

Alibr essay

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Belonging Essay: “ Sometimes it is hard to balance belonging to a group with keeping one’s own individual identity. ” How has your study of the prescribed text and two texts of your own choosing either supported or conflicted with this idea? An essential element of belonging is one’s identity as it provides an understanding of the group to which one belongs. However, it is often difficult to retain one’s individuality while belonging to a particular community.

This difficulty is evident in Sara Gavron’s film “ Brick Lane” and Shaun Tan’s “ Stick Figures” (Tales From Outer Suburbia), where both composer’s highlight the loss of individuality as a result of group conformation. In contrast, William Shakespeare’s play “ As You Like It” demonstrates the converse as it highlights that it is possible to balance belonging to group while keeping one’s unique identity. As a result, by comparing the exploration of all three composers, a responder can enhance their understanding of the influences that affect one’s sense of belonging and identity.

As one becomes part of a group an understanding of their own unique identity can often be enriched. This is evident in William Shakespeare’s play “ As You like It” through Orlando, whose development of a sense of familial belonging empowers his own self-understanding. This is evident through the contrast between Orlando’s initial dejected state and final sense of status. This is evident through Orlando’s early despondence in the play in “ in this world I fill up a place, which may be better supplied when I have made it empty. The impersonal tone associated with ‘ a place’ alludes to Orlando’s own feeling of alienation and isolation as a result of a lack of connection with

others. This is reinforced through the hollow connotations of ‘empty’ which accentuate Orlando’s lack of understanding of himself. However, this is contrasted with the conclusion of the play, as Orlando develops his sense of familial belonging with his brother Oliver. This sense of empowerment is evident in “you have my consent” where Orlando’s dominance is evidence through his approval of his brother’s wishes.

This emphasises his enhanced status and identity, solely a result of his sense of belonging. As a result it can be seen that it is Orlando’s belonging to a group that nourishes his sense of identity. Antithetically, when a responder considers Sara Gavron’s film “Brick Lane” the converse of Shakespeare’s exploration becomes prominent. This is evident when considering the character of Karim, a London-born Pakistani man.

As a result of Karim’s cultural and religious heritage, he experiences a sense of alienation from the wider community as evident in “Go home Paki!” The derogatory term of ‘Paki’ compounded with the incensed tone created through the exclamation, Gavron demonstrates Karim’s social alienation. It is this isolation that yields his identity as evident in “this is my home.” The blunt nature of Karim’s statement highlights his resoluteness and confidence with his own unique multicultural self.

Despite this, Karim’s identity begins to waver as he becomes part of a Muslim group that fights for understanding. This is evident through the contrast in costuming used by Gavron. Initially, she characterises Karim in a combination of western and Pakistani clothes, but as he joins the group, these western elements begin to disappear. This results in Karim conforming

to the dress code of the other group members, implying the loss of his own unique identity as a result of his belonging.

Hence, Gavron, unlike Shakespeare emphasises that one's sense of identity can be lost through their connection with a group. In certain situations it is often difficult to retain a sense of unique identity while being part of a group. This is elucidated in Shaun Tan's "Stick Figures" where the Stick Figures are shown to be alienated from their homeland due to industrialization. Tan emphasises that by belonging to this group of isolated individuals, a person can lose their sense of identity in "faceless clod." The