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Research Article

Negotiating Marriage in Diaspora: Modernity, Miscommunication, and Emotional Estrangement in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the issue of marriage negotiation under the influence of modernity, cultural displacement, and constant miscommunication, which results in the estrangement of spouses at the emotional level. Considering the marital relationships within the novel, the paper argues that Lahiri does not simply portray marriage as a personal connection, but rather as a point where tradition and modern values come into conflict and contact. These tensions are magnified by the immigrant experience, whereby characters find it difficult to balance the cultural requirements of their ancestors with the emotional requirements of a contemporary individualized culture. The paper examines the role of silence, restraint, and unspoken expectations in marital interactions through close textual analysis and how emotional distance is created in such a way that it does not involve overt conflict, but instead builds up. Miscommunication has not only become a failure of language but also a result of the difference in emotional vocabularies due to different cultures, gender roles, and experiences of generations. The paper places *The Namesake* in a more general context of the diaspora and modernity, postulating that emotional alienation in marriage indicates a more general state of cultural in-betweenness. Through an artistic and relational perspective of *The Namesake*, this paper reveals how Lahiri criticizes both the traditional and modern ideals of marriage and how intimacy in a diasporic setting needs not assimilation or rebellion, but enduring emotional translation across generations, cultures, and personal histories.

Keywords

Marriage, Modernity, Diaspora, Miscommunication, Cultural Identity

1. Introduction

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* takes a prominent position in the modern diasporic literature due to the delicate yet influential way in which the author has explored the theme of identity, belonging, and emotional inheritance in immigrant families. Although the novel is often treated within the context of cultural displacement and name-based identity politics, its extended discussions of marriage and intimate relationships provide a more profound commentary on the realities of living in modernity and a lack of understanding. Marriage in *The Namesake* is not only a setting for the development of characters but a narrative device itself as Lahiri uses it to explore the theme of generational conflict, repression, and the challenges

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of expressing love across cultures and time. Through this, Lahiri exposes the way in which tradition and modernity create silences that define, and sometimes disjoint, human relations.

The core of the novel is the Bengali immigrant experience in post-1960s America, where there is a question of negotiation instead of resolution. The arranged marriage between Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli is a kind of model based on cultural continuity, collective responsibility, and emotional support. Their marriage, which began in Calcutta and was transplanted to the United States, develops over time in the routines, loss, and adaptation. Conversely, the romantic and marital life of their son Gogol is revealed in a modern paradigm where individual choice, emotional openness, and personal satisfaction are valued. However, Lahiri does not want to show modernity as liberating or tradition as repressive. Rather, she reveals how the two systems are both sources of miscommunication in the forms of silence in classic marriages and emotional impatience and self-centeredness in contemporary ones.

In *The Namesake*, marriage is the place where inner feelings collide with the norms. The initial married life of Ashima in America is marked with isolation and linguistic dislocation, in which communication is internalized more than verbal. Lahiri embodies this state in the silent habits of Ashima and her reserved display of emotions, and hints that love within such a marriage is performed by perseverance as opposed to expression. This dynamic is also solidified by Ashoke's emotional reserve; his inability to express affection or trauma, especially his train accident, which almost killed him, creates emotional distance even in a stable marriage. However, these silences do not indicate a lack of closeness; instead, it represents a cultural moral in which love is entrenched in action and accountability, and not confession.

The relationships of Gogol, though, demonstrate another type of miscommunication, which is conditioned by modern expectations. His affair with Maxine Ratliff reveals his desire to erase his culture and feel comfortable. The free and liberal closeness of Maxine seems to provide Gogol with freedom, which he does not have at home. However, it is the failure of this relationship that is actually due to neglecting the emotional legacy of Gogol, his sorrow, his family, and his unresolved connection with his past. Contemporary intimacy, despite its expressiveness, does not always fit in the emotional richness that is based on memory and loss. These complexities cannot be expressed by Gogol, resulting in withdrawal and not connection.

This tendency is heightened in the marriage of Gogol and Moushumi as a union that appears to unify cultural acquaintance with contemporary autonomy. Both the second-generation Bengali Americans, Gogol and Moushumi, get into marriage with hopes of compatibility and understanding each other. Nevertheless, Lahiri shows that even a common cultural heritage does not ensure that the emotional levels are compatible. The unrest of Moushumi, her unwillingness to live a stable life, and her affair with Dimitri reveal a greater discontent with traditional as well as modern identities. Their collapse of marriage also highlights the criticism of modern individualism, where one considers self-realization as the key element of life, ignoring emotional responsibility. Miscommunication in this case is not caused by cultural differences but by avoiding the issue emotionally.

