

"An individual's interactions with others and the world around them can enrich or limit their experience of belonging.."

An individual's relationship with the world, shaped by experiences of acceptance or alienation contribute to the development of identity, and this can either enrich or limit one's experiences of belonging. This complex relationship of identity and acceptance supports the notion that in choosing not to belong, identity can also be strengthened. This further emphasises that divergent worldviews and values are positive in the development of who we are, drawing us closer to true identity. Shakespeare's pastoral comedy *'As You Like It'*, explores the relationship between identity and experiences of belonging through the impact of displacement, social expectations and divergent worldviews, consequently dividing the characters within the play. Similarly, Sujata Bhatt's poem *'Search for My Tongue'* reveals how identity is intrinsic to belonging through its use of language and culture as an internal and external barrier to belonging, either enriching or limiting their ability to belong. Ultimately, both texts explore the inextricable relationship between identity and belonging shaped by an individual's interactions with others and the world around them, revealing the powerful role of place in determining whether one's true identity can flourish, and thus whether their experiences of belonging are enriched or limited.

In Shakespeare's *'As You Like It'*, connection to place is secondary to identity, which in the end determines the ability of one's true identity and experiences of belonging to be enriched or limited. This is conveyed through the characterisation of Rosalind who must uphold the values and expectations of Shakespeare's Elizabethan context under Duke Frederick's "rough and envious dispossession". Rosalind, whose innate identity is strong and pragmatic, is restricted from revealing these characteristics in court, and instead must conform to socially constructed gender expectations where qualities such as being submissive and dutiful are paramount. Thus it can be inferred that as identity is intrinsic to belonging, developed through one's interactions with the world, Rosalind's experience of true acceptance is limited. Contrastingly, it is in the curative Forest of Arden, "free from peril" where Rosalind is able to surpass societal limitations. The Forest of "liberty" is Rosalind's panacea to true identity, and holds connotations of growth and development, enabling her to re-connect with her inherent identity. Amongst this transition in setting, Rosalind is still restricted from displaying her physical identity, having to disguise herself as a man, 'Ganymede'. Yet, it is through this disguise that she is ironically able to be her true self, willingly compromising her identity in order to liberate herself from gender oppression within the Court. Through interaction with the forest, Rosalind is able to overthrow her disguise, "you are my daughter Rosalind", symbolising that alienation from her innate identity is a stepping stone to an enriched experience of belonging. Ultimately, Rosalind's experiences of belonging are greatly impacted upon place as an external factor which can both limit and enrich her sense of belonging.

While most people search for somewhere to belong, others reject the notion of belonging, preferring solitude and self-sufficiency. Despite living in the Forest of Arden, a natural setting used as a dramatic device for re-evaluation and likened to the biblical Garden of Eden, Jacques chooses not to belong to anyone but himself. Choosing not to belong or conform is justified through his cynicism of mankind, explored in his soliloquy, 'Seven Ages of Man'. The extended metaphor "all the world's a stage, and men and women are merely players" illuminates his worldview of the superficiality of humanity and as a result true belonging is impossible and irrelevant. The people on earth as "merely

players" allude to the "painted pomp" of the court, and explains Jaque's decision to have limited interaction with others. This is developed when he proclaims that in death, people are "sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything", symbolising the impermanence of belonging, as in the end we are without anything. As the stock malcontent of the play, Jaque's pessimistic worldview contributes to his self-exclusion, ultimately enhancing the divergence of his world view and values in contrast to others. However, with Jaque's clear cut understanding of humanity, he is able to develop his own identity and hence enrich his experience of belonging.

