Smarty Pants 2

Mr. Barrington

English 12

April 17, 2019

Family Influences

Each family is unique from one another, whether it be size, race, or beliefs; and it is this difference that makes each family special in their own way. All the following sources depict a common theme when it comes to identity. First, the novel, *The Illegal,* by Lawrence Hill, about a young man named Keita Ali who escapes from his conflict torn fictional home country of Zantoroland to become a professional marathoner and earn enough money to reunite his family. Second, the biopic, *Lion¸* directed by Garth Davis, summarizes the incredible journey of Saroo Brierley who, as a child, was separated from his birth family in India and was then adopted and raised by an Australian family. With only limited memories of his hometown and Google Earth, Saroo sets out nearly 20 years after being lost to find his hometown and birth mother. Third, the article “Lost and found, one identity,” written by Karen Sawyer, tells the story of how the author, later in her life, finally found her identity. Finally, the movies *Thor*, by Kenneth Branagh, and *Avengers: Infinity War*, by Anthony and Joe Russo, both have the character of Loki, portrayed by Tom Hiddleston. The movies are his first and last appearances respectively, and they successfully develop Loki as a character. By examining the sources, it becomes evident that family influences the identity of individuals and helps to shape the person that they become.

In *The Illegal,* Keita Ali emphasizes the importance of his family throughout the entirety of the novel. Having grown up in a small home, his family is not only the most important part of his life but also the reasoning behind his identity and actions. This is well documented once Keita leaves Zantoroland to become a professional marathoner. During this time, Keita believed that the only surviving member of his family, his sister Charity, was in the United States studying at Harvard; however, he soon finds out that she is in life threatening danger in a Zantoroland prison. Keita’s mindset immediately shifts upon learning this, and instead of focusing solely on his own survival, his main goal is now “to run as many times as necessary to help [her]” (Hill 203). He knows that he controls his sister’s fate, since he is the only remaining member of their family capable of raising the money to pay the ransom. In this scenario, it seems as if Charity is the one who needs Keita’s help, however he needs her help all the same. Keita feels lost and alone in an unfamiliar country, so saving his sister to reunite with her is his only chance at finding the lost part of himself once again. Losing his parents “left a hole that never went away” and if he is to lose his sister as well, that hole would grow so immensely large that he would lose himself forever (Hill 233). His parents and family were the largest influencers in shaping Keita’s identity and now that they are gone, his only hope to regain everything that he has lost is through his sister Charity.

In *Lion,* Saroo Brierley had always felt as if there was a part of his identity he never truly understood because he did not know where he was born or where he spent the first few years of his life. For this reason, Saroo sets out to find his birth home and mother using only Google Earth and his minimal memories. Around the time he starts searching for his birthplace, Saroo has a dispute with his girlfriend, Lucy, about his recent actions and he emphasizes the importance of finding his family because she cannot “imagine the pain they must be in not knowing where [he is]” (Lion 01:15:46). Saroo is not only referring to his family’s emotions towards his disappearance, but is also referencing how he feels on the inside. He is overwhelmed with both pain and guilt for not knowing his origins and because he lives a life of luxury in Australia while they live in poverty in India. Because of this, Saroo is conflicted when it comes to his identity. He was raised as an Australian with all the privileges of a first world country, however a part of him knows that he will never fully accept who he is unless he accepts his Indian roots and finds where he came from. After relentlessly searching on Google Earth, Saroo is successful in locating his home village. He proceeds to present his discovery to his adoptive mother with caution because he “did not want [her] to feel that [he] was ungrateful,” however she is nothing but loving and supportive towards him, since she knows that finding his birth mother is important for him in accepting who he is as a person(Lion 01:38:07). In the end, Saroo’s identity is influenced by two families; the one who raised him in Australia and the one he lost all those years ago.

In the article “Lost and found, one identity,” Karen Sawyer was led to believe, by her grandfather, that she is of aboriginal descent and that he is an aboriginal chief. Her grandfather loved to tell her stories of their aboriginal identity and she embraced these stories with open arms; at such a young age she did not know any better therefore she, “was very proud of [her] aboriginal heritage” (Sawyer 1). It was not until she was older, that her parents informed her that her grandfather had lied to her in all of his stories and that they were not in fact aboriginal. Being presented with a fact such as this is detrimental to a child who has already come to accept their identity and place in the world. After learning the truth, there was a part of Karen that still believed that what her grandfather had told her was true, she “felt it in [her] bones” that there was some small percentage of aboriginal descent inside of her (Sawyer 1). It was not until she was an adult with kids of her own that she took a DNA test that revealed the truth. She was a third generation Métis and was once again filled with the pride she once felt towards her aboriginal identity. Even though her grandfather lied to her when she was a child, he was by far the main influencer and the reason she accepts and identifies her aboriginal heritage with open arms, pride and joy.

