

The concept of belonging – strictly ballroom

Literature



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In our modern society, the concept of belonging and acceptance is a major aspect. Belonging is a fundamental human need and when we lack this and experience alienation, boundaries and limits are out on our human experiences. Most stories and films represent belonging or alienation in one form or another. *Strictly Ballroom*, directed by Baz Luhrmann and the 'Ugly Duckling', a short story by Hans Christian Anderson, are both representations of acceptance and disconnection through various film and language techniques.

In *Strictly Ballroom* represents belonging using a variety of techniques to distinguish between the world of artifice and the more realistic world. The image of the artificial world, shown as the ballroom world, is glitzy and colorful. Luhrmann has presented this world as having power, whereas the character of Fran, shown in plain clothes and reading glasses, is initially shown as powerless, because she does not belong to the ballroom world. When central characters Scott and Liz run into Fran, barely acknowledging her existence, the audience can understand how insignificant she is in their world.

Luhrman portrays Fran and her Spanish family as not being 'on the right side of the tracks.' He displays this by literally showing a train going past her house. Fran and her Spanish family of immigrants are portrayed in a dark and gloomy manner in contrast to the glamour and glow of the pleasant ballroom world. This effect sets an image of Fran's family being detached and not fitting in. However, as the story progresses and Scott familiarizes himself with the family, he discovers that they are passionate dancers and is welcomed into their world.

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Compared to the unfortuneta fran who is yet to be accepted into the world of ballroom, even after a whole two years of passionate hard work spent in the begginers class. This use of juxtaposition by luhrman, displays how fran does not belong. He does this by the contrast of scott being accepted in comparison to fran being rejected. Another example is the usage of a close up of frans plain and simple face which is an immediate follow up of liz's face with stylish hair and over the top make up on. These two comparisons enthuse how fran doesn't fit in and emphasise her alienation from the world of ballroom.