Our cultural heritage, especially our mother language, is static and remains a part of our lives and our identity. It ultimately defines who we are and can either enrich or limit ones experience of belonging. Sujata Bhatt's poem, "Search for My Tongue", explores the intrinsic connection between identity and belonging by uncovering the poet's psychological challenge of being contested by two languages, Gujarati and English, internal and external barriers to belonging. Having moved to a "foreign" place, the poet now has "two tongues" in her mouth, "foreign tongue" and "mother tongue". The "tongue" motif repeated through the poem, symbolises the poets dual identity which alters from weak and fragile to strong towards the end of the poem. The two tongues cannot be used together, symbolising the significant power of culture and place in either limiting or enriching ones level of contentment. The diction of "rot" in "mother tongue would rot" holds connotations of death and deterioration of original language, something which gives her identity, security and purpose, ultimately affecting her ability to belong. The speakers incorporation of phonetic language in the middle of the poem, challenges the reader with a foreign language in order to build empathy. She is forcing readers to connect with her emotional state which brings her isolation and displacement in this "foreign" place.

Furthermore, "Search for My Tongue" develops the notion that shifting from a place that is known and familiar to a place that is foreign can result in the development and growth of identity, similar to the curative Forest of Arden in 'As you Like it'. When Gujarati language is translated to English, the last stanza signifies a stronger, more developed sense of identity. Antithetical ideas are introduced when "rot" is contrasted with "grow", symbolising re-growth and re-connection to true identity. The speaker explains that whilst she dreams her mother tongue "grows back", "Longer, moist" and pushes the foreign tongue aside. The metaphor "blossoms out of her mouth" is a symbol of the positivity of growth which ultimately brings her close to her true identity and culture, thus enriching her experience of belonging, similar to Rosalind's interactions within the forest. Sujata Bhatt explores how identity is intrinsic to belonging through the use of language and culture as an internal and external barrier to belonging, which both limits and in the end enriches her experience of belonging.

Ultimately, 'As You Like It' and 'Search for My Tongue' work together to provide detailed insight into the complex relationship between identity and belonging, exploring how each impacts upon the other in positive and negative ways. Through their exploration of alienation and acceptance (shaped by interactions with the world) both texts champion the notion of the importance of true identity in enriching ones experiences of belonging. However, "Search For my Tongue", is more effective as it offers a modern perspective on belonging, more relatable to twenty first century audiences.

FEEDBACK FOR ESSAY – BELONGING (AYLI) BY [REDACTED]

MARK: 13/15

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Hi [REDACTED]

A very well written Belonging essay that you should be very happy with.

To make this a 15/15 essay we would need to see greater synthesis between your prescribed and related text. You have done it a little in paragraph 4, but we really need to see more to maximise your marks. Remember that your related text is there to support your arguments that you make regarding your prescribed text, so rather than devoting a whole paragraph on your related try to weave it in to your AYLI paragraphs. We love to see intertextual links; characters that have similar experiences and world views.

Your line of argument is very strong and conceptually, you have done an excellent job.

You will find detailed feedback for each paragraph below. Make a few tweaks and re-structure so that each paragraph deals with both texts and this will be a 20/20 essay.

Best of luck in your HSC!

DETAILED FEEDBACK:

Good opening lines of intro.

You refer to 'true identity' – perhaps try to refine this a little.

Your final sentence in the introduction is a little long and wordy – attempt to break this down (concept is good).

Attempt to make your opening topic sentence of paragraph 1 a generic statement and then link in your text.

Excellent analysis of AYLI.

The final sentence in P1 isn't clear; "experiences of belonging are greatly impacted upon place" – are you trying to say her experiences of belonging are influenced by her connection to place?

Your opening of Paragraph 2 is very good – try to make your opening of P1 like this.

Your analysis of Jacque is very strong – would benefit from links to related text.

Paragraph 3 topic sentence – rather than specifically focus on cultural heritage, could you make it about past experiences and how these can influence ones sense of identity?

Good analysis of poetic techniques.

Topic sentence of P4 – again try to make generic. I.e. When an individual shifts from one place to another they are confronted with the need to develop a stronger identity to understand themselves and the new world around them. This is seen in both 'Search for my tongue' and 'As you like it'...

Provide example of Rosalind adapting in her new environment.

Final sentence adapt to deal with both texts.

Conclusion is very good until the final sentence. You are not asked to provide an opinion on which text is more effective – don't fall in to this trap that we see a lot of students do. Instead of this, try to bring it back to the audience – how do these themes challenge the audience in unique ways?

Avoid using the brackets in your conclusion – they are not needed.