” on Roisin’s grand piano. When he returns to the street below, he can hear Roisin through the window continuing the same tune, only now it is in the full embellished and cheerful version of “Ah Vous Dirai Je Maman” by Mozart, that he was not capable of playing. We see Casim’s admiration or enchantment with what he hears. It is as if Roisin is playing “an inverted serenade – Juliet sending an echo of Romeo’s love back down to him from the balcony” (Gilbey n.pag.). Only, one gets the distinct feeling that of the two, Roisin is in the lead, and Casim struggles to “match up”.

Between the two, Roisin seems the stronger, and several scenes support this notion: In Roisin’s apartment (26:39-27:40), the first time they make love, we see them one on top of the

other, rolling on the floor, laughing while fighting to be the one on top. Casim remarks that Roisin is strong, and she admits “for a wee Irish girl, I am”. We sense they are not only talking about physical strength. They are in fact negotiating their positions with each other, and Casim allows Roisin an equal position in settling for a “truce”. Roisin is an emancipated and individualistic woman, and will never subordinate herself to a man. In the Pakistani culture, the man is supposed to be the head of the family, not the woman, and this is a conflict of cultures and identities which might prove more problematic when the first infatuation between them wears off.

On another occasion, just after saying he cannot match her, Casim confesses to Roisin to “feel so strong when I am around you” (48:55-51:10). But when he comes home to his family, he just cannot bring himself to tell them about Roisin, because he knows it will destroy them. Casim is anxious to know whether Roisin will love him and stay with him forever. Her response does not give him the certainty he requests; her low sense of uncertainty avoidance prompts her to maintaining “you just have to take a risk”, and “will you forever go on doing just what they tell you?” However, Roisin does not understand the full extent of the repercussions an open relationship between the two will have; the shame will lead to the destruction of the entire Khan family and Rukhsana will not be able to marry the man she is engaged to. Casim is laying his entire family on the line, a fact to which Roisin is oblivious: “You don’t understand. It is not about love, it’s much more than that”, he says. The fact is also that their relationship will cost a lot more strength and resolution from the “uncertainty avoiding” Casim than from Roisin.

When Rukhsana brings Roisin in her car to witness the meeting between Casim and his prospective bride, she affirms that she will not give up her family for someone as unstable and changeable as Roisin (1:28:11-1:30:37). To her, Western people are unpredictable and unstable, and uncertainty avoiding Pakistanis have institutionalised arranged marriages precisely to ensure a secure future in relationships. When Casim has the final showdown with his family, his father shouts that his family would sacrifice everything for him, but Roisin, as the unreliable and selfish person Tariq judges her to be, would only kick him out in the end (1:31:58-1:32:20). This again illustrates the different attitudes adopted by Pakistanis and Western people towards uncertainty avoidance. Pakistanis need to know that a partner is there until the end, whereas Western relationships increasingly more often tend to be temporary, and fewer couples stay together for life.

*A happy ending?* In the final scene (1:37:00-1:38:16), Roisin and Casim reunite at the piano, in an optimistic defiance of the parting theme of the Burns song which gave the film its title. Casim again utters his concern of whether Roisin will stay with him and provide him the certainty his Pakistani identity needs, and not kick him out even if he loses all his money - or when he gets “very, very, old”. Roisin again gives no promises of eternal love to Casim - she has

already broken that promise to her first husband. Instead she mockingly replies that she will “let him know”. Roisin’s ironic answers to Casim’s questions about the fate of their future show that she regards his worries as legitimate, but dismisses them as not worthy of concern, quite in line with her tolerance of the unpredictable and uncertain. Casim’s transculturation allows him to settle for this answer.

While Roisin’s “I’ll let you know” to Casim’s question if she will kick him out when he is old, suggests that she intends to stay around until then, to actually be able to let him know, the viewer is never assured that Casim and Roisin will live happily ever after. On the surface the film is the usual story of boy meets girl, boy loses girl, and boy wins girl again. On a deeper level it raises questions of whether their love will survive their cultural differences, and whether their love will be enough for Casim when his family is gone. After all he has had a collectivist upbringing with the family’s wellbeing and their relations in focus.

Even though Casim and Roisin do care a great deal for each other, they often argue and their cultural differences might prove fatal to their relationship in the end. We are never fully convinced that Casim and Roisin are soul mates, but that Casim is finally taking control of his path - he does not want the arranged marriage, and right now he wants Roisin. It is worth noting that he never proposes to her. The film is not trying to say that he chooses to marry Roisin over Jasmine, but that he chooses to find his own partner - whoever that may be - and not have it chosen for him. He is tired of having his parents dictating how he is to lead his life. In the end, their relationship might prove to be not much more than “a fond kiss”, and then; “farewell”. The main point is that he is choosing his own way; and Roisin is the one who has given him the courage to do so. To Casim, his love and relationship to Roisin is life altering, in the sense that the “life experience” of this love and relationship trigger an alteration towards allowing his Western identity to take dominance over his Pakistani identity. We see a transformation from a complying son, to a liberated adult who decides to take charge of his own life, no longer putting his own desires on hold for the benefit of his family.

Critics have accused the film of ultimately having a pro-Western message, in the sense that Casim decides to let his Western values and mind set dominate and thus reject his Muslim values of collectivism and family honour (IMDb Pro n.pag.). Casim leaves his family after they desperately have tried to trick and manipulate him and Roisin into breaking up. In the end, the only common ground Roisin and Casim can meet on is based on their Western values. Casim’s transculturation is ultimately at the expense of his family and there is no reconciliation between the opposing parties as far as the audience is left to believe. From the Khan’s point of view, the film does not have much of a happy ending; two of their children have abandoned family traditions, and are “lost” to the Western society. The family’s face is irrecoverably lost. The

hybridisation of Tahara and Casim's identities is not compatible with the parents' essentialist, conservative, and exclusionist Pakistani identity, and therefore a break is inevitable.

