

Interpersonal relationship and billy

[Life](#), [Relationships](#)



English (Belonging) Blind Side Essay “ Committing yourself is a way of finding out who you are. A man finds his identity by identifying. A man's identity is not best thought of as the way in which he is separated from his fellows but the way in which he is united with them. ”- Robert Terwilliger. This idea is represented in the core text of *The Simple Gift* and related text of *The Blind Side* which further reveal that belonging is the understanding and acceptance of an individual which makes them feel included.

It is through their relationships with people and places combined with their experiences that help transform their own ‘ identity’. Steven Herrick’s novel *The Simple Gift* (SG) is a verse poem written from three various perspectives of Billy, Old Bill and Caitlin. The text was first published in 2000 and is set in contemporary Australia, in a fictional town of Bendarat. It follows the protagonist Billy and his longing to find his place in life to feel accepted, but it is not until the experiences of belonging with individuals is formed that his identity is shaped.

The novel’s structure is non-linear as it involves flashbacks over the course of the story to reflect back on the character’s past. The novel’s first poem *Champagne* written from Billy’s perspective, expresses the catalyst behind Billy leaving home, this being his abusive father. Billy refers to his dad as an “ old bastard” as he steals his “ champagne and cigarettes”. Billy’s use of a negative tone clearly defines the anger towards his father and their non-existent relationship. The technique of irony is used throughout this poem as it is titled “ champagne”.

Champagne is usually symbolic of celebrating an occasion. This represents an idea that Billy is “ celebrating” leaving home. Billy does not have a

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relationship with his father, therefore has no consecutiveness with the community in Longlands Road. These reasons influence his decision to leave home in search of the new 'Billy'. The Blind Side shows that when those around an individual are of a welcoming nature, close relationships can be formed. The 2009 film *The Blind Side* (TBS) written and directed by John Lee Hancock is a contemporary American film.

The film has a circular structure which shows the transition of Michael Oher, an uneducated teenager with an impoverished upbringing, searching for a better life. The narrative device of his adoption by the wealthy Tuohy family is the catalyst for his initial sense of belonging. In a series of visual rather than dialogue driven scenes Leigh Anne Tuohy and her family give Michael experiences a diverse group of social circumstances which positively change his life as he becomes a star football player, accepted into the Mississippi University and metaphorically accepted in life.

These experiences bring about Michael's new identity. The opening sequence of TBS opens us to Michael's old world as the flashback technique is used. The combination of frame shots exposes us to his hometown, and why he wants to leave this deprived, rundown area. The scene shows a sad, lost and depressed boy walking towards the camera with no direction. The use © (2012) All Rights Reserved 1 of 2 For more info, go to www.hscintheholidays.com.au of a long shot shows Michael's surroundings, as we connect to his life. It shows that Michael is an 'outsider'.

Through this sequence we also see a train travelling away from the town. This train is symbolic of Michael; moving and escaping his life, in an attempt for a new one. Both the poem *Champagne* and the opening scene of TBS <https://assignbuster.com/interpersonal-relationship-and-billy/>

show in a similar way both personas' reasons for leaving their hometown. The lack of relationships both characters have with those around has a negative impact on who they are. This is the reason for them leaving. In comparison to Michael's hometown, Billy describes his area as "rundown and beat" on pg 4 of Longlands Road.

Although we cannot see Billy's hometown, we perceive that it would appear quite similar to Michael's. The idea of not belonging is evident in each text at this stage as no close relationships have been formed which has a large impact on one's identity. The poem The Hobo Hour on page 48 of SG is the start of Billy's relationship with Old Bill. Old Bill is described by Billy as "an old man with long grey hair and a beard..." he is seen as a stereotypical 'hobo'. In the poem Herrick uses the symbol of hands for the idea of 'giving'.

Billy "hands across" the cigarettes stolen from his father and gives them to Old Bill despite not knowing him. This giving is seen as a simple gift. The line "burns brightly then fades to old smoke" is used by Herrick as it is a metaphor for Old Bill's life. These simple acts of kindness show the developing relationship between Billy and Old Bill. This poem The Hobo Hour relates to the thanksgiving scene in TBS. The scene in TBS shows the Tuohy family eating their thanksgiving meal together.

The film technique of a close-up is used to show Michael's emotions over the shared meal as he shows a sign of happiness. Both texts are alike as they show that in giving a simple gift a close relationship can be formed. The final poem of SG is the ending of Billy's search for belonging. The poem is from Billy's perspective and titled The Hobo Sky. Throughout the poem, Herrick has used the technique of lists as Billy explains in detail exactly what he is

doing, examples include: “ I cleaned the bowls” “ I watched until he was out of sight” “ I looked up”.

These quotes include the use of repetition of the word “ I” which puts emphasis on Billy’s new identity as he clearly has a sense of self by the use of the “ I” pronoun. The use of Herrick using the words “ deep blue sky that Old Bill and I shared” suggests that Billy’s new life has been a shared experience with close relationships between various characters. In the scene where Michael begins university, you are able to see how the tight positioning of both the Tuohy’s and Michael is symbolic of their close relationships.

When Leigh Anne is told “ you’re changing that boy’s life” she replies by saying “ no he’s changing mine”. Like Billy, all of Michael’s shared experiences have gotten him to where he is today. Both Billy and Michael have found a family. Each person’s close and personal relationships have come from others experiences. Both *The Simple Gift* and *The Blind Side* show that close, personal relationships come from shared experiences and it is through this process that one’s sense of identity is formed, creating the deepest form of belonging. © (2012) All Rights Reserved 2 of 2 For more info, go to www.hscintheholidays.com.au