

Belonging in gran torino and as you like it essay sample

[Family](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Gran Torino follows the story of Walt Kowalski, a widowed, unhappy Korean War veteran. Originally racist towards his new Hmong neighbours, he soon discovers that he has more in common with them than he expected.

Walt's connections to others are developed through a growing understanding of the shared values between him and his neighbours, such as respect for elders. Walt shares little affection and values with his own family; as portrayed when his grandchildren are not even dressed appropriately for his wife's funeral. Gran Torino suggests that kinship does not necessarily define someone's ability to belong.

The visual narrative is shown from the perspective of Walt. At the beginning of the film he is shown as viewing the Hmong people from high angles as he feels they are inferior to him. As the film proceeds and Walt builds connections with them, he is portrayed as viewing them from a neutral angle as he considers them equals.

We understand the growing sense of belonging primarily through Walt's character and dialogue. His strained interpersonal interactions reveal his inadequacies. He initially grunts at his own grandchildren. He is not a likable character at the start. The change is foreshadowed as Walt reads to his dog, "...Daisy. This year you have to make a choice between two life paths. Second chances come your way..."

His character's belonging and identity develops to such an extent that by the end of the film he sacrifices himself in a nearly Christ-like manner in order to ensure the safety of his neighbours. In Gran Torino, Walt and the Hmong

neighbours are different by race and age. This was at first a barrier but as Walt gets over his prejudice, the race and age gaps are overcome.

In *As You Like It*, the main characters have differences in place, class and kinship. Kinship barriers are overcome as Celia leaves her father for the close friendship with Rosalind. Class barriers are overcome as Touchstone marries Audrey. Place barriers are overcome as Duke Senior has connections with the land in Forest of Arden even though he originally belonged to the court.

Even though *As You Like It* and *Gran Torino* have different barriers, they both overcome some of these barriers in the journey to belong. Race in *Gran Torino* and class in *As You Like It* are of similar importance and are overcome in the end. *Gran Torino* suggests that kinship does not necessarily define someone's ability to belong, also seen in *As You Like It*.

Even though people may be different in culture, class or age, if interests and/or values are shared, a relationship can be formed.