**4.4.10 The film's ideology.** "One assumption of the prevailing ideological system is that cinema 'reproduces' reality, but in fact, it only reproduces the world of the dominant ideology". This quote from Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (660), reminds us that it is important to be aware that *Ae Fond Kiss...* is laden with ideology, even though the filmmakers maintain they have aimed for accuracy, reality and a sense of lived life. In a film there is always an agenda, always an ideology, only this time, not the dominant mass media message of anti-Islam.

According to Tony Pearson, Ken Loach is Britain's most renowned and controversial director of socially conscious feature films whose radical political messages consistently provoke strong responses in audiences as well as politicians (n.pag.). Loach's films are known to be films of integrity which continue their director's lifelong principle of bringing issues of oppression, inhumanity and hypocrisy to the public's attention.

"The war on terror" contains within it that we are the democrats and defenders of freedom, and the people with brown faces or shawls over their heads are terrorising us" Loach said, in connection with making *Ae Fond Kiss...* "If you look at history, it's the exact reverse. The Americans with the British as their supporters are the ones who have done the terrorising. Within *the war on terror* is presented that we are the good guys", Loach maintained, and warned against the propaganda contained in the phrase (in *Making of*).

With Tahara's political speech in the opening scene it is as if we hear the voices of the filmmakers ring through the screen. Her speech clearly aims at combatting the "West's" stereotypical and prejudiced conceptions of Muslims, and screen writer Lavery says he was inspired to write the film by the events in the wake of 11 September 2001, when "Muslims were demonised" and vilified by the media and politicians (Macnab n.pag.). Lavery said he felt obliged to "do a story that saw Muslim people as rounded human beings; and family life as family life is everywhere, with its tensions and jealousies and guilts and the rest of it." Similarly, Loach said: "Families are families; the surface details change but the emotional blackmail is the same ... and there's always rebellion" (Mottram 22-23).

In *Ae Fond Kiss...* there are no "good guys" or "bad guys", one is able to see the point of view of both Muslim British-Pakistanis as well as the White Western Catholics, not idolising or stereotyping either side, rather allowing each individual a voice. By observing what is portrayed as objective social realities, the audience is asked to assess the events for themselves.

Loach is not very popular among his compatriots, we learn from *The Irish Times* (in Hill 1), and this can in fact be seen as a stamp of quality in this respect: "What the public wants means what the dominant ideology wants" (Braudy and Cohen ed. 689). It only gives credibility to the



claim that Loach does not merely perpetuate the stereotypical and colonist dominant ideology. He is, in fact, empathetic with both sides; the Western and the Muslim.

**4.4.11 Is *Ae Fond Kiss...* appropriate for promoting ICC in the lower secondary classroom?** Does the film *Ae Fond Kiss...* meet the requirements of a “multicultural text” stipulated in section 3.5? The film offers a glimpse into the everyday lives of Pakistani immigrants in Britain, traditionally an underrepresented group in the media, quite in line with Mitchell’s demands on multicultural texts (200). The choice of *Ae Fond Kiss...* in multicultural teaching also agrees with Sims Bishop’s main criteria that say we should choose texts that contribute to an understanding and appreciation of persons of colour and their cultures and that offer a positive vision of a diverse society and a multicultural world (in Nodelman and Reimer 174). Casim and his family come across as likeable and humane and manage to elicit sympathy for their stand. We do of course not agree with everything that the main characters in *Ae Fond Kiss...* say or do, that would make them one-dimensional and little trustworthy as characters. Or as Nodelman and Reimer point out, it would be a “misrepresentation” of the culture (174). But characters are depicted in a manner that manages to elicit sympathy from the viewers; they come across as amiable despite deficiencies. In a time of increasing mistrust and fear between Eastern and Western countries, it is more important than ever that the media include positive portrayals of people of South Asian descent.

Even though the filmmakers admittedly come from a culture with a history of oppressing the one they want to portray, both Loach and Lavery seem genuinely set on not perpetuating stereotypes, rather going out of their way to show both sides of the story, and not villainising anyone. Although Casim’s father Tariq, is clearly shown to be opposed to normal “Western” “freedoms” or liberalism, such as choice of partner, choice of university, or, the liberty for a girl to go out, the film is also at pains to emphasise how Tariq’s outlook is not simply the traditional, inherited Muslim one. It has also been shaped by actual experience of colonialism and racism.

To what extent *Ae Fond Kiss...* is an authentic text with the personal voice of the culture, could perhaps be subject to discussion, since the director of the film is English and the screenwriter is of Scottish and Irish descent, and no British Pakistanis have co-produced or co-written. However, the British-Pakistani actors are all cast from the Glaswegian British Pakistani community, and they report to have brought elements of personal experience and expressions of their own identities into the film. Authentic will here mean that the story is so close to real persons’ experiences that something similar may have happened in real life. The emphasis on lifelike naturalism and “lived experience” of ordinary people is therefore reflected in this film, as in other typical Loach films. He is actually known to cast unknown non-actors for leading roles, who do not possess the acting techniques of professionals. In the short documentary, *Making of,*



