

# FISH AND CHIPS

de Damien O'DONNELL

## FICHE TECHNIQUE

Titre original (original title) : East is East

Pays (nationality) : GB

Durée (running time) : 1h36

Année (year) : 1999

Genre : Comédie

Scénario (screenwriter) : Ayub KHAN-DIN based on his play

Directeur de la photographie : Brian TUFANO

Musique : Deborah MOLLISON

Production : Assassin Films

Distribution : Ocean Films

Interprètes (cast) : Om PURI (George Khan), Linda BASSETT (Ella Khan), Jimi MISTRY (Tariq Khan), Jordan ROUTLEDGE (Sajid Khan), Archie PANJABI (Meenah Khan), Emil MARWA (Maneer Khan), Chris BISSON (Saleem Khan)

Sortie : 2 février 2000

## SYNOPSIS

For the seven kids of George Khan – proud Pakistani and chip shop owner – life is one long compromise. Tomboy Meenah prefers playing soccer to wearing a sari, hippie Saleem pretends to be studying engineering when he's really at art school, heart-throb Tariq has got a reputation as a local Casanova, and Sajid hasn't even been circumcised yet. For George Khan ('Ghengis' to his kids), life is an uphill battle to get his family to conform to traditional Pakistani values. But this is Salford in the 1970s. George's English wife Ella is Lancashire born, and his kids have got minds of their own.

With one disastrous arranged marriage already in the family – Nazir fled at the altar to become a milliner in Eccles – George plots to bring his next two sons into line by marrying them off to the daughters of Mr Shah, Master Butcher and proud owner of an extended home in Bradford.

*East is East* is the often hilarious and sometimes painful story of what happens when two cultures collide within one family. In the Khan's cramped terraced house with its scant indoor plumbing, anarchy erupts on a daily basis. When the Khan kids begin to oppose their father's petty tyrannies, Ella is forced to make a choice between her love for her husband and the right of her children to make their own ways in the world.

*George Khan, que ses enfants surnomment « Gengis », est Pakistanais et fier de l'être. Propriétaire d'un « fish and chips », petit restaurant où il trime sans relâche, il élève ses sept enfants d'une poigne de fer et veut faire d'eux de bons petits Pakistanais. Mais nous sommes à Salford, dans le nord de l'Angleterre, en 1971. Et même si Ella, l'épouse anglaise de George, s'efforce d'aimer et de respecter son tyran domestique de mari, elle souhaite au moins autant contribuer au bonheur de ses enfants. Tirillés entre la mode des pantalons à pattes d'éléphant et les mariages arrangés par leur père, ceux-ci n'aspirent qu'à devenir tout simplement des citoyens britanniques de leur temps : hip, cool et sexy.*

## AUTOUR DU FILM

### Quotes:

- BBC Radio 1 : « ...Is incredibly poignant and also incredibly funny ... great performances throughout ... A very, very funny film... »
- The Guardian : « A rip roaring comedy. »
- The Times : « British magic returns to the cinema. »

## Critique

« Dès les premiers plans (une procession catholique à laquelle « participe » une famille anglo-pakistanaise), le ton de cette comédie cocasse et moqueuse est donné. Avec dérision et émotion, sans jamais se prendre au sérieux, *East Is East* passe du rire aux larmes, de l'anecdotique à l'essentiel. Quelle que soit la gravité des situations, du propos (l'intolérance, le racisme, le conflit de générations et de valeurs entre parents et enfants...) et sans jamais user de clichés, le jeune réalisateur Damien O'Donnell a la volonté de faire rire. Il a sélectionné avec justesse des scènes de la vie quotidienne révélatrice du caractère et du mode de vie de cette famille mixte.

