

ENGLISH: *AS YOU LIKE IT*

The challenge to belong may be resisted or embraced.

How is this explored in your prescribed text and ONE other related text of your own choosing?

The fundamental human desire of establishing connections to people or places can be testing which will result in individuals opting to resist or embrace such a challenge. One's response to such a situation is powerfully influenced by their interaction with the world around them, or their desire to establish affiliations with others. This aspect of belonging is prominent within both Shakespeare's comedy *As You Like It* (Globe Theatre Production 2009) as well as Peter Jackson's filmic thriller *The Lovely Bones* (DreamWorks Production 2009).

Many composers explore the idea that the removal of one's connection to a specific place, from which they derived a sense of identity and comfort, inhibits the development of equivalent associations to other places, creating a sense of resistance. This is clearly exemplified within Shakespeare's *As You like It*, originally designed to entertain his Noble and Commoner audience, through Touchstone's displacement from the Court in the pastoral setting of the Forest of Arden. Touchstone's black "motley" costuming with gold embellishments clearly defines him as a product of the court and visually symbolises his resistance to acquaint himself with Arden. His costuming sharply contrasts to the natural setting of Arden, as depicted by the use of props with harmonious hues such as pastel greens. Touchstone's maintenance of verse and iambic pentameter, "In respect that it is in the fields it pleaseth me well, but in respect that it is not in the court it is tedious" is juxtaposed to the verse and simplistic language of Corin, characterised as the stereotypical countryman influenced by the pastoral romance of Shakespeare's context, as seen by "I am a true labourer; the greatest of my pride is to see my ewes graze..." The positioning of Touchstone physically distanced from Corin with standoffish body language, as seen by his folded arms and turned back, further communicates his rejection of Arden and the individuals in it. Despite the Forest of Arden being presented as the idealistic biblical Garden of Eden, Touchstone chooses to repel such an environment due to his connections to the "perilous court". This positions responder's to empathise with Touchstone due to his intense association with the Court, resulting in his inability to connect to Arden.

Peter Jackson's *The Lovely Bones*, brings to life a story appropriate to a more technological advanced audience through film that similarly explores an individual's inability to connect to their new environment. Dynamic protagonist, Susie Salmon, had her association to earth forcibly removed, alienating her from her family, community and home. Through the use of a first person voice over narration, we are exposed to Susie's personal thoughts as "life is leaving her" which communicates her rejection of her new environment, the "in-between" world, as seen by the repetition of her emotive dialogue, "I desperately looking to go back... I have to go home..." Such dialogue is accompanied by a montage of family shots, portraying her family home as a positive source of association through its warm, natural lighting and mise-en-scene of family portraits depicting Susie with her laughing siblings. Such a setting that nourishes one's happiness, similar to Touchstone's Court, is juxtaposed to the "in-between" world which, through the use of pathetic fallacy, symbolises Susie's dissatisfaction within an environment by constant rainfall, artificial lighting and drifting mist. As Susie's earthly world is portrayed as a place of happiness, responders are positioned to feel sympathetic for Susie's forcible removal from such an environment, and empathise with her inability to connect to the "in-between" world. Composers of both *As You Like It* and *The Lovely Bones* engage in a unanimous discourse, revealing to responders that once a connection to place has been established, it is the foundation of an individual's sense of belonging and results in discontentment when removed.

For humans, it is an integral part of our nature to have relationships with others that are positive and conjure happiness. When these associations are tested, it presents one with an opportunity to

create alternative affinities, and results in the individual embracing such a challenge to belong with others. This notion is explored within *As You Like It* through the strengthening relation of Rosalind and Celia at the loss of Duke Senior's. In Act 1, scene 2 responders are introduced to the strength of Rosalind and her father's relationship, through her heartbreak at his "banishment", symbolised by her blue costuming and her positioning off-centre on stage, symbolising her emotional imbalance. Despite the strain of such a relationship, Rosalind chooses, in turn, to strengthen her association with Celia from which she derives a sense of happiness and companionship. Through the character's positioning centre stage physically touching, responder's grow aware of the relationship they share and perceive it as being stronger than "the natural bond of sisters". The tone of dialogue used by Rosalind when addressing her "sister" is indicative of her embracement of such an association, as demonstrated through her eager and up-beat verse that playfully humours her "sweet coz" as seen by "Fortune too hard for nature, when Fortune makes Nature's natural the cutter-off of Nature's wit". The strength of such a familial relationship is contrasted to that of Oliver and Orlando's hostile affinity, which enhances the responder's insight into the happiness that results when one chooses to embrace the challenge to belong with others.

Similarly, the removal of Buckley's association to Susie within the *Lovely Bones* results the strengthening of his relationship with his Grandmother Lynn, similar to Rosalind and Celia, who subverts the stereotypical "grandmother" façade, as a "hard-line drinker". Responder's are first introduced to the strength of their relationship through a low shot that slowly pans up to reveal Buckley and his Grandmother playing in the overflowing soap suds. The combination of diegetic laughter as well as ambient lighting demonstrates the happiness such a relationship derives for both Buckley and Lynn. The symbolism of the characters costuming, vibrant oranges and greens, furthers such an idea, and creates a contrast to the darker colours that had formerly characterised the Salmon family. The use of a jump-cut, alternating from low angle to an aerial shot, alters the pace of the movie, creating a sense of excitement and is supported by the non-diegetic music of the Hollies. The physical closeness of the characters as seen by them dancing and hugging in the suds further indicates Buckley's embracement of such an association.

Thus, it through the works of composers Shakespeare and Jackson that audiences throughout time, have and continue to gain an insight into the challenging nature of belonging, and become aware of the choice one has to resist or embrace such a testing situation to belong to place or with people.