Notably, Lahiri does not situate miscommunication in the context of interpersonal failure; on the contrary, it is highly institutionalized, conditioned by migration, generational changes, and rival cultural discourses. The former generation speaks with restraint and ritual, whereas the latter generation is at a loss for how to deal with the silence that has been passed down to them and the expressive nature of emotions in the present. The fact that Gogol does not feel comfortable with his name, which is an epitome of forced identity, reflects his inability to feel comfortable in the relationships that require him to express emotions with clarity, which he is unable to give. His silence is not a direct inheritance of his parents but a product of alienation in the modern era.

Modernity in *The Namesake* is, therefore, described as being paradoxical. On the one hand, it liberates the person from the strict traditions, but on the other hand, it discontinues emotional continuity. Characters are urged to love, but they are hardly prepared to maintain it. This thematic issue is supported by the reserved style of the narration used by Lahiri; the scene of emotional crisis is described in a low-key manner, focusing on what has not been said. Miscommunication exists not only among characters but also between generations, cultures, and even past and present selves. Marriage is the field where these fractures are most perceivable, since expectations are in conflict with each other, and emotional labor is still unevenly distributed.

The present paper states that *The Namesake* portrays marriage as a place of cultural translation instead of resolution. Lahiri challenges the belief that modernity enhances closeness as a matter of course and illustrates that emotional bonding must be negotiated over an extended period through silence, memory, and difference. This study predicts miscommunication as a dominant narrative power that defines identity and belonging by comparing the marriages and romantic relationships in the novel. By closely analyzing some of the most important relational dynamics, the paper places *The Namesake* in the context of the wider discourse on diaspora, modernity, and emotional expression, and ultimately proposes that relationships in the context of immigrant experience do not require assimilation or rebellion, but rather, require listening across the generations and the past.

Literature Review

The Namesake has been the subject of critical discussion in which the issues of identity, diaspora, and cultural hybridity have been the primary focus, with the symbolic significance

of naming and generational opposition typically being highlighted. Nevertheless, in this emerging literature, marriage and intimate relationships have become more accepted as important narrative locations of cultural negotiation, modernity, and emotional misunderstandings. This paper provides a review of the key academic discussions of *The Namesake*, placing the current research in the context of the arguments about diasporic modernity, marriage, and communicative silence.

The formation of identity is the main issue in the novel that is preempted in the early critique of *The Namesake*. The theory of hybridity, as formulated by Homi K. Bhabha, has been used by critics like Vibha Bhatia but not directly on Lahiri to inform numerous readings of Gogol Ganguli as a subject trapped in an "in-between" cultural position. Critics claim that Gogol does not feel comfortable with his name, which is part of the wider problem of the imposition of identities in the life of the diaspora. According to Brada-Williams, the fact that Gogol rejects his name is an allegory of "his resistance to a cultural inheritance he does not fully understand" (457). Although this method throws light on the psychological aspect of identity, it tends to overrule the relational situations, especially marriage, in which this identity crisis is practiced.

Some of the critics take the discussion further by concentrating on generational differences among immigrant families. As noted by Ruvani Ranasinha, the first-generation immigrants are depicted by Lahiri as relationally stable but emotionally restrained, whereas the characters of the second generation are "emotionally restrained yet relationally stable" (112). This is especially true in the context of marital relations in the novel, in which the marriage of Ashoke and Ashima is maintained in spite of the lack of verbal warmth, and the relationships of Gogol are ruined in spite of the emotional openness. The work by Ranasinha points in the right direction of miscommunication as a generational phenomenon, but falls short of exploring marriage as a communicative arrangement, as it is influenced by modernity.

Kapoor's pioneering research suggests that in Lahiri's novel, diasporic identity is a state of perpetual deferral, while Gogol's serial engagements first with Ruth, then with Moushumi, dramatize the impossibility of resolving the second-generation subject's cultural ambivalence through marriage (62). This analysis is extended by Qazi, who argues that The Namesake casts the Ganguli family as a space of conflicted emotional geographies: first-generation parents aim to maintain a Bengali domestic space while their American-born children occupy an experiential space of a different order, making ongoing intimacy between the generations almost structurally impossible (5-7). This leads, Qazi suggests, not to hostility but to a deeper incomprehension - a failure to communicate premised on different understandings of duty, love, and the self (8).