the actors report rehearsing their scripts as little as possible, in order to keep the spontaneity and naturalism to their reactions to each other, and prevent mannerism and premeditated or “wooden” acting. Loach gives abundant freedom and few direct suggestions; he prefers the dialogue to be intuitive and trusts the instincts of the actors to act on the spur of the moment or to colour the on-screen interaction with their own personal reactions. As an example, actress Shabana Bakhsh, playing Tahara, exclaimed: “I was totally me!” Moreover, Atta Yaqub (playing Casim), for whom this was his first film, uttered that “[y]ou are actually not acting. He [Loach] wants you to express yourself” (*Making of*). According to Yaqub, the depiction of Asian family life that drives much of *Ae Fond Kiss...* has been “bang on” – from the way “the story shows there’s a lot of community pressure” to the fact that, just like Casim, most of Yaqub’s Asian friends lead a “second life” their parents and relatives know little about. The story, Yaqub is pleased to note, “goes beyond the stereotypical ways Asians are thought to live. It shows that a lot of us have changed and moved on” (Mottram 22-23). All this support the claim that *Ae Fond Kiss...* is not a case of voice appropriation, but has the authenticity required for constituting the “personal voice of the culture”, if the British-Pakistani actors’ testimony is enough. If an authentic story means that it is close enough to real persons’ experiences to be likely to happen in real life, then one could argue that *Ae Fond Kiss...* is an authentic story, on equal terms as literary stories, and constitutes the personal intercultural encounter requested by Amer and Fenner, appropriate to promote ICC in pupils.

The film is set in a Western environment; the city of Glasgow in Scotland and the female protagonist is the young, Roisin. This should be familiar enough to establish a connection to a young Norwegian spectator’s cultural background, and hence constitute Bishop’s *mirror* reflecting lower secondary pupils and their life experience. Media messages are always selective and incomplete (Hobbs 59); and information on Roisin’s family and cultural background are largely omitted. This is a fact we hardly question; we assume cultural similarity because she is a “White” Western woman, and intuitively fill in the blanks with our own experiences, hence perhaps get a glimpse of ourselves in the “mirror”. The British-Pakistani Khan Family would be the exotic “Other”, constituting *the window* onto lives and experiences different from our own. Simultaneously the different members of the family show traits also Western people can easily identify with, and this serves to show pupils that what we have in common is actually more than what divides us – beneath surface differences of colour, culture or ethnicity we have the same universal feelings of love, joy, anger or grief.

Stories have an age-old capacity to appeal to our deepest feelings and change perceptions, attitude and behaviour, and the film medium in particular, because of its simultaneous stimulation of several senses. To an adult and trained eye, the film may be a bit moralist and obvious in its intent to persuade its audience in an anti-prejudice and anti-racist direction. To a younger and less

experienced audience, the level of didactics might be just right, to enable them to compare and find similarities between “us-and-them”, hence help to break stereotypes and see Muslims as real people with individual traits and complex identities. It is actually the clear anti-prejudice ideology, or message which makes the film appropriate for breaking stereotypes and ethnocentrism and building knowledge (i.e. ICC), and to be able to see a different side than what is usually presented in the mass media.

The film is very realistic and gives a good insight into Pakistani culture contrasting it with British/Irish culture, without favouring either side. Therefore, *Ae Fond Kiss...* would be very suitable for teaching intercultural communication in lower secondary school. The film lends itself well to foster a better understanding of the Muslim/Pakistani values and traditions. Moreover, British/Irish and Pakistani values are highlighted and contrasted in a way that makes for a discussion of potential conflicts and misunderstandings between the two cultures. It is also suitable as a basis for talking about our own social identities and how they might conflict.

## 5. Using *Ae Fond Kiss...* to promote ICC in the English classroom

**5.1.1 General conditions.** The teaching scheme is fashioned towards a class of 27 Norwegian 10<sup>th</sup> graders in order to work on the objectives of the English subject curriculum of “gaining knowledge and personal insight”, “insight into how individuals think and live in the English-speaking world”, “understanding and respect between people with different cultural backgrounds”, and contribute “to the all-round personal development and fosters democratic commitment and a better understanding of responsible citizenship” (Norway, n.pag.). The concrete competence aims selected will be:

- the ability to discuss the way young people live, how they socialise, their views on life and values in Great Britain, the USA, other English-speaking countries and Norway
- the ability to prepare and discuss his/her own oral or written texts inspired by literature and art
- the ability to express himself/herself in writing and orally with some precision, fluency and coherence (Ibid).

The basic skills involved will be *speaking*, *listening* and *writing* and the assessment will be partially formal, partially informal. The teaching scheme has 10 lessons, each of 45 minutes, stretching over a period of three weeks. Tasks and evaluation forms distributed to the pupils appear as appendices at the back of the paper.

**5.1.2 The Reader Response Approach.** The complex social, intellectual and emotional functions of popular media culture in our pupils’ lives should not be trivialised. “Whether we like it or not, this media culture is our students’ culture” (Hobbs 6), but pupils may need adult help to engage with mass media such as films beyond the superficial level of mere entertainment. The

approach selected to work on *Ae Fond Kiss...* will be the *aesthetic and constructivist Reader Response Approach* (RRA) as formulated by Amer (67-68). The RRA presupposes a transaction to take place between the reader (viewer) and the text, consisting of personal response, reflection, discussion and elaboration leading into new experiences in reading and writing (and viewing). The pupils are invited to respond and express their own ideas, feelings, and opinions freely; there is no one correct interpretation, because multiple interpretations allow for creative and critical thinking to take place (Amer 68). The focus is on engaging with the text on a personal level, hence one could argue that it adapts well to working on the attitudinal level of ICC. Byram et al. qualify attitudes to be the foundation of intercultural competence (7), and actions and behaviour are usually based on attitudes and values.

The guiding principle of the teacher's method will be the posing of *open-ended questions*<sup>6</sup> followed up with requests of elaboration, such as *why* or *tell me more* (as also stipulated by Hobbs in connection with developing media literacy (55)). The tasks and questions will be fashioned in order to activate the pupils' previous knowledge, reflection on new input, and comparing and contrasting "the familiar" and "the other"; a method also recognised by Fenner:

Activating previously acquired knowledge followed by reflection on it will assist the process of developing cultural awareness. In a process of comparing and contrasting the two cultures, the learners will be able to further their understanding of the foreign culture as well as gaining an outsider's view of their own (155).

