

Analyze the belonging essay

Life



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Belonging Essay The concept of belonging is essential in our lives as it brings about acceptance and connection to a person, group or place. Migrants often experience alienation and exclusion before experiencing acceptance and belonging into the new society. Peter skrzynecki portrays migration as a painful, soul searching experience, re forging a sense of personal and cultural identity which is evident in Migrant hostel. On the contrary Peter displays a perspective where the family feels stability and security at their address 10 Mary Street.

The journey to belong often proves to be a great burden; the lack of social stability generates a sense of loss and insecurity leaving migrants struggling to adjust to their new cultural environment. This is established in the first stanza of Migrant hostel through the choice of words such as “ sudden/wondering”, which illustrates uncertainty and doubtfulness of what is occurring around them, therefore living erratic and uncertain lives.

The idea of not being in control of their lives is further emphasized in the first stanza with the use of the simile “ we lived like birds of passage”, this creates a image of migratory birds and represents how the migrants are at a point of transition in reality. Peter creates a picture of confinement and imprisonment via the symbol of a barrier “ A barrier at the main gate”, represents obstacles to their dream of belonging and exclusion from mainstream Australia.

The Migrants are shown as being powerless and their lives have been marked by disorientation, “ unaware of the season/whose track we would follow”, highlights the whole migrant communities uncertainty as “ we” is inclusive of all migrants and shows that all migrants experience similar

hardship. The irony of the concluding lines “ that had only begun or were dying”, accentuates the burden of uncertainty in their lives instead of surviving in their new homeland and experience a new sense of belonging their lives remain in limbo.

However, people eventually experience belonging which is evident in 10 Mary Street as it is a stark contrast to Migrant hostel as there is insecurity while there is a feeling of security in 10 Mary Street due to the family’s long term connection to their home and Australia itself. The repetition of “ nineteen years” reinforces how long term residency establishes a place of belonging. Peter also repeats ‘ eight years” in St Patrick’s as Peter is pointing out how peoples sense of belonging is strengthened over a long period of time.

Furthermore, the simile “ like a well-oiled lock”, symbolizes security and highlights how the family is experiencing security at their family home. The poem also highlights how the family’s strong affinity with the garden represents settlement and permanency in Australia. The simile like “ adopted children” emphasizes the parent’s great care and love for their garden and symbolizes their belonging to their new homeland. The act of Peter ravaging the garden represents how the garden provides the family with food and sustenance.

The garden is a representation of their new homeland as Australia also provides them with work, opportunity and a good life. The house is described as part of the family through the personification “ the house stands” this portrays the house as another member of the family as it shows belonging and relation to the house. The metaphor “ Inheritors of a key that’ll open no

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house”, highlights the poets appreciation of his family and their home, the experience is cherished however when the house is pulled down, he believes he will never be able to experience such warmth when he moves on in life.

In conclusion, it is evident that a person will establish a connection with a place or person with time, however will go through hardships and feelings of unfamiliarity before finding security and belonging to their new homeland. Migrant hostel emphasizes how life’s adversities can hamper peoples sense of belonging, while 10 Mary Street portrays how people adapt to their new homeland to become “ citizens of the soil” and experience stability and security.