

In Skrzynecki's Old/New world poem anthology, the poet highlights the intimate relationships between individuals. Especially the relationships within his close family. Discuss.

In Peter Skrzynecki's anthology, *Old/new World: New & Selected Poems*, the poet sheds light on his intimate and personal relationships with his father and mother, Feliks Skrzynecki and Kornelia Woloszczuk. Notably, Skrzynecki holds a great deal of respect of his father and admires non-conformist attitude and stoic fortitude. Contrastingly, despite the mother's total devotion and maternal love, the speaker does not uphold this same sense of appreciation for her. Substantially, Skrzynecki and his bond with both parents begin to disintegrate overtime due to external influences of Australian culture and civility. In turn, this places his parents in a position whereby they are unable to prevent the dissipation of his Polish heritage.

Significantly, Skrzynecki emphasises his high regard for his father's individualistic nature, equanimity and contentment despite the trials and tribulations of life. Firstly, the poet espouses the idea of an affectionate relationship between father and son. This is elucidated in the poem 'Feliks Skrzynecki' through the use of the first person possessive pronoun 'my', in 'My gentle father'. This highlights that there is an apparent closeness between the filial pair. Therefore, this illuminates the fact that Skrzynecki exhibits a sense of fondness for his father. Moreover, the poet's respect for his father's unconventional attitude is illuminated as he 'only kept pace with the Joneses / Of his own mind's making - '. Through this quotation it is made apparent that Feliks is not influenced by others but instead driven by his own goals and aspirations. This notable characteristic is noted by Skrzynecki and through including this quotation he is able to express his approbation for his patriarch. Remarkably, the linguistic devices serve to reinforce this. The enjambment is representative of the predisposition of his father to genuinely not be susceptible to the expectation of others. The caesura halts the poem and fortifies the depiction of his father's unique and non-conformist nature. Furthermore, Feliks' sense of satisfaction despite adversities is innate. The speaker insinuates this as 'five years of forced labour... / Did not dull the softness of his blue eyes'. The fricative 'f' sounds intensifies the harsh conditions that he has endured. Additionally, sibilance in this quotation is representative of the gentleness, whilst the weightiness of the 'd's accentuates the inability for this kindness to be extinguished by brutal treatment. Thus, this quotation is testimony to the fact that Skrzynecki is able to recognise Feliks' love of life and humanity; generosity of spirit and compassion cannot be annihilated by savage and cruel afflictions. The speaker is unable to comprehend his father's stoicism as he claims that '(he) often wondered how he existed'. Ergo, he cannot fathom he's father's dedication and fortitude and in turn he expresses his awe and reverence for this satisfied and forbearing individual. Essentially, the poet manifests deep veneration and adoration for his patriarch who confidently bears an unorthodox and anomalous temperament.

Conversely, it is apparent that the poet does not exhibit the same amount of appreciation and approval for his matriarch. This is evident, as regardless of her devoted love for, she believes that her son's reciprocation is his forsaking of her. Evidently, in the poem 'St Patrick's College', Peter's mother, Kornelia demonstrates her maternal love for him by 'enrolling (him) at St Pat's'. By sending her son to such a prestigious school it is made evident that she simply '(wanted) only / "what was best"', this is reflective of her devotion and inclination to give her son the best education possible. Furthermore, this is stressed by the enjambment of this quotation. Her maternal love is exacerbated as she 'had never a thought / to fees and expenses'. Thus, despite her low socioeconomic status, she was willing to make sacrifices for her son out of love. Additionally, this highlights her strength and her actions that lovingly direct her son into upward mobility so that he can live a life that is more comfortable than his mothers. Essentially, the poet elucidates his mother's sacrificial choices are fuelled by her passion and affection for her son.

Remarkably, in 'Kornelia Woloszcuk', his mother feels rejected and abandoned by her son. The poet espouses this idea as she is 'dragging / the depths of a swamp / for her lost son'. Therefore, she desperately longs for her son who is distant from her. The alliteration and weightiness of the 'ds' fortifies the intensity of her yearning for him. Additionally, the greatness of and depths of her love is accentuated. Significantly, the poet reiterates her sacrificial love as she confesses that 'All is sacrificed for... children', then she regrettably adds 'children / who forget you before you are dead' Thus, the poet suggests that her son has neglected and deserted her despite her unwavering adoration and sacrifices for the sake of him. Ultimately, it is made clear that Peter doesn't not reflect the same veneration and adoration for his mother who displays an eternally great love for him.

Similar to the non-mutual maternal relationship, the idea that there is a degree of misunderstanding and an impediment that prevents Skrzynecki and his parents from sharing a relationship of reciprocal understanding and love. Significantly, the poet suggests that this chasm may be due to age, generation or cultural dissimilarities and highlights the outcomes of this. Substantially, in 'Kornelia Woloszcuk', the speaker seems to be confused and questions 'Being / her only child, / where did I go wrong - '. Ergo, the poet reveals his bewilderment in finding out his mother's true feelings. The caesura impedes the rhythmic flow of the poem and heightens his sense of perplexity. The poet insinuates that he remained unaware of her emotions and thereby suggests that he did not completely understand his mother, as she is isolated in her sentiments. Additionally, the lack of consideration that the persona displays results in 'the cave of silence/ in which/ she outwaited'. Essentially, the poet implies that his mother feels powerless and helpless and thus confines herself to silence. This mirrors the Feliks Skrzynecki's adopted sense of quietude in the poem 'Feliks Skrzynecki' as he witnesses his son's acquaintance with the Australian ways of life and living. The narrator conveys this as Skrzynecki's father simply watched; like a dumb prophet... (as his son pegged his) tents / further and further south of Hadrian's wall'. The simile used by the poet highlights that Felik's is a wise individual and thus, despite his son's adaptation to Australian culture, education and civilisation he remains silent and does not act to hinder this, as he knows that 'what will be, will be'. Notably, 'Hadrian's Wall' is symbolic of the generational gap that dissociates father and son. Remarkably, as the son becomes more accustomed to the society and customs of Australia he abandons his cultural heritage.

Ultimately, the poet scrutinises the many familial bonds between the Skrzynecki's and exposes the intricacies that pervade in this family. Significantly, Skrzynecki's veneration is for his father is revealed, the reduced amount of appreciation that is displayed for his mother and finally, the results of these intimate relationships.