Khorakiwala's take on this failure is interdisciplinary and drawn from Anthony Giddens' theory of reflexive modernity. He argues that the "self" of diaspora needs to be understood as both multiple in "being" and dynamic in "becoming," and suggests that each member of the Ganguli family engages in an internal self-other dialogue that is in constant flux (265-70). The emotional alienations between family members, especially Gogol's growing estrangement from his parents are, in this account, caused by ontological insecurity in the modern world rather than cultural incompatibility.

Mohammadi places The Namesake in a comparative diaspora context, suggesting that Lahiri presents diaspora as ambivalent: her characters consciously try to maintain family ties while they struggle to reconcile the cultural scripts their children have picked up from American culture, and the tension between the two makes the marital and familial unit a site of both comfort and constraint (42-44). He also maps Gogol's acculturation trajectory as a shift from assimilation (unconscious adoption of American culture) to integration (conscious hybridity). This is reflected in his relationships: his adulterous affair with Maxine is the culmination of assimilation, while his marriage to Moushumi is an attempt to return to his origins that fails because neither spouse has come to terms with their hybridity.

Varghaiyan makes another contribution, a spatial-narratological analysis of the novel through the Foucauldian notion of heterotopia. She suggests that narrative space in The Namesake is crucial to the meaning of the novel, and the plot unfolds with the help of three simultaneous, heterogeneous, incompatible spaces; the major feature of the fictional world is a barely resolved tension between the ordinary space of American culture and the minor, semi-closed space of the immigrant family. For Varghaiyan, the marriage space of the Gangulis is just such a heterotopic counter-site: a space that is at once a part of the broader American world, but in deep conflict with it (634). Singh and Rani offer a survey-based reading of the diasporic fiction, noting that her stories consistently emphasize the generational tensions that arise as immigrant children try to negotiate the tensions between their parents' culture and their own identities, and that these tensions are most acutely represented in the failure or insufficiency of personal relationships (2-4).

Feminist and cultural studies readings of Lahiri have paid more attention to marriage as a thematic issue. Susan Koshy states that in her fiction, Lahiri also criticizes the Western beliefs about arranged marriage as "a flexible, evolving institution rather than a static cultural relic" (602). In *The Namesake*, the marriage between Ashoke and Ashima changes to being more of a formality than a companionship, implying that emotional tenderness does not have to be direct and verbal. The fact that Ashima thinks that "she learns to love her husband, slowly, through his gestures" (Lahiri 56) makes the narrative of love and its equalization with emotional expressiveness an uphill task. The significance of the reading is that it re-interprets traditional marriage as emotionally possible, but it does not explicitly deal with the role of silence as a communicative

mode of such unions.

Other theorists dwell on modernity and its frustrations, especially relating them to the relationships of second-generation immigrants. James Nagel argues that the private affairs of Gogol reflect "modern desire for self-fashioning that ultimately undermines relational stability" (89). The fact that Gogol is engulfed by the world of Maxine Ratliff enables him to forget the issue of cultural difference in the short run, but the world of Maxine demands emotional lacuna. According to Lahiri, with Maxine, Gogol feels "free of expectation, of guilt" (Lahiri 141), which turns out to be an emptiness in his heart later when his father dies. The fragility of contemporary understanding is emphasized by Nagel, but is not explicitly described as a form of miscommunication based on cultural dissonance.

The character of Moushumi has gained a lot of critical interest, especially in gender and autonomy debates. Mrinalini Chakravorty sees the act of infidelity by Moushumi as a response to the patriarchal culture as well as diasporic norms (214). Although this reading foreshadows the agency of Moushumi, the individualism is romanticized at the cost of emotional responsibility. The account given by Lahiri is focused on how Gogol is shocked to find out that his marriage is not based on knowledge but on assumptions: "They had never spoken about what they wanted from each other" (Lahiri 267). It is a moment that prefigures miscommunication as a failure of all instead of a gendered uprising, and it is a scene that may require more relationally-based analysis.