The activation of previously acquired knowledge, and then comparing and contrasting is an effective way of working on the LK-06 competence aim of "...contribut[ing] insight into the way we live and how others live, and their views on life, values and cultures" (Norway n.pag.) Knowledge about and reflection on how others lead their lives, compared to us may also shed new light on our own traditions and elicit new insight about ourselves. Byram et al. agree and say there should be "a series of activities to enable learners to discuss and draw conclusions from their own experience of the target culture", where the important thing is "to encourage comparative analysis with learners' own culture" (10).

Other activities and methods central to the RRA are for instance response journal, role-play and re-writing from another perspective (Amer 68). The observations we make in joint effort in the classroom, by viewing the film and implementing the RRA will be the starting point to find similarities and differences, and a new understanding of Tahara and Casim's culture, but also about ourselves and our own cultures. The approach adopted is admittedly a utilitarian and efferent way of using the film; not to work on film as a medium, or to work on media literacy per se; the film is rather a tool to reach an ulterior goal; namely intercultural competence.

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<sup>6</sup> The questions used in the teaching scheme are influenced by the reader response questions in the Compendium SFE4209000 Litteratur i undervisningen 2 – englesk (Høst 2011), edited by Karen Patrick Knutsen, HIOF (80-82).

The RRA's not film specific approach is chosen because the focus will be on the content of the narration and the pupils' reactions to it, and not on any film specific elements, such as visual or aural effects. Therefore a film specific approach is not necessary. The RRA will help the pupils to engage on a personal and emotional level with the content and the characters. This again is believed to facilitate the acquisition of the emotional and "attitudinal" ICC *savoirs* of *savoir être* and *savoir s'engager*.

**5.1.3 The teaching ambiance.** Any classroom situation requires an ambiance where the pupils feel safe and included in addition to observing a set of ground rules which apply to the tone of discussion and co-operation, based on an understanding of human rights and respect for others. This is even more essential when working on issues of interculturality, because human reactions of ethnocentrism, stereotyping and prejudice are likely to be triggered. Discriminatory remarks, particularly racist, are totally unacceptable at any time. Participants must show respect when commenting on and describing people. All involved have the responsibility to challenge stereotypes and a respectful tone is required at all times, this also includes facial expressions and body language. Whether the context is pair work, group work or whole class discussions, participants are expected to listen to each other and take turns. This approach is also sanctioned by Byram et al. (20). They also maintain that since stereotypes and prejudices are based on feelings rather than reason, it is important to have opportunities to explore feelings as well as thoughts. Moreover, the intercultural dimension involves learners in sharing their knowledge with each other and discussing their opinions. This implies careful classroom management to ensure that conflicts of views are productive and not destructive. In particular it is important to challenge ideas, not the people who express the ideas (21). The crux of the matter is to establish an atmosphere in the classroom which allows learners to take risks in their thinking and feeling (28), without resorting to funny remarks at the expense of others. The pupils thus learn as much from each other as from the teacher, comparing their own cultural context with the unfamiliar contexts to which the film viewing introduces them. Keeping a respectful and tolerant tone of communication in the classroom when working on intercultural issues could actually be viewed as a way of working on ICC skills.

**5.1.4 Concrete teaching scheme.** *Lesson 1:* Previewing activities: The teacher will start by having the pupils predict what the film is about on the basis of the cover of the DVD and the title of the film, before showing a trailer of the film found on YouTube on the Internet (*Ae Fond Kiss Trailer*). This will give the pupils a preview and a general idea of the story, and hopefully wet their appetite to see the rest. The pupils will probably identify areas such as growing up, Pakistanis, religion, immigration, gender issues, cultural clashes, and so forth, and the teacher will make a mind-map on the black-board to organise the thoughts the pupils contribute on the

subjects. The teaching period starts with this brainstorming and talking about our experiences of the various themes brought up in *Ae Fond Kiss...* in order to activate and summarize the pupils' previously acquired knowledge. Then the goals of the period and the different obligatory tasks they will be required to do will be introduced (See app. 1).

*Lesson 2-4 in sequence:* Viewing the film. Even though it takes more than two lessons to view the entire film, there are benefits of viewing it as a whole, instead of through selected segments. Sylvi Penne argues that a text loses some of its meaning and impact when fragmented into excerpts, and that pupils perceive the use of clips or episodes as boring and meaningless (113-114). The full impact and meaning is best obtained when viewing it as a whole, especially when the pupils are supposed to relate to the characters of the film.

The class will be divided into 8 groups of three or four, consisting of pupils of mixed abilities, and assigned the task of looking for specific elements while watching the film, in order to share what they have found with the rest of the class afterwards, *comparing their findings to their own cultures* where this is natural (See app. 2). Some might want to use a Venn diagram; a tool the class is already familiar with (See app. 3). Immediately after the film there will be a brief round of questioning in the whole class: did this film make you smile? Cheer? Cry? Cringe? Explain why? What is the most important word you can think of in connection with this film? In what ways are you like any of the characters? Do any of the characters remind you of friends, family members, or classmates? Explain. After this brief section the group-members will have some time to organise their notes and discuss their findings in order to prepare for the presentation. Some will have to get together after school to finish their preparations.

