

The china coin



Belonging is not only being considered in term of experience, and ideas about identity, relationships, acceptance and understanding but it also deal with rejection and alienation where people feel excluded. The novel *The China Coin* by Allan Baillie, clearly explores the concept of belonging through the characterisation of Leah and her identity have been challenged by the relationships with other people, places, groups, communities and the larger world. Similarly in *Immigrant Chronicle* by Peter Skrzynecki, the composer is confused and struggle to find out about his cultural identity. These concepts also evoke on *We are going* poem by Kath Walker. It demonstrates the loss of identity and suffering the aboriginals experienced at the time of European colonization. At the beginning of the *China Coin*, we can see the relationship between Leah and her mother, Joan is really tensed. "Here I am about to be sold into slavery", "I have been kidnapped by an evil aunt".

The used of words "evil aunt" as a metaphor and "Joan" in 3rd person techniques create the negative feeling and the distance between Leah & her mother. Leah's internal monologues are allowing the readers to both analyse Leah's perspective and to be part of her mind. It is also reflecting how Leah does think of her mom and how does she feel being alienated by China. The feeling of alienation toward her mom also been highlighted when Leah return to the hotel after loss Joan in the street by protesting students and result in a huge argument. "Should have left you in Chatswood", "why didn't you I didn't ask to come! Its your rotten China".

Leah's™ involuntary to be taken there struggling to accept her Chinese heritage. By the use of dialogue, the author shows the frustration and fear of Joan toward Leah and the audience can see again a big difference from both Joan and Leah through their interaction. It reveals Leah's™ rejection about the idea of finding her long lost family.

In the immigrant chronicle, the poem by Feliks Skrzynecki indicates the disconnection and barriers between Peter and the Polish world through his father Feliks. Feliks is a man who strongly connects to Polish culture and is very clear about his culture identity of his own mind's making. He is content to build his little Polish world at home, swept its paths ten times around the world. The simile of Peter like an only child evokes a sense of dedication to his garden like father connects to an only child.

The disconnection and alienation that Peter experiences come from his father's Polish friends because of the negative connotations of "violently" hands shaking and formal addressing. The quote "Did your father ever attempt to learn English?" assumes that Feliks never wants to belong to Australian society and doesn't do any efforts even learning the language. The cultural identity struggle haunts him on how to fit both worlds. He has lost his Polish identity gradually as he said "I forgot my first Polish word". The process of education as slow movement leads him apart from his heritage rather than his decision.

The connection between both the family and the wider society makes Peter feel hard to choose. The last word "Hadrian's Wall" is a use of metaphor to emphasize the different culture identities and the relationship

between two generations. Feliks chooses to not belong, unlike him, Peter is more like an Australian than Polish.

Likewise, ??? Post Card??™ by Peter Skrzynecki depicts him as a grown man who desire to belong to Poland, his homeland, through his childhood, but lacked personal experience. He was bound by his culture and reminisced on memories he did not possess. The use of direct speech ??? A lone tree whispers ??? We will meet before you die????™ personifies Poland and suggests it is calling him home in order to understand his identity.

The ??? whispering??™ highlights the desire to visit Poland lingers in Skrzynecki??™s mind. For him to belong to Australia he must first belong to Poland by visiting it and giving in to its calling. In the similar context, Leah feels that she does not belong in China. When the airhostess said ??? Welcome home???, Leah resents it by saying that she never been to China before.

She tried to convince herself to ignore her Chinese heritage ??? your not Chinese. You don??™t even look like them?!??? she feels alienated by her own identity. As Leah engages more with the people, places and communities in China lead her to the acceptance of a new family ??? Yes, we are family. The word ??? we??? shows the close relationship between her and the entire member of Joan??™s familyat Good Field Village.

. The acceptance and understanding of Leah on her cultural identity is the results of many changes to Leah and Joan??™s relationship. Leah learns more about her mother??™s childhood and understand why she so fears of mob, the pain of losing her husband. She becomes more mature and growth

through the challenges and difficulty that she faced on the way. The fear of losing her mother makes her stronger and become more independent. She realise that being in China not only to find the other half of the coin but also about drawing closer to her mother.

Joan said ??? Yes, Leah, I wanted China to be our Paddy??™. In the poem ??? We are going??? by Kath walker also evoke the idea of rejection and alienation toward the Aboriginal people. They are ??? subdued and silent??? as white men invaded their land, and now there are only very few of the Aboriginal people left in the tribe. The Aboriginal people have been stripped of their town and their traditions and confused about how to belong as their culture and life style have been taken away from them. They feel like stranger in their own land but they are not ??? We are as strangers here now, but the white tribe are the strangers We belong here, we are the old way???. The title itself ??? We are going??? repeated at the end tell us that they came to back again and there was nothing left of the Aboriginal culture.

Everything have been change and gone, and now so were they Overall, the idea of culture identity has been success fully created in these four texts. Either find or keep one??™s culture identity is both a big challenge. The composers demonstrate how belonging can be easy through understanding and the acceptance of other??™s cultural backgrounds. Through my exploration of the concept of belonging and through studying the aforementioned texts, I have come to the conclusion that understanding, choices, culture, relationships and experience are what make it easy or hard for someone to belong.