Silence and emotional suppression have also been discussed as stylistic and thematic elements of Lahiri's prose. Rocío G. Davis states that the minimalist style of narration used by Lahiri reflects "what is withheld often carries more weight than what is spoken" (398). This observation is especially helpful when analyzing marriage in *The Namesake*, in which love, sorrow, and disappointment are often conveyed not in dialogue but in routine. The silent grief Ashima displays after the death of Ashoke, when she says "she feels his absence everywhere, in every corner of the house" (Lahiri 182), can be considered an example of how silence as an affective language works.

Irrespective of these useful additions, the current paper tends to consider marriage as a secondary motif, inferior to identity or cultural displacement. Very little research focuses on marriage as a key channel through which modernity transforms emotional communication in diasporic situations. In addition, miscommunication is often implied and hardly ever theorized as a structural situation brought about by migration, generational transition, and conflicting emotional norms.

This paper bridges this gap of critical concern by pre-empting the concept of marriage as a communicative place where tradition and modernity meet. The paper states that miscommunication is a constitutive element of diasporic modern existence by examining marital relationships and romantic failures in *The Namesake*. Based on close textual analysis and existing literature, the paper reinterprets the novel as a prolonged reflection of the way in which love is bargained, and in most cases misconstrued, across cultural and emotional borders.

2. Methods

This paper uses qualitative, text-based analysis to explore the themes of marriage, modernity, and miscommunication in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*. Close reading is used as the main technique and is centered on major marital and love relationships: the arranged marriage of Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli, the love of Gogol and Maxine Ratliff, and the marriage of Gogol and Moushumi Mazoomdar. These relations are examined as narrative places where the cultural values, emotional expectations, and communicative practices collide and contradict each other. Moments of silence, emotional restraint, and unspoken tension are given special consideration and are viewed as valuable modes of communication as opposed to narrative absence. The interdisciplinary approach taken by the study is based on diaspora studies, cultural studies, and literary theories of modernity, with selective use of the existing critical literature to contextualize the textual analysis. Instead of imposing a strict theoretical framework, the approach is interpretive and relational, which allows thematic patterns to be generated naturally out of the text. Placing personal relations into the context of more socio-cultural shifts, migration, generational change, and contemporary individualism, the approach aims to show the way in which miscommunication works structurally in the novel. This method allows developing a subtle understanding of marriage as a fixed institution, but as a shifting communicative place that is defined by diasporic modernity.

3. Analysis and Discussion

In *The Namesake*, marriage is a central narrative prism that helps to unveil the tensions of modernity, migration, and emotional communication. This part contends that Lahiri employs marital and romantic relationships to reveal that miscommunication is a structural situation of diasporic existence and not an interpersonal defect. The novel criticizes the traditional silence and contemporary emotional individualism by comparing first-generation marital endurance with second-generation romantic and marriage failure. Critics have pointed out with growing frequency that in his fiction Lahiri favors emotional restraint and silent breakdown over dramatic conflict, and that this tendency is most apparent in the arena of marriage. The results are arranged in themes, which include marriage as endurance and silence, modern romance and emotional erasure, and marital breakdown and the boundaries of modern

individualism.

The arranged marriage of Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli gives the emotional and moral background of the entire relationship in *The Namesake*. Their marriage is not based on romantic choice or expressiveness but on cultural expectations, tolerance, and flexibility. At the beginning of the novel, Ashima ponders her loneliness in her married life in America, and the foreignness as "a sort of lifelong pregnancy, a perpetual wait, a constant burden" (Lahiri 49). This metaphor sums up the concept of migration and marriage as states of survival and not satisfaction.

Critics have pointed out that Lahiri intentionally disrupts Western beliefs that view intimacy as verbal expression. Susan Koszy explains that Lahiri is redefining arranged marriage as "an affective structure that evolves, shaped by routine and mutual dependency rather than emotional disclosure" (602). This opinion is evidenced by the fact that Ashima is gradually getting attached to Ashoke: "She learns to love her husband, slowly, through the years" (Lahiri 56). Love here is not dramatic, confessional, but is accruing, based on experience.

This is also a marital model that Ashoke possesses in terms of his emotional reserve. The fact that he never informed Ashima about his traumatic train accident over a long period of time adds a deep silence to the core of the marriage. And yet affection is not ruined by this silence. As noted by Roccio G. Davis, Lahiri's characters "translate emotion into action, allowing responsibility to substitute for speech" (398). Stability, care, and sacrifice are forms of expression of devotion by Ashoke, not words. The news about the accident breaks when Ashima eventually finds out about the accident, and this only strengthens their relationship instead of breaking it (Lahiri 117).

