

External forces essay

[Life, Relationships](#)



To what extent is an individual's sense of belonging determined by external forces.

Support your response by close reference to how ideas about belonging are represented in your prescribed text and at least one other related text of your own choosing. To a large extent external forces will influence an individual's sense of belonging, however to a small extent internal forces also have an impact. This is reflected in the prescribed text "The Simple Gift" by Steven Herrick and the related texts, "Minority" by Green-day, and "Happy Feet" by George Miller. All these texts demonstrate both negative and positive experiences of belonging through the use of various methods and factors.

External factors affecting an individual's sense of belonging may include, people, society and the environment they are brought up in. However an individual may choose to not belong anywhere due to factors within themselves. Steven Herrick's "The Simple Gift" communicates external forces influencing an individual's sense of belonging. He does this through the characters needs of belonging to society not being met.

One of Herrick's main characters that undergo this is Billy. As we meet this character, we learn that he has come from a less positive experience of belonging which has caused him to become detached from family, and society. Billy is seen as having a bad relationship with his father in this verse novel. His childhood was destroyed and had a big impact on his sense of belonging. The poem "Men" conveys his negative attitude towards his father

and this is seen in the line “ There are men like Ernie and then there are men like my dad”.

Another poem “ Sport” reveals the actions of his abusive father as he writes from his perspective, “ Gave me on hard backhander”. In having a terrible relationship with his father, through acts of kindness from various characters such as Ernie and Irene, Billy feels he is more able to reach out and form relationships with others. Billy forms a close friendship with the old hobo who lives in the carriage next to him. The poem “ The Kid” Old Bill writes from his perspective that “ Billy deserves more than an old carriage and spending his days trying to keep an old hobo from too much drinking. ” In doing this Herrick has presented conveyed to the reader that Billy is gradually finding a sense of belonging through different external forces.

Another external force that has disallowed Billy to gain a sense of belonging has come from society. Billy’s negative approach towards society is reflected in the poem “ Lord of the Lounge”, Billy finds peace and segregate’s himself from society on the lounge in the library. Billy’s choice of a story about “ kids/ stranded on a deserted island” seems to reflect his own situation and the challenges which it presents. “ You can’t trust those who want to break the rules and certainly can’t trust those who make the rules”, in doing this Billy has expressed how he is on nobody’s side, either that of the rule makers or the rule breakers. His lounge in the Bendarat library becomes his own deserted island. The song “ Minority” by Green-Day links with Billy’s segregation of society, and is presented in the line “ I don’t need your

authority” in contrast with Billy not wanting to follow the rules of authority, being an individual and also wanting to be an independent.

The film “ Happy Feet” by George Miller explores the notion of belonging through bad experiences with family. As Billy is detached from his abusive father, Mumble is having trouble trying to find acceptance with his because of his dancing, indicating both Mumble and Billy are going through the darkness held in the song “ Minority”. This then proves that external forces such as family and society do have a large extent in influencing a person’s sense of belonging. The small extent of internal factors is depicted in the song “ Minority” by Green-Day the individual reflects his unenthusiastic attitude towards society and tells us that in order for you to find your sense of belonging; you must go through some darkness.

Green-Day has juxtaposed the “ I pledge allegiance to the underworld” with the “ I pledge allegiance” of loyalty to America. They also employ emotive words such as “ dark”, “ alone”, “ mold” and “ underworld” creating a harsh and daunting atmosphere. In the path of revealing the lives of these characters, Herrick portrays society’s attitudes and beliefs and the ways in which young people, in particular, deal with these issues as they move from environments such as home and school out into the world.

From experiencing one’s original home and associations raises the issue of the importance of belonging and how that is going to be tested and achieved.