

A sense of belonging  
is an instinctive  
human need in all of  
us essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Finding a place to belong is an integral element of developing one's identity, sense of self, and enriching relationships, which is therefore critical to all of us. To belong is to fit in or to be accepted into a particular group or environment. In order to belong similarities and connections must be felt within that group.

The play 'Rainbow's End' by Jane Harrison, the novel 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' by John Boyne and the film 'Little Miss Sunshine' directed by both Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris all embody the concept of belonging. This is illustrated through the relationship between one's self and a particular place and one's family. Stereotypically the family unit comprises of parents (a mother and a father) and children. This idealised concept is challenged in various texts particularly in 'Rainbow's End' and 'Little Miss Sunshine'. The concept of family and its importance in a sense of belonging is central to the momentum of all three of my texts.

In 'Rainbow's End' the Dear family consists of only female relatives, which challenges the idea of a 'traditional family'. Regardless of the lack of male present within the house or within the action of play, Harrison makes reference to 'Papa Dear'. These references provide the audience with an insight to the effect these members have on all of the Dear women. These references also illustrate that no matter how far away a family member may be they still belong: "GLADY'S: Papa Dear will be here soon. I hope that you, Regina, will be as lucky as I am. Papa Dear.

.. He's the best father a girl could ever ask for. " This quotation indicates Gladys and Papa Dear's close connection regardless of their time spent apart.

The ' Hoover' family in ' Little Miss Sunshine' is portrayed as dysfunctional. The ' Hoover' house consists a desperate dad, and his foul-mouthed father, a ' pro-honesty' mum and her suicidal brother, olive a seven year old would be beauty queen and Dwayne a child from a previous marriage who has committed to a vow of silence. Throughout the film the composers have created situations which highlight the lack of belonging between family members, and have used camera shots and angles as their principal technique to illustrate belonging and not belonging.

The establishing sequence of ' Little Miss Sunshine' starts with a close up of Olive's eyes watching a state beauty pageant on television. This shot was intentionally used by the composers to highlight Olive's yearning to belong to a world that she is not a part of. Olive's family all support her . The ways they try to help her tell us much about the story of who they are, and reveal who they are to one another and themselves. Dwayne however doesn't support Olive until towards the end of film. Throughout the duration of the film Dwayne is portrayed as isolated from his family. This is evident in the long shot showing dwayne in the foreground and his family in the background. Even though a sense of family is present throughout the film, he feels disconnected from them.

The quotation " I hate everyone" and " Welcome to Hell" also aid the communication of his lack of belonging. During the play ' Rainbow's End' we

are introduced to Errol , he is the urban, white perspective throughout the play. The audience is about the gain insight into's Errol's character and sense of belonging to a family when he says: " ERROL: No you're not.

.. I like hearing about your life.

Your family... It's different from mine. My dad expects me to call him sir. "

The lack of belonging in Errol's family is conveyed through this quotation.

Due to Errol's deficiency of a family sense of belonging he is determined to mind it with Dolly: " ERROL: Dolly, I've got something to say. I want you to come away with me. " " DOLLY: away? " " ERROL: Yes. To the city . We can get married....

" This exchange highlights Errol's need to belong as he feels disconnected from his family. In the novel ' The Boy in the striped Pyjamas' a more traditional family is portrayed, consisting of a father, who is a commandant at a concentration camp, a mother, and two children , Bruno and Gretel. Even though they are a more traditional family, the lack of connection between members is ever present. The novel is told in third person narrative style through the perspective of Bruno, with snippets of others opinions occasionally mentioned. This perspective is therefore skewed due to his age.

As Bruno grows older he is included more into the family affairs but is still unaware of the harshness his father inflicts on the Jewish people on the other side of the fence. This is evident in the quotation " There aren't any good soldiers. " repeated Shmuel.

“ Except Father” repeated Bruno. Which emphasises not only Bruno’s respect for his father but his naivety and innocences. A sanctuary is a place of refuge or safeness, a place you feel you belong to and that belongs to you. All three of my texts focus on a kind of sanctuary for the characters. The humpy and the river are a place of safeness for the Dear women, the VW bus brings the ‘ Hoover’ family together and the home in Berlin for Bruno represents this security. ‘ Little Miss Sunshine’ is about a family determined to get their youngest member to a beauty pageant in California. Panoramic shots are used throughout the film ‘ Little Miss Sunshine’.

These shots consists of a landscape in the far background and the family pushing their VW bus in the mid ground. The family is forced to move the bus together due to a broken clutch. These shots illustrate the families connection towards the bus, and that they all work together to get back on the road again. Land is an essential aspect of Aboriginal culture, as the dreaming is inextricably linked to the land. The Dear family in ‘ Rainbow’s End’ live in the flats of the Goulburn River in Victoria. They live in a ‘ humpy’ which is a place of familiarity and belonging. The audience gains as insight to the importance of the hump from the very beginning of the play as it opens with the cleaning of the hump after a flood.

Dolly’s connection to the humpy is evident when Errol asked Dolly to leave the hump with him. “ DOLLY: But... A real home? A real home is where there are people looking out for each other.

[Beat] Do they do that in your home, in your family, Errol? ” When the Dear family is moved to the ‘ Rumbalara House’ their sense of family connection

and well being is jeopardised. The rent collector that visits the ' Rumbalara House' Symbolises the constant authority of the white society. Bruno has a strong connection with his home in Berlin.

He feels secure in his home as this is where he grew up. The house for Bruno symbolises his old life, including his " three best friends for life". The repetition of the phrase " My three best friends for life" highlights the importance of his friends, but also the lack of connection to anything in ' Out-with'. When Bruno meets Shmuel his desire to go back to Berlin fades . All three of my texts explore a sense of belong, and how it is essential to the development of self identity.

Belonging is a universal need which encompasses both similarities and connections. If a ' need' is something that we cannot live without, then a human being needs to feel a sense of belonging at some point in their life.