

29.2.2016

The handout:

Questionnaire

Time.

Future reading.

Now:

Divide into groups.

Let them talk for up to 15 minutes – a) spontaneously

a n d

b) collecting topics for large-scale discussion.

If you run out, you could look at the thoughts contained in the reviews I have excerpted and see how you feel about it.

Talking about 'Versions of Us' – 29.2.2016

general brilliance?

1..... called to me from the bookshop shelf..... and **it met my expectations.**

2. the **standalone brilliance** ... is more than simply a story of romance and tantalising what ifs, providing a frank dissection of human foibles and the often complex mechanics of our relationships.

3. Roads not taken and lives unlived can make for great fiction....Natural flow....Barnett weaves the myriad strains of her characters' lives into **a cohesive and compelling whole.**

.....
Structure/TECHNIQUE. – Objectively

5. **insubstantial?** It really comprises **three short novels**, which each attempt to capture lives in around 150 pages, **so events are often skimmed.** She – BBC interview – thinks of it like plaiting.

6. ...It's a daring structure could easily have turned into a clunky exercise in creative writing but Barnett manages to **keep all her plates spinning nicely.** ...At first it felt too much like hard work but once you let go of that straining after what was said and who was who in each version's instalment it becomes thoroughly engrossing.

She says in an interview:

The initial idea for The Versions of Us came to me one morning, more or less fully formed. ... Two, it seemed to me, would have felt insubstantial, and four or more would have run the risk of becoming too unwieldy.I wrote them concurrently, b u t she did write a broadsheet first and later, too.(I wrote out a summary of each storyline before I started,)

TECHNIQUE. – Subjectively

4... Much of the appeal of the book comes in **working out which story matches one's own.**
are you a version one, two or three person? ...

.....
Other topics: Narrative technique?

SYMBOLS: /Motifs eg The whole concept is beautifully illustrated by Jim's eponymous triptych

Paintings and drawings,

choosing a path

other metaphors – rough with the smooth

I am most drawn to realism in literature (not wanting the characters to move too far apart)

(but she says in BBC i) that she is romantic, believes in soul-mate.

Social climate influences choice. – how choice and options have changed during C20 esp for women

What did you get out of it? What are we looking for? We DID have a good read, I think?

Symbolism

motifs

language

Does the novel show promise?

She says But my husband and I met by chance. Do you feel this might be a first novel that doesn't have a second to follow? Says in BBC interview that whole idea came soon after her marriage.

Choosing of a partner = very important.

Which version do you like best? (cf. Quotation 4 - Technique)

Who is the main character/your favourite character?

(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02tknkx> Laura Barnett open book bbc)

(<http://www.foyles.co.uk/laura-barnett> Laura Barnett Foyles Interview)