

Adv english peter skrzynecki essay sample



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How has your understanding of the concept of belonging been shaped by the representation of relationships and events that you have encountered in the texts you have studied for the Area of Study: Belonging?

Belonging requires an individual to build a connection with another person or group over time, these connections are often developed through shared experience and understanding. Peter Skrzynecki's poems; "Feliks Skrzynecki" (1975) and "Migrant Hostel" (1975) offer various perspectives and representations on this concept. Ernest Hemingway's short story "A clean well lighted place" (1926) and the picture "Berlin Wall" by unknown (1973) compliment these perspectives and representations further.

A lack of shared events and time hinders the ability for relationships to form and therefore for a sense of belonging to form with it. "Feliks Skrzynecki" offers the responder an insight into the world of a Polish immigrant, Skrzynecki's father and the experiences and events that have developed his relationships and hence sense of belonging. Skrzynecki, the narrator describes his father's interactions with his friends as they discuss their time in Poland, an experience Skrzynecki never had. This creates a barrier in which he cannot belong as "that formal address I never got used. Talking they reminisced" emphasising that because he did not partake in this event he cannot form the same relationship and hence not belong. Hemingway's short story tells the reader about two waiters in a café one young and one old and their different perspectives on a lonely customer who stays all night. The younger waiter hasn't shared the experiences the man has "he's lonely. I'm not lonely. I have a wife to go home to" the use of personal pronoun accentuates the differences between the two. Because the man doesn't have

a family they don't understand each other and can't form an understanding relationship. This lack of family evokes a longing for a place to belonging, explaining why the man stays at the café all hours, this acts as a barrier to building a relationship, due to lack of understanding and experience, similar to Skrzynecki in "Feliks Skrzynski".

The younger waiter believes he has "no regard for those who have to work." On the contrary the older waiter also doesn't belong to a family and attempts to explain "he stays up because he likes it" "it's clean and well lighted" the light acting as a metaphorical parallel to the comfort the café offers in his otherwise dark life. Seeing as the older waiter understands him he does his best to make the customer feel he belongs and build a relationship with him. He realises that not everyone shares the same perspective realising "it's not only a question of youth" but in this case a question of lack of relationships allowing sympathy and explaining his actions. "Migrant Hostel", gives the responder a perspective of the plight of migrants and the trouble they face in building relationships due to the events in their past and the lack of understanding in the world around them.

The metaphor of the "barrier at the main gate... Pointed in reprimand or shame" demonstrates how their housing affects them. A person cannot belong if they feel shamed, furthermore they consider themselves "birds of passage" with constant "comings and goings." The constantly fluctuating events in their life results in an in-ability to form relationships as they have in-adequate time to form them, hindering belonging. Despite this shared "memories of hunger and hate" allowing some belonging, the alliteration emphasises the hardship of being a migrant to the responder. This concept

mirrors the protagonist's friends reminiscing in "Feliks Skrzynecki" and the older waiter and customer's loneliness in "A clean well lighted place."

Adequate time together and sharing of events can allow relationships to prosper and hence form a strong sense of belonging. "Berlin Wall" is a picture of people greeting each other through the Berlin wall. The focal point of the people hugging through the barbed wire fence demonstrates to the viewer that the shared event of living with the wall has brought them together and hence allowed their sense of belonging to Berlin to be relatively un-effected. The officer wears his uniform representing his part in the army; he stands proud, defending the wall mirroring the pillar next to him.

The experiences he has had with his comrades and relationships he forms allows him to stand proud. Similarly in "Migrant Hostel" the "nationalities sought each other out instinctively" the parallel of their actions to instincts illustrates how the need to belong is an instinct for people, similar to the people in "Berlin wall." Furthermore the shared event of migrating from their country has allowed them to develop a relationship as they "recognise accents." The need for sanction also allows them to form a relationship as seen in the metaphor of the gate "underneath or alongside it – needing it's sanction." Through their mutual displacement they belong to a group of migrants who don't belong creating a paradox, allowing them to build relationships and form a sense of belonging.

In order to belong a person must build a connection with the individuals around them through time spent together and experiencing events mutually.

If people can do this they can build a sense of belonging, if any of these factors are hindered their sense of belonging is effected also.