*Lesson 5-6:* Group presentation and discussion in class. Many of the task areas overlap to a certain degree; therefore the pupils will be looking for and talking about much the same issues, but from different perspectives. The presentations will take about 2-4 minutes each and after each presentation there will be a free discussion in class where all pupils are invited to comment on what is said and vent their own opinions or feelings. The teacher will ask open-ended follow-up questions to the groups in order to elicit reasoning and reflection. The assessment of the groups will be in the form of informal feedback from the teacher and fellow pupils during the discussion.

*Lesson 7:* Questions and discussion in class: This time we will talk about the pupils' different social identities; identify their different social arenas and possible conflicting identities. The lesson will start by recapitulating some of the instances in the film where the protagonists showed different sides to their identity, or felt they had to hide something from somebody. The club scene where Tahara had snuck out from her house, or Casim and Roisin's secret trip to Spain are relevant examples. Do the pupils act and speak in the same manner at all times, no matter who they are with? Have they ever experienced conflicts of identity? Are there sides to their identity or

things they do that they do not want everybody to know about? -For instance their parents? -grandparents? -classmates? Do their parents have expectations they cannot or do not want to live up to? Have they ever felt stereotyped, prejudiced or misunderstood? Explain.

The lesson will conclude with a rerun of Tahara's speech in the school assembly hall as a point of departure of a "mini-talk" the pupils' will prepare for their next lesson (see app. 4). The theme of the mini-talk will either be a presentation of the pupils' own identity, and what makes them proud of who they are, *OR* a speech in defence of the rights of a minority group in society they sympathize with. The "mini-talk" will have to include two or more of a list of words and expressions on the topic of cultural diversity. Byram et al. suggest working on the intercultural perspective by including a "vocabulary that helps learners talk about cultural diversity. This can include terms such as: human rights; equality; dignity; gender; bias; prejudice; stereotype; racism; ethnic minority; and the names of ethnic groups, including white groups" (16).

*Lesson 8-9:* mini-talks. The pupils give their "mini-talks" and are assessed according to a set of criteria of oral performance they are familiar with (See app. 5, a slight modification of Hobbs's criteria, Hobbs 62). After the "mini-talks" there will be time enough to show stills from *Ae Fond Kiss...* on a projector (See app. 6), while the pupils recapitulate in pairs what the scene was about, their own reactions to the scene, and how they themselves would have reacted or felt in a similar situation. -What is different from you in this scene? -What is the same? -How would you have acted, how would you think?

*Lesson 10:* The class keep their own response journals where they write their own responses and reactions to films and books they have seen or read. The pupils' responses will this time be prompted by three questions prepared by the teacher, but they are also free to write about additional observations or thoughts they have concerning the film. The journal will be handed in for assessment on their written skills (See app. 7) (the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training's assessment of written skills after year 10), but will also serve as a means to make the pupils reflect on the period and take stock of what they have learnt in terms of ICC. In this way the response journal also functions as the pupils' self-assessment. The pupils write one or two paragraphs about each bullet point:

- What do you know now that you did not know before?
- Choose one of the main characters (Casim/Tahara/Roisin/Tariq/Rukhsana...).

If I were (insert the character you have chosen), I would.....

- Do you like the ending of the film? Why/why not? Do you think there is more to tell? What do you think might happen next?
- What do you think the filmmakers of *Ae Fond Kiss...* wanted to say with this film?



**5.1.5 Assessment of the pupils:** The pupils' oral and written performance will be assessed according to the competence aims for the teaching sequence. Since the sequence stretches over a lengthy period of three weeks, and involves oral and written production, it is natural that the oral and written production is assessed. The teacher's own form on oral performance and The Norwegian Government's form on assessment of written English after year ten will be used. Here the aims are broken down so they are more concrete and measurable. The pupils are already familiar with these forms (see app. 5 and app. 7 respectively). Part of the assessment will be summative with emphasis on what they have managed to do, part of it will be formative with concrete suggestions on how to improve their performance.

As one can see, the assessment focuses on linguistics. Since intercultural learning is a life-long learning process and involves attitudes, an assessment of intercultural learning is particularly difficult, a point also made by Dypedahl and Eschenbach (16). According to Byram, ICC is not easily assessed through any single test or paper, especially not the attitude *savoirs*. Many of the other competence goals in English depend on a gradual development as well and are too vague or comprehensive to find room in one paper or performance. Assessment in terms of producing a record of learners' competences invites to keeping the European language portfolio developed by The Council of Europe, where the pupils collect all their proof of proficiency in addition to keeping score of "can-do" statements. "This portfolio introduces the notion of self-assessment which is considered significant both as a means of recording what has been experienced and learnt and as a means of making learners become more conscious of their learning and of the abilities they already have" (Byram et al. 24). The role of assessment in intercultural competence is therefore to encourage learners' awareness of their own abilities, and to help them realise that these abilities are acquired in many different circumstances inside and outside the classroom (26). The language portfolio is of good assistance, and is available in an electronic format which could easily be kept on a memory stick and updated regularly by the pupils, not necessarily after each teaching period, but for instance twice a semester. Each individual's response journal entry would be a natural attachment to the language portfolio, in order to keep a complete record of the pupil's accomplishments.



## 6. Conclusion

The ethnic plurality we see in modern day societies requires a certain competence from us all, i.e. intercultural communicative competence, if we are to make the most out of our daily encounters with people of different cultural backgrounds than ourselves. There is certainly the potential of misunderstanding, xenophobia and alienation, but also of invaluable knowledge, personal growth and insight. Our common human traits enable us to find the common ground needed to communicate and co-exist despite differing personalities, attitudes, languages, religions and norms.

My thesis statement was that (i) the film *Ae Fond Kiss...* has the potential of promoting intercultural communicative competence to lower secondary pupils, (ii) in particular by the analysis of the sentiment of conflicting identities found in this film. The research has found that the film is clearly suitable for this purpose. The supporting research questions and my findings are briefly summarised in the following:

1) What is identity and how is it formed? Identity, culture and communication are intertwined, and there are many different views of how identity is formed and what influences its formation. The roles of family, worldview and national cultures are explored and found essential.