The character Loki, in the *Marvel Cinematic Universe*, struggles with his identity throughout the entire series. Loki’s character is interesting in that one can never classify him as either a hero or a villain, since he displays traits of both. His seamless change between good and evil is directly related to his identity and his internal conflict in accepting his family. In his first cinematic appearance, it is revealed that Loki is not in fact the son of Odin, but instead the son of Asgard’s sworn enemy, the Frost Giant King Laufey. After learning the truth of his heritage, Loki berates Odin about keeping him from the truth, even though he did it out of love. Learning that he is not the prince of Asgard, but instead, “the monster who parents tell their children about at night,” causes Loki to spiral and become the villain (Thor 00:41:30). Everything evil he does is a way to enact revenge on his family because he feels betrayed and conflicted since everything, he thought about himself, was a lie. After failing on multiple occasions with his evil acts, Loki begins to realize that his family accepts him albeit his birth family. It becomes evident that Loki begins to reaccept his Asgardian identity as he starts acting like a hero once again. However, only at his death does he fully accept his identity as he solemnly states that he is the “Prince of Asgard…Odinson,” which brings his character full circle on the hero spectrum, allowing his character to meet his demise with dignity (Infinity War 00:07:50). Loki’s actions and character development, within the movies, show that his identity changed along with his thoughts towards his family, proving that his family was his identity’s main influencer.

Family is an important aspect of every person’s life and they play a key role in influencing the identity of every individual. The role that everyone’s family plays is also vital in shaping the person that they become later on in life. For Keita, Saroo, Karen, and Loki, they all eventually came to accept their identities each in their own way; however, every one of them ultimately knew that their family had played a role in helping them find themselves. Family plays a major role in every person’s life and without them, one loses a valuable aspect of not only their life, but also their identity.

Works Cited

* Hill, Lawrence. *The Illegal*. Harper Perennial, 2017.
* *Lion*. Directed by Garth Davis. Performances by Dev Patel, Nicole Kidman, and Saroo Brierley. The Weinstein Company, 2016. (this is not done correctly. It should be Davis, Garth, director. *Lion*. Weinstein Company, 2016.)
* Sawyer, Karen. “Lost and found, one identity.” *Globe & Mail* [Toronto, Canada], 1 Aug. 2012, p. L8. *Canada In Context,* <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/A298220192/CIC?u=43riss&sid=CIC&xid=fd4b887b>. Accessed 24 Apr. 2019
* *Thor*. Directed by Kenneth Branagh. Performances by Chris Hemsworth, Natalie Portman, and Tom Hiddleston. Marvel Studios, 2011. (This is also not done correctly- should begin with director, always!!)
* *Avengers*: *Infinity War*. Directed by Anthony Russo, Joe Russo. Performances by Robert Downey Jr., Josh Brolin, and Chris Hemsworth. Marvel Studios, 2018. (Also incorrect)

Writing Rubric

Name:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 2-2.5 | 3-3.5 | 4-4.5 | 5-5.5 | 6 |
| Depth of Discussion   * Arguments * Supporting Details * Insight into the topic | No understanding of the question.  Thesis is not stated.  No support of your arguments. | Understanding of question is not clear.  Thesis may not be stated but it is present in the writing sample.  Struggle to support your arguments. | Good understanding of the question.  Thesis could be stronger and your references are good but needs to support your argument a bit more. | Clear understanding of the question.  Effective argument and clear stated thesis  Argument could be clearer in writing sample. | Outstanding understanding of the question and thesis is well supported.  Effective argument or level of insight. |
| Writing   * Flow (Sentences make sense) * Paragraph Construction * Style | Lack of organization and no flow.  Points do not support your overall.  Clarity is not clear in the sample. | Organization is present, but do not directly help the flow of ideas.  Points need to elaborate and better support your overall argument.  Clarity is not clear in the sample. | Writing is organized and straightforward.  Paragraphs have errors in them but are not to distracting.  Points could be clearer in the writing sample. | Writing style is good.  All the paragraphs and sentences work well in the writing sample but there are some errors.  Clarity is clear but could be improved. | Effective writing style.  All the paragraphs and sentences work well in the writing sample.  Clarity is quite clear |
| Grammar   * Sentence Structure * Grammar | Tons of errors and grammar mistakes that distract the reader. | Lots of errors and grammar mistakes that distract the reader. | Some errors and grammar mistake but does not distract the reader to much in the writing sample. | Few errors and grammar mistake but does not distract the reader to much in the writing sample. | Error Free  Limited grammar mistakes. |
| Language   * Word Usage | Language is weak. | Language is very basic | Good use of language | Strong use of language. | Clear use of a sophisticated language. |

**6 /6 marks**

**Observations in the paper:**

**Excellent arguments in your essay. Other than a few word choice issues in your sentences, this is an excellent research paper.**