

ENGLISH: *IMMIGRANT CHRONICLE*

“Understanding nourishes belonging, a lack of understanding prevents it.”

Each individual has a different interpretation of belonging. One’s sense of belonging is shaped by their understanding; that is, one’s lack of understanding may result in alienation. The prescribed text, *The Immigrant chronicles*, composed by Peter Skrzynecki and the related film text, *I am Sam*, directed by Jessie Nelson explore the concept of understanding and how understanding can nourish a sense of belonging. One’s understanding can be influenced by factors such as relationships and events. These texts effectively explore how these factors can affect one’s understanding and therefore, further demonstrate how an individual’s sense of belonging can be nourished through understanding.

In the poetic text, *Immigrant chronicles*, Skrzynecki highlights the concept of relationships and the importance of understanding them. This is clearly evident within the poem “*Feliks Skrzynecki*” as Skrzynecki states “Remnants of a language, I inherited unknowingly”. Through first person and high modality language, Skrzynecki reflects that he cannot comprehend the relationship he has with his father, Feliks, and the enthusiasm Feliks has for his Polish background. In some respects, Feliks and Peter continue to have a rather complicated relationship as each of them lacks an understanding in each other’s experiences. Both Feliks and Peter do not share the same cultural background. Consequently, Peter is excluded from his father’s historical past. Peter struggles as he doesn’t belong with the Polish culture nor does he categorize himself under the Australian culture. Therefore, it is clearly evident that an individual’s understanding can be influenced by relationships and can therefore affect how their sense of belonging is nourished.

Likewise, the idea of relationships and the importance in understanding them is also mirrored in the film *I am Sam*, directed by Jessie Nelson. This is effectively conveyed in the scene when a class mate of Lucy’s comments “Why does your father act like a retard.” Lucy replies “He is!” The young boy’s mean-spirited tone positions the audience to see his lack of understanding and the inability to appreciate the special bond between Sam and his daughter. Nelson utilizes a mid-shot within this scene to emphasise Lucy’s feelings of alienation because the young boy is not able to understand the relationship she has with her father. Therefore, Nelson effectively demonstrates that a sense of understanding is vital within relationships in order to nourish a sense of belonging.

The poem “*St. Patrick’s College*” effectively depicts the concept of understanding events in order to attain a sense of belonging. This is explicitly conveyed when Skrzynecki makes a comical reference to the school motto “*Luceat Lux Vestra*” (‘let your light shine’). The use of school-based jargon reveals his incomprehension of its significant meaning as he thought it “was a brand of soap” Throughout “*St. Patrick’s College*”, Skrzynecki is depicted as the individual who refuses to gain an understanding of the events that take place in his life, particularly, going to school. Consequently, Skrzynecki’s lack of understanding results in him feeling alienated. Through Skrzynecki’s effective use of literary techniques the reader is informed that a lack of understanding prevents an individual from feeling a sense of belonging while understanding nourishes it.

Similarly, the concept of events and the importance in understanding them is also demonstrated in the film, *I am Sam*. This is clearly portrayed in the scene where Lucy quotes “Daddy, did God mean for you to be like this or was it an accident” and “You’re not like other daddies” Nelson uses the techniques of narration and close-up shots of Sam and Lucy bonding in a park to emphasise and demonstrate her incomprehension and misunderstanding of the events taken place in Sam’s life, that is, being born with a disability. Through the effective use of film techniques, the director proves that understanding of events nourishes belonging while a lack of understanding prevents it.

In conclusion, both composers Skrzynecki and Nelson effectively convey the notion of belonging and how it is determined and nourished by one’s understanding. These composers also discuss the

factors that impact upon an individual's understanding; these factors consisting of relationships and events. In the text, Immigrant chronicles and in the film, I am Sam; it is illustrated that by understanding relationships and events any individual can attain a sense of belonging. These notions are demonstrated through the effective use of literary and film techniques thus allowing the audience to receive vast knowledge on how understanding nourishes belonging while a lack of understanding prevents it.