There seem to be two different approaches to the ideas around culture and identity. On the one hand there is the essentialist approach which focuses on the past, on shared history, traditions and ancestry. This is where we find the Khan parents and Rukhsana in their claim of preserving their traditional culture and in defining their identity mainly in terms of their Muslim ancestry. On the other hand there is the non-essentialist approach which perceives culture and identity as being in constant creation and recreation, as a function of new experiences, hence focuses just as much on the future as on the past. This is where we find Casim and Tahara in their search for their identities; they draw on their Muslim heredity just as much as on new impulses, and in this way create hybrid identities. I have also taken the liberty to draw parallels between the essentialist and non-essentialist approaches to culture and identity and the models of multiculturalism and transculturalism respectively.

2) How can living in a society with cultural values conflicting with the values one was brought up with affect young Muslim people? Of particular interest to the formation of conflicting identities in the film *Ae Fond Kiss...* are the Scottish society's individualistic and pluralistic view of identity, contrasted with the Pakistani Muslims' collectivist and exclusionist view, which renders pluralism of identity difficult. Casim and Tahara's acculturation to their surrounding society is strongly disapproved of by their parents who hold a strong in-group/out-group and

exclusionist attitude towards non-Muslims. This makes their conflicts of identity stronger than the average person's.

Casim and Tahara show us that it is hardly possible to grow up in a society without being affected by it, even though their upbringing has sought to prevent that from happening. Casim and Tahara have developed transcultural identities, in maintaining Pakistani elements simultaneously as picking up elements from the Western/Scottish culture they have grown up in. This proves incompatible with their traditionalist Pakistani parents and their conservative view of culture and identity. The ultimate breaking up of the family indicates that transculturation is not consistent with a collectivist/exclusionist culture, but that some amount of adaption to the "host" ultimately is inevitable in a modern society with constant cross-cultural interaction, also to secure the cohesion that keeps societies together.

Rukhsana bears proof of another possible scenario resulting from living in a society with cultural values conflicting with the one's she was brought up with. In her case it has led to the formation of a "political streak" and her calling herself "Black", thus marking the difference from the surrounding society. Her focus is on maintaining her hereditary Muslim identity, and in this way invoking the multiculturalist endorsement of cultural difference, and resistance of assimilation.

3) What is intercultural competence, what does it mean in the setting of compulsory education, and how to promote intercultural competence in lower secondary school? According to Byram et al., interculturally competent speakers, in short, avoid stereotyping and respect individuality, complex identities and equality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction (5). In a setting of compulsory education, Byram claims, this means to promote different *savoirs*, or attitudes, knowledge, skills and awareness to the pupils. Adequate methods for building ICC would be intercultural encounters through direct or indirect contact with people of other cultures, and literature or film have the potential to constitute intercultural encounters and points of departure to work on Byram's *savoirs*. The texts should be authentic, they should represent the voice of people not traditionally heard, and provide both a window into the unfamiliar, and also a mirror reflecting the familiar.

4) Does the viewing of *Ae Fond Kiss...* with a particular focus on conflicting identities in the young British Pakistanis combined with the *Reader Response Approach* have the potential of promoting intercultural competence to lower secondary pupils? *Ae Fond Kiss...* has been examined and found capable of promoting ICC in lower secondary pupils, in particular by looking into the conflicting identities of British Pakistanis in this film. The leading perspective of comparing and contrasting and the *Reader Response Approach* is found appropriate to contribute to ICC, i.e. new knowledge about the British Pakistanis, as well as the pupils' own cultures, in

addition to skills of comparison and relating, and not the least an open and curious attitude with the willingness to decentre.

This thesis touches only on some parts and elements of the important issues of culture, identity and intercultural communication. It would have been desirable to examine several other aspects than the ones examined here. For instance, when it comes to issues of identity, it would have been possible to look into other perspectives, such as the psychoanalytic perspectives of Freud and Erikson. These would have contributed further to the insight of the formation of identity and the identities of the characters of *Ae Fond Kiss...*, but are omitted on account of the limited space.

The use of the film *Ae Fond Kiss...* has been the efferent and utilitarian approach of using it as a tool to develop ICC, rather than teaching pupils about films or media per se. More film specific approaches would have been possible, where one could have looked in detail at filmic or narrative elements and cinematography. It is also necessary to teach pupils critical media literacy in order to develop critical thinking skills in connection with media consumption. This, however, has not been the scope of this thesis.

There are several other aspects of the film than the ones touched upon here. The aural elements play an important role in films, and one could argue that music is also a vital element to *Ae Fond Kiss...* Casim is after all a Disc Jockey and Roisin is a music teacher. Other alternatives which spring to mind would be to examine in more detail the many different expressions of religious bigotry, since bigotry seems to be a major theme in the film, or instances of ethnocentrism, stereotyping, and prejudice, since the awareness of these mechanisms are essential to ICC. However, the leading perspective has been the intercultural aspect with particular focus on conflicting identities, therefore other important observations or themes are left out.

Keeping ICC on the school agenda is as important as ever. The different media offer exciting possibilities of intercultural encounters and opportunities to work on ICC in the classroom. If we meet people different from ourselves with tolerance and an open mind, they may actually teach us something new about ourselves and about the experience of being human.

