

# The china coin by allan baillie



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

No individual can live without belonging. A sense of belonging to a place, people, or culture is greatly influenced by each individual's identity and relationships. 'The China Coin' by Allan Baillie, the poems Feliks Skrzynecki and Postcard featured in 'Immigrant Chronicle' composed by Peter Skrzynecki and the magazine article 'My Life as an Immigrant' composed by Dzung To, all demonstrate how identity and relationships form a person's sense of belonging.

By using various language techniques such as \* Internal monologue \* First person \* Symbolism \* Personification \* Humour \* Visual image he composers are able to convey this idea on belonging to us. In the China Coin, the main protagonist Leah is Eurasian girl born in Australia. She travels to China with her mother after her father dies of cancer, in search of the other half of an ancient coin sent to Joan after her father's death. Leah feels no sense of belonging in China when she first arrives there. Her identity and relationship towards the place and culture is negative as she says, "I hate China I hate it." This internal monologue enables the reader to understand Leah's lack of any sense of identity and therefore sense of belonging to the country.

Furthermore Leah feels uneasy because her appearance is different to the people in China and she says, 'I am a giant'. This example of internal monologue conveys to the audience that she doesn't belong to China. By also using a metaphor with negative connotation, 'giant' the composer helps us understand her personal feelings. Additionally Leah doesn't feel a sense of belonging with people living in China, and this is shown in the internal

monologue ‘ few young women looking curiously at her’. The word ‘ curiously also betrays her sense of not belonging because of her appearance.

Furthermore, Joan finds her family but Leah is estranged from her mother and her mother’s side of the family ‘ They were all the family Leah had, but she wasn’t involved in that. Not really. Let Joan find her family. She was going for her Dad. ’ Narrative, short sentences used to convey the audience how she doesn’t belong with her own mother. Moreover, symbolism is used in the novel. the old ancient halved coin as a Leah’s identity, the coin meets the other halve of the coin to represent that Leah, accepted her heritage, China, and the relationships with her mother coming together as real family.

Similarly, Feliks is symbolically portrayed as Peter’s only connection with his Polish heritage. As their relationship withers however, the poet begins to deviate away from his heritage and assimilates into Australian society. This is revealed in the poem ‘ Feliks Skrzynecki’ “ Watched me pegging my tents/ Further and further south of Hadrian’s Wall. ” The historical allusion to “ Hadrian’s Wall” acts as a metaphor for the barrier that is increasingly amplified between Feliks and his son Peter.

This presents a substantial understanding of the importance of familial relationships in the process of trying to find a sense of association both with the self and furthermore with the wider community. The impacts of belonging on the individual vary depending on the experiences they encounter which in turn shape their preconceived notions of belonging. In the poem, ‘ Feliks Skrzynecki’, the poet indulges in adoring the state his father is in while juxtaposing it with his own sense of isolation.

Feliks's unpretentious understanding of belonging is largely due to the challenging experiences he has faced throughout his life; he has now found a place where he truly belongs. The positive aspects achieved from this sense of belonging are highlighted through the use of imagery where Feliks is represented in a harmonious atmosphere by the accumulation of positive images: " My father sits out the evening/ With his dog, smoking,/ Watching stars and street lights come on" creating a sense of comfort and tranquillity.