

It hasn't been very much concerned with Peter's inner-journey he is growing up and becoming isolated from his father. He sees the physical journey

Feliks Skrzynecki

My gentle father
Kept pace only with the Joneses
Of his own mind's making -
Loved his garden like an only child,
Spent years walking its perimeter
From sunrise to sleep.
Alert, brisk and silent,
He swept its paths
Ten times around the world.

Hands darkened
From cement, fingers with cracks
Like the sods he broke,
I often wondered how he existed
On five or six hours' sleep each night -
Why his arms didn't fall off
From the soil he turned
And tobacco he rolled.

His Polish friends
Always shook hands [too violently]
I thought... Feliks Skrzynecki,
That formal address
I never got used to.
Talking, they reminisced
About farms where paddocks flowered
With corn and wheat,
Horses they bred, pigs
They were skilled in slaughtering
Five years of forced labour in Germany
Did not dull the softness of his blue eyes.
I never once heard
Him complain of work, the weather
Or pain. When twice
They dig cancer out of his foot,
His comment was: "but I'm alive".

Growing older, I
Remember words he taught me,
Remnants of a language
I inherited unknowingly -
The curse that damned
A crew-cut, grey-haired
Department clerk
Who asked me in dancing-bear grunts:
"Did your father ever attempt to learn English?"

This is an expression that was common in Australian society. Suggests that Feliks had settled well over he immigrated and felt no need to compete with other Australians.

play on expression "keeping up with the Joneses" - to compete with one's neighbour for wealth & success
he competed with nobody else; compared + competed with only himself.

inner-journey of Peter - did the physical journey to Australia and the new life have a negative impact on the father-son relationship?

his area - his own.

hyperbole - the tending so much to the garden - the confined space - isolated Peter

imagery of physical labor - the physical journey required to build life in Australia

hyperbole - constant work, but also relaxation

cultural isolation -> inner-journey away from familial recognition

imagery of homeland, Peter targets - effect of the physical journey

positive attitude of Feliks did not waver, even through P.O.W. camp experience; Peter wonders about his resilience has gone.

connotations of hard worker

stoic traits; endured the physical & mental strain.

remnants of culture - also familial heritage
the inner-journey is influenced, however incidentally, by the physical journey of immigration and watching his father build a life in Australia

question repeats the purpose of the journey - is the destination, and the values of the destination, worth the journey undertaken? links to immigrants at Central Station.

Continued idea of the point of departure giving reason for the physical journey (immigrants) but also being the impetus for the enriching inner-journey that takes place...

Mood of isolation:
- positive for Feliks
- negative inner-journey of Peter

Inner-journey continues... feeling