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## 8. Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### English period plan week 18-20, 10<sup>th</sup> grade

<p>The film “Ae Fond Kiss...”</p> 	<p><i>Ae Fond Kiss...</i> has been called a modern day Romeo and Juliet. The British Pakistani Casim and the Irish Roisin meet and fall in love in Glasgow, Scotland, where they both live. They have to fight for their love against traditionalist Muslims and Catholics who think their relationship is inappropriate. Will their own cultural differences finally drive them apart?</p>
<p>Goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gain an attitude of curiousness, openness and tolerance towards other cultures</li> <li>- Being able to compare and relate the film and the characters to your own culture(s)</li> <li>- Gain knowledge of the Pakistani culture and British Pakistanis</li> <li>- Gain awareness of your own culture(s) and values</li> <li>- Discuss the way young people live, how they socialise, their views on life and values in Great Britain, the USA, other English-speaking countries and Norway</li> <li>- prepare and discuss your own oral or written texts inspired by literature and art</li> <li>- express yourself in writing and orally with some precision, fluency and coherence</li> </ul>
<p>Week 18</p>	<p>Watch and talk about the film</p>
<p>Week 19</p>	<p>Group assignment: present and discuss findings in the film in class. No formal assessment.</p>
<p>Week 20</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mini-talk: The regular assessment sheet for oral presentations is used.</li> <li>- Response journal entry: The regular assessment sheet for written production is used. The journal entry will also be added to your language portfolio.</li> </ul>

Appendix 2<sup>7</sup>

In groups of 3-4: While watching the film, look for specific elements, in order to share what you have found with the rest of the class afterwards. Your group number corresponds to the number of the task you will be working on. Take notes and compare in your groups afterwards.

Give an oral presentation in class on what you have found by giving concrete examples from the film. Compare your findings to your own culture. How would you have reacted, what would you have done? What is similar and what is different? Sometimes other people's traditions and customs seem strange to us. Have you ever thought of that what we say or do may seem strange to others?

The presentations should take about 2-4 minutes. You are free to use different aids for visualising or spicing up your presentation. Some groups might make good use of a Venn diagram.

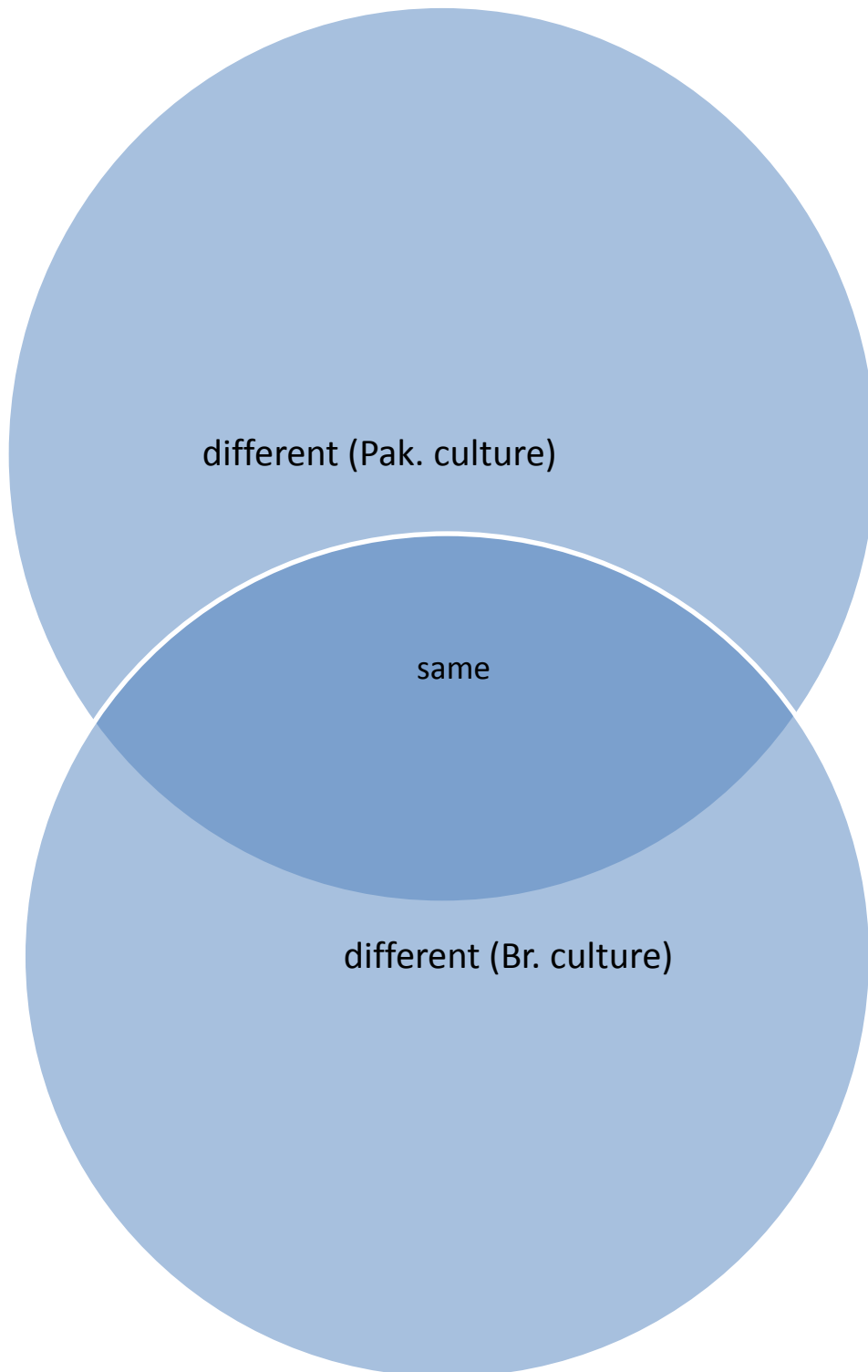
- 1) The role and importance of religion in British and Pakistani culture
- 2) Expressions of the British culture
- 3) Expressions of the Pakistani culture
- 4) Family structures and roles and relations between family members in the Khan family
- 5) Gender roles in the British culture versus among British Pakistanis
- 6) Stereotyping, racism and prejudice towards Pakistanis or towards the British
- 7) Tahara's different roles and identity at home and outside home
- 8) Casim's different roles and identity at home and outside home. Does Casim undergo any change during the film?

