

Mr.Bennett

Senior Seminar: Reckless Libertines

1/17/2022

An exploration of the value of love in *The Namesake*

In *The Namesake*, Jhumpa Lahiri explores the complexities of immigrant identities and their looming generational effects over relationships. Each new character introduced comes with their own struggles, background, and memorable stories, yet many have one common experience: their previous life controls their decisions and thought processes. While Gogol tries to separate his past life from the present and struggles vigorously to live as Nikhil, Ashima sticks to her Bengali heritage as she repels against the encroaching American values of life. Characters return to their original lives through Lahiri's realistic series of life dramas - birth of babies, childhood of teenage immigrants, dreams of unexplored lifestyles, ruthless betrayals - and equip themselves with alternate perspectives as they learn through their past mistakes.

These other factors do not come without cost. Romantic relationships intertwine with family business, as Gogol encounters the dilemma of introducing his lovers to his personal life. As characters engage in new culture, their interests temporarily alter their outlook towards life - Gogol's exploration of Maxine's luxurious lifestyle goads his independence from his parents, or Moushumi's affection for Paris leads to her displeasure in unimportant events, and overall dissatisfaction in her marriage, causing her to begin an affair with another man. Major moments in their lives also provoke changes in their attitudes: death and danger create appreciation, and heartbreaks allows them to appreciate family and new romantic journeys.

In my thesis, I hope to investigate how these characters interactions with their identities affect their relationships. By separately analyzing each crucial moments of the main characters with their past and present contexts in consideration, I may reveal the different ways they react through lessons they collected and factors beyond superficial stimulations. Does sharing a common background create opportunities for deep connections? Does rejection of identity results in rejection of love? Do the characters' hesitance in embracing their culture passively hinder their commitment to the people they love? How do people's identities and heritage persist despite their resistance? How does the modern setting of the novel contribute to the intricacy of personal issues and character development?

Besides romantic relationships, I would like to examine friendships and generational threads throughout the story. How do these relationships instigate self-reflection and mirrors that leads to self-acceptance? What leads characters to seek communities, whether these communities are familiar or foreign to their past? How are these communities created, maintained, or ignored?

Ultimately, I hope to look into the value of love in *The Namesake*, and answer whether the effects of these relationships are worth it for what they bring, and if investing in love can come with profit in emotions and growth that can make up for what they cost.

I hope that my paper will draw out answers to these questions, and examine the psychology in belonging and love that underlies the complexities of immigration and adulthood.

Write about A BUNCH OF DIFFERENT POINTS ⇒ a bunch of paragraphs, NOT long paragraphs

summarize + explore major theme. Choose one theme

Explore how this theme is complicated by other factors

Propose the question

Add one quote in one of the questions

How does identity affect love?

- Rejection of identity → rejection of love (Maxine, Moushumi,...) Ashima embracing America after Ashoke died?

Comparison of Affairs: Gogol n Bridget? Vs Mushoumi and the other guy

Changes in relationship - how Gogol change in the way he behave in his current relationship as he reflects on his past relationship

Class creates/ instigates separation: talk about Maxine and Gogol

Separate Lives (why is there separation between Gogol and Mushoumi - her Paris life he never knew about)

- Hesitance in embracing identity passively hinder character's commitment to relationships?
- Relationships in friendships too.
 - Idea of extended family - Ashima seeks Bengali friends in America as she is physically distant from her family back home.

Go deeper into the question

I hope that my paper will ultimately