

Practice Essay for the Half Yearly Examination  
By Thomas Lee

Relationships and experiences shape an individual's sense of belonging.

To what extent do the texts that you have studied support this idea?

In your response, refer to your TWO prescribed texts and ONE text of your own choosing.

A sense of belonging is a sense of connection or bond to a place, people, community or larger world. An individual's sense of belonging may be shaped by relationships and experiences as they seek to replace insecurity with a greater sense of belonging. Through the texts, 'Rabbit Proof Fence', by Phillip Noyce, 'China Coin' by Allan Ballie and 'District Nine' by Neill Blomkamp, an individual's sense of belonging is effectively conveyed and shows how their relationships and experiences shape their sense of belonging.

In Noyce's film, 'Rabbit Proof Fence' by Phillip Noyce, a sense of belonging is conveyed through the character's family relationship and their strong sense of connection to the Aboriginal culture. The movie is depicting Molly, Daisy, and Gracie's removal from their family, homeland and Aboriginal community to Moore River Native Settlement. At the time the film was set the Australian Government operated under the Assimilation policy which gave power to remove half caste children from their family, homeland and Aboriginal culture. In the removal scene, the three girls are forcefully taken away from their family, homeland and culture, the director effectively highlights their strong sense of belonging to the Aboriginal culture, through the use of motif. The repeated images of hands pressed against the windows of the car remind the viewers of Aboriginal art and reinforces the girls' link to their Aboriginal culture. The symbolic nature of their hands against the windows suggests that the hands are a connection, bond and a link between them and their Aboriginal heritage. The first person perspective of the three girls in the car, gazing at Maud and grandmother pressing their hands against the windows and mourning, enable the responders to sympathise and understand their desperate hope to not be taken from their family, culture and homeland. Responders vicariously experience the trauma that the three girls and their mother experience and realise that these girls do belong to Jigalong and to the Aboriginal community.

Phillip Noyce also conveys the girls' strong sense of connection to their family through and in the film. The girls are removed to the Moore River Settlement and they meet Nina, who is appeared as a chief of the dormitory. When the girls hear babies crying, Molly asks "Where are there mothers?" Nina then replies "They got no mothers. Nobody here got any mothers." Molly denies this and states that she does have a mother saying "I got mother." Molly's clear and strong declaration shows her personal belonging to her family and her firm belief that she will be reunite with her family. Noyce, furthermore, emphasises the girls' connection to their family in the scene when they find the fence, run to it and grip it. The camera cuts to the girls and Maud's hands holding the fence. The director, using the fence as a metaphorical link between Maud and the girls, highlights their unbreakable family bond. The non-diegetic sound of up-lifting and optimistic music enriches responders' understanding

Comment [u1]: delete

Comment [u2]: film

Comment [u3]: delete

Comment [u4]: situation as they are taken...

Comment [u5]: good strong thesis in this paragraph 😊

Comment [u6]: delete: as they settle into the routines at Moore river Native settlement

Comment [u7]: description of scene too long:

Comment [u8]: just saying "personal belonging" appears a bit clinical/impersonal. Maybe try "strong connections to her family, culture and her homeland

Comment [u9]: connection to family, aboriginal culture and their homeland when they are elated to find the rabbit proof fence. They hold onto it as if it is a link/connection to home

of such a strong connection between them. Through the effective theatrical and sound techniques, the director allows the responders to understand the girls' relationship with their family.

**Comment [u10]:** ??

**Comment [u11]:** Reinforces the understanding that these girls are aboriginal and belong with their family, culture, community and homeland

**Comment [u12]:** The China Coin

To contrast, Allan Ballie's 'China Coin', through an individual's relationships and experiences, convey shift in a sense of belonging to the culture, homeland and family. Leah and Joan travel to China to re-establish the connection between the lost families. In the beginning of the novel, the author clearly shows Leah's lack of belonging to China and its culture. It can be seen from the very beginning of the novel when Leah says, 'Here I am about to be sold into slavery ... I have been kidnapped ...' Allan Ballie, using internal monologue and negative connotation, allows the readers to understand Leah's sense of not belonging to China. The negative connotation of 'kidnapped' and 'sold into slavery' emphasises Leah's negative attitudes towards China. The barrier between Leah and China is further shown when she says to Joan, "... she wasn't going home. She was just ducking into a strange and probably hostile country." The author's use of the word "home" implies the sense of connection; however, Leah denies that China is her home. The use of descriptive vocabularies such as "strange" and "hostile" highlights Leah's sense of alienation. Leah's lack of understanding and acceptance of China is very strongly expressed when she says to Joan, "It's *your* rotten China!" Allan Ballie's use of second person narrator depicts that she does not accept herself as a Chinese, which breaks the relationship between her and Joan.

**Comment [u13]:** As Leah arrives in China for the first time and thinks: "quote"

**Comment [u14]:** I'd like to see this word appear in the topic sentence for this paragraph

However, Leah's attitudes towards China and connection between her and Joan changes through various experiences in China. Leah and Joan find Good Field Village and Leah says "As the sunset expanded, family ate small paddy fish, salted pork and rice under the plum tree..." The beauty and pleasant of nature clearly influenced on her attitude towards China. The author's use of dialogue and very descriptive language allows the readers to be able to understand the change in Leah's attitudes towards China, as the readers can easily visualise the scene of beautiful and peaceful nature and lifestyle of the Good Field Village. Leah starts to engage with Chinese culture and accept it, as her relationship with people in China improves. When Jade offers meal to Leah and Joan and says "We are sorry for the poor meal", Leah replies "It is lovely. Great!" Leah's great acceptance of what Jade has offered is depicted, as she is now engaging with the Chinese culture and gaining a new sight about herself. It clearly shows that the barrier between Leah and China is breaking down gradually. In the end of the novel, the shift in Leah's sense of belonging to China and her family in China are distinctly conveyed when she says "... but this is *my* family now!" Through Allan Ballie's use of first person perspective and italic word, the readers can sympathise with Leah that she is truly accepting her family in China and recognising her Chinese identity.

**Comment [u15]:** I think this is the narrative voice, not Leah...

**Comment [u16]:** Explanation of the quote is too long... and the quote isn't dialogue

**Comment [u17]:** Awkward phrasing: try "indicates"

**Comment [u18]:** Don't use this... too ordinary!! Try something like: Leah's sense of belong has **modified over time** through her improved **relationship** with her mother and her **acceptance** of her Chinese heritage (remember our Belonging BUZZ words)