*Ae Fond Kiss and then we sever. A farewell, Alas! Forever*

<sup>7</sup> Picture on the left: Locate TV. <http://www.locatetv.com/movie/ae-fond-kiss>. Picture in the middle: Leremy Sutton Hibbert. [http://jeremysuttonhibbert.photoshelter.com/image/I00007f\\_hze3evpM](http://jeremysuttonhibbert.photoshelter.com/image/I00007f_hze3evpM). Picture on the right: Tumblr, Inc. <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/atta-yaqub>.

## Appendix 3

An example of a Venn diagram (after John Venn) commonly used as a didactic tool in school. It is well suited to illustrate differences and similarities the pupils find in the film, either between the British and the Pakistanis, or between characters in the film and themselves.



Appendix 4<sup>8</sup>

# Mini-talk

Prepare a mini-talk of about 2-3 minutes about:

- Your own identity and what makes you proud of who you are

OR

- A speech in defence of the rights of a minority group or another group in society you sympathize with which is often prejudiced against or stereotyped.

The mini-talk will have to include **two or more** of these words and expressions<sup>9</sup>:



The regular sheet of assessment of oral presentations will be used.



<sup>8</sup> Screen capture from the DVD *Ae Fond Kiss...* : Tahara giving a speech in the assembly hall of her school

<sup>9</sup> The word cloud is a screen capture of a word cloud made on <http://wordle.com/indexb.php>

## Appendix 5

**Assessing pupils' oral presentations, an adaption of Hobbs's criteria (62)**

<b>Pupil:</b>				
<b>Date:</b>				
<b>Topic:</b>				
	<b>Grades 1-2</b>	<b>Grades 3-4</b>	<b>Grades 5-6</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Content</b>	Description is unclear with no evidence of reasoning	Description is clear, but reasoning is unclear	Description is vivid and compelling and reasoning is persuasive	
<b>Speaking</b>	Not loud enough, hesitation, pacing slow or too fast, reads from notes	Loud enough, good pacing, somewhat reliant on notes	Loud enough, good pacing, no hesitation or reliance on notes, good vocal energy	
<b>Pronunciation</b>	Poor, hard to follow	Communicates well despite some glitches	Communicates well at all times	
<b>Order</b>	No introduction or conclusion	Introduction, some use of transitions and conclusion	Attention-getting introduction, transitions, and good conclusion	
<b>Didactic aids</b>	None, or do not add value	Well chosen	Well chosen, and help keep the audience's interest	
<b>Q and A</b>	Hesitation, defensiveness	Responds well to questions	Responds well and makes connections to the presentation	
<b>Final grade and comments</b>				

Appendix 6<sup>10</sup>

Casim: “Can you do me a favour and duck down for a second? If they see me in the car with a strange woman, there’s gonna be trouble.”



Boys shouting: “Paki Hun!” “Paki go home!”

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<sup>10</sup> Screen captures from the film *Ae Fond Kiss....*



## Appendix 7 (the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training)

## Kjennetegn på måloppnåelse engelsk 10.trinn ved sentralt gitt skriftlig eksamen våren 2011

Kompetansenivå	Karakteren 2 Eleven kan:	Karakteren 3 og 4 Eleven kan:	Karakteren 5 og 6 Eleven kan:
Helhetsvurdering av teksten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>svare på oppgaven på en enkel måte</li> <li>skrive en tekst der det kan hentes ut et innhold</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>svare på oppgaven, men ikke nødvendigvis med et fullstendig relevant innhold</li> <li>formidle et budskap</li> <li>skrive om et emne med et relativt enkelt innhold og med en viss grad av selvstendighet</li> <li>bruke innhold fra kilder på en ansvarlig måte</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>besvare oppgaven på en relevant måte</li> <li>presentere et budskap på en selvstendig og tydelig måte</li> <li>gjøre rede for et emne på en utfyllende måte</li> <li>bruke innhold fra ulike kilder på en kritisk og ansvarlig måte</li> </ul>
Oppbygning og innhold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sette sammen setninger etter hverandre til en enkel tekst</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>skrive en tekst med en viss grad av grunnstruktur og bruk av avsnitt som til en viss grad er tilpasset kommunikasjonssituasjonen</li> <li>skrive en sammenhengende tekst</li> <li>skrive en tekst med enkel tekstbinding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>skrive en tekst med en passende struktur og en hensiktsmessig bruk av avsnitt som er tilpasset kommunikasjonssituasjonen</li> <li>skrive en tekst med logisk oppbygning og god flyt</li> <li>skrive en tekst med en rimelig variert bruk av tekstbinding</li> </ul>
Språk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>bruke et svært enkelt ordforråd</li> <li>uttrykke en mening, selv om språket kan inneholde mange feil</li> <li>bruke enkel ortografi og tegnsetting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>bruke et ordforråd som er stort nok til å skrive en tekst om et kjent tema</li> <li>i noen grad bruke språkets grunnleggende formverk</li> <li>i noen grad variere setningsbygningen</li> <li>bruke ortografi og tegnsetting med noe presisjon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>bruke et ordforråd som er stort nok til å uttrykke det meste om et gitt tema</li> <li>bruke språkets grunnleggende formverk med en del presisjon</li> <li>varierte setningsbygningen</li> <li>bruke ortografi og tegnsetting med en del presisjon</li> </ul>