L'action se situe au début des années 70, mais les thèmes abordés restent d'actualité et dépassent les frontières anglaises. Confrontée à deux cultures (celles des pays d'origine et d'adoption), deux religions (catholique et musulmane), plongée dans un racisme ambiant, cette famille se cherche, assume sa différence en allant au-delà du poids de la tradition, du conservatisme et de l'obscurantisme. »

## About Ayub KHAN DIN (writer)

'I was pretty useless at school. I remember sending my brother a letter, he's in the navy, and it was so unintelligible that he stuck it on the notice board with an offer of £20 to anyone who could make sense of it! Anyway, at drama school, we had to write something as an exercise. Given my academic record, I thought it would be a nightmare but for some reason, I enjoyed it so much that I wanted to do more. What's more, I found out I was quite good at it! I started writing this piece which turned into a kind of family saga – the life I'd lived at home in Salford, the colour and community – but then I finished my course, so I stuck it in a drawer and got on with my day job as an actor. Years later, the Royal Court were looking for new Asian writers and out it came, eventually developing into *East is East*.'

The multi-award winning play *East is East* was Ayub Khan Din's first outing as a writer, although he is a well-known film and television actor whose credits include *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (directed by Stephen Frears, 1987) and *London Bridge*. *East is East* was first produced at the Royal Court Theatre in 1996 and was an instant success, selling out before it even opened. It then went on a national tour before returning to London at the Theatre Royal Stratford East and the Royal Court at the Duke of York.

Ayub won the Writers' Guild of Great Britain Award for Best West End Play and Best New Writer and was nominated for the Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Writer.

## Characters:

- GEORGE KHAN (Om Puri) 'As his world falls apart around him, George's only refuge is in the centuries-old traditions into which he was born. He is not a man who can break with his own experience and accept ideas and concepts that are alien to his upbringing.'
- ELLA KHAN (Linda Bassett) 'Ella has a strong belief in freedom, fairness, family... and Salford.'
- SAJID KHAN (Jordan Routledge) 'I would hang around with Sajid but not always because he's a bit weird!'
- TARIQ KHAN (Jimi Mistry) 'Tariq is a rebel searching for an identity.'
- MANEER KHAN (Emil Marwa) 'Maneer is hurt that his Dad hit him, but he understands the reasons why, that he shouldn't lie to him – he's that kind of kid.'
- SALEEM KHAN (Chris Bisson) 'Saleem is a strange, tricky one – I've spent many, many hours trying to work out what's going on with him.'
- ABDUL KHAN (Raji James) 'To me, the thing that sums up Abdul is that he always wears a suit.'
- MEENAH KHAN (Archie Panjabi) 'Meenah is me when I was younger – a tomboy whose parents own a fish and chip shop.'
- NAZIR KHAN (Ian Aspinall)

## PISTES PÉDAGOGIQUES (CLASSROOM WORK)

### Pre-watching activities:

- p. 107 *Broad Ways 2<sup>nd</sup>e Making Matches*, jumbled article about arranged marriages in India.
- p. 85 *Your Way Terminales "Savita's Wedding"*, text about the wedding day of Savita whose husband was chosen by her mother.

- Visit the website [www.eastiseast.co.uk](http://www.eastiseast.co.uk) and fill in the grid:
  - Place of action
  - Time of action
  - Characters involved
  - Name and job of main character
  - Number of children
  - Nationality
  - Religion

**Text 1: Father and Son**

Language:

- Spot the rude words, say who uses them and why.
- Rephrase the following incorrect phrases into standard English:
  - l. 1 : *in (bloody) mood* = .....
  - l. 3 : *I warning you* = .....
  - l. 6 : *I trying* = .....
  - l. 7 : *English people never accepting you* = .....
  - l. 8 : *everyone equal* = .....
  - l. 8 : *No black man, no white man, all Muslims, special community* = .....
- Some negative sentences are wrong, correct them:
  - l. 3 : .....
  - l. 6 : .....
  - l. 7 : .....
  - l. 13 : .....
  - l. 13 : .....
  - l. 15 : .....
- Who uses incorrect language? Why?
- Try to explain these words:
  - l. 5 : *Urdu* .....
  - l. 8 : *Islam* .....
  - l. 8 : *Muslims* .....
- What do the following pronouns refer to?
  - l. 1 : *it* = .....
  - l. 2 : *we* = .....
  - l. 5 : *here* = .....
  - l. 13 : *they* = .....

Follow-up work: what does 'respect' mean for George? Give your definition of respect and illustrate with examples.

**Text 2: A family row**

- Rephrase George's cues.
- What starts the chain reaction?
- What does each child reproach his father with?
- Account for Ella's attitude.
- Who's your favourite character and why?