The findings indicate that miscommunication in the first-generation marriage is culturally intelligible and emotionally viable. Silence is used as a common language that is influenced by Bengali rules of restraint. This is not a romanticized model by Lahiri, but she makes it sound as if it is long-lasting. There are emotional distances, but there is ritual, duty, and understanding that bind them. In this case, marriage is not more concerned with emotional gratification but rather with maintaining the family, culture, and survival.

In a stark contrast, the relationships between Gogol and Maxine Ratliff are typical of the affinity of the modern world, based on openness, choice, and emotional comfort, seeming to be effortless. Physical proximity, liberalism, and lack of cultural binding are some of the characteristics of the world that Maxine lives in. This is exactly the kind of environment that attracts Gogol because he wants to forget the burden of his inherited identity. With Maxine, Gogol feels "as if he is living someone else's life" (Lahiri 138), a phrase that tells a lot about his desire as well as dislocation.

According to James Nagel, the relationship of Gogol with Maxine is the product of a contemporary "self-fashioning that depends on the suppression of inconvenient histories" (91). Gogol does not carry his family, anguish, and cultural recollection into the relationship. On the contrary, he is glad not to have to defend himself: "He likes that with Maxine he does not need to explain himself" (Lahiri 141). This lack of explanation is initially a sense of freedom, but it is, in fact, a kind of emotional evasion.

This weakness of this contemporary romance is clearly revealed when Ashoke suddenly dies. This sadness in Gogol reveals the boundaries of Maxine's emotional world. Lahiri states that "how little Maxine knows about his parents, his childhood, his grief" (176). The connection does not break down in terms of conflict, but in terms of incapacity. The mourning defined by cultural memory and family duty cannot fit Maxine.

As Ruvani Ranasinha notes, the second-generation characters of the fiction written by Lahiri are usually vulnerable to "emotional openness without emotional endurance" (115). Contemporary rapport can be expressed, but has no frameworks to maintain loss and responsibility. The results indicate that miscommunication in this case is not silence, but selective disclosure. The problem with Gogol is not his inability to speak, but his refusal to incorporate his emotional heritage into contemporary romance.

The marriage between Gogol and Moushumi seems to be the solution to the conflict between modernity and tradition. Both are second-generation Bengali Americans who speak the cultural codes and are not submissive to parental demands. Their common past gives them a false impression of compatibility: "They understand each other's references without explanation" (Lahiri 223). Marriage in this case is pictured as an ornament of contemporary decision-making, which is backed by cultural acquaintance.

However, Lahiri very soon demolishes this assumption. Moushumi finds marriage restrictive and believes that it entraps her personality in a manner that she cannot accept. She links Gogol to "a life already mapped out" (Lahiri 250), and marriage is not about attachment but a trap. Critics like Mrinalini Chakravorty view the infidelity of Moushumi as a statement of agency of the diasporic woman against the dictated roles (214). Although this reading anticipates resistance, it is complicated in Lahiri as it focuses more on emotional avoidance than liberation.

The moment when Gogol understands that "they had never spoken about what they wanted from each other" (Lahiri 267) is a turning point in the novel. The silence of Ashima and Ashoke is culturally approved, whereas the silence of Gogol and Moushumi is symptomatic of emotional denial. According to Rocío G. Davis, Lahiri depicts contemporary marriage as "especially vulnerable because it lacks rituals of endurance that traditionally sustained intimacy" (401).

The failure of this marriage proves one important conclusion: the same culture does not mean that there will be

emotional communication. The contemporary marriage requires negotiation, and neither Gogol nor Moushumi engages in a prolonged discussion of desire, discontent, and anticipation. Contemporary individualism is more focused on self-realization, yet Lahiri argues that the lack of emotional responsibility is disruptive to close relationships.

In all these relations, miscommunication is not an exception but a characteristic of diasporic existence. The former generation speaks of perseverance and sacrifice, whereas the latter generation is grappling with inherited silence and the requirements of contemporary society to be open with their emotions. Gogol does not feel comfortable with his name, and this is similar to how he is not comfortable with relationships that require emotional coherence. He denies the name Gogol, which reflects his denial of a fixed identity, but both lead to fragmentation, not freedom.

The notion of the in-between proposed by Homi Bhabha is applicable in this situation, since Gogol exists in a transitional emotional state, which is defined by the conflicting cultural discourses (38). This liminality is most anguishly bargained upon in marriage. Gogol is not devoted to traditional restraint and does not manage to preserve the modern expressiveness. His personal associations are characterized by swings as opposed to amalgamation.

This structural miscommunication is reinforced by the restrained narrative style of Lahiri. Emotional crisis is described in a low key; there are few confrontations; the speech is not so loud. Such minimalism of style reflects the economies of emotion of the characters themselves. According to Davis, "what remains unsaid in Lahiri's fiction often carries greater emotional weight than speech" (398). Miscommunication, therefore, works both at thematic and formal levels.

In *The Namesake*, gender is a significant factor that contributes to marital miscommunication. The state of emotional restraint of Ashima is culturally prescribed, but it is accompanied by deep emotional work. She keeps family life alive by sacrificing and adjusting to it until she redefines home on different continents. She considers marriage as the form of her identity, as she wonders after Ashoke dies, "without a husband, she does not know what she is" (Lahiri 178). But she finally acquires a silent independence, and she decides to reside between India and America.

Moushumi, on the other hand, is opposed to domestic stability. Her affair with Dimitri is usually interpreted as transgressive, but Lahiri makes it an affair based on discontent and not empowerment. The rebelliousness of Moushumi is not glorified in the novel, but rather the emotional price of independence, with the lack of relationship accountability being revealed. The argument by Chakravorty (214) on the feminine resistance to diaspora in Moushumi is convincing, but Lahiri makes this resistance tricky by prefiguring its destructiveness.

The results indicate that Lahiri criticizes both sides, the gendered expectations. On the one hand, traditional femininity requires emotional sacrifice, and on the other hand, modern femininity threatens to lose emotions and remain emotionless. The clash of these competing models takes place in marriage. After all, *The Namesake* places marriage as a place of emotional translation, but not resolution. According to Lahiri, successful marriage is not a result of cultural naivety or contemporary defiance, but of the skill of bargaining silence, memory, and accountability. This balance is symbolized in the fact that Ashima eventually comes to terms with living in two countries with two lives. She is taught to survive with fragmentation instead of fighting it.

The last moment when Gogol opens the book by Nikolai Gogol, which is a gift from his father, is an indication that identity and familiarity cannot be achieved without working with the inherited memory (Lahiri 289). This scene is comparable to the wider wisdom of the novel: miscommunication cannot be eliminated; it can be admitted.

4. Conclusion

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* introduces marriage as a very delicate and yet eye-opening place where modernity, cultural inheritance, and emotional communication meet. By using the comparative marital and romantic relationships in the novel, Lahiri shows that miscommunication is not only a personal issue but also a structural one that is influenced by the life of the diaspora. The matrimony of Ashoke and Ashima, Gogol and Moushumi, and the affair of Gogol and Maxine all bring to light the functioning of silence, restraint, and avoidance of emotions in different generations, but in each case, the outcome of relationships will be similar.

This paper has revealed that the conventional marriage, as such, exercised by Ashoke and Ashima, is dependent on perseverance, joint accountability, and non-verbal care. They are emotionally reserved, yet the relationship makes them stable and continuous, especially in the confusing world of migration. Modern romantic and marital relationships, on the contrary, are supposed to be free of emotion and choice, but in reality, they crumble under the burden of unspoken expectations and unidentified identities. The relationships that Gogol goes through demonstrate that closeness in the new age is often not patient enough to allow grief, remembering, and cultural commitment. His marriage to Moushumi goes further to show that only the commonality of culture does not guarantee emotional openness or devotion in relationships.

Lahiri ends up criticizing the traditional models as well as the modern models of marriage without giving any of them an upper hand. Rather, she postulates that the only way to have meaningful bonding is through emotional translation, a continual negotiation of silence versus speech, autonomy versus responsibility, past versus present. The problem of

miscommunication in *The Namesake* is not resolved, and this is the reality of the experienced diasporic modernity on its own. The invitation to rethink the role of love, identity, and belonging in a more fragmented world is provided by Lahiri through the process of foregrounding marriage as a communicative space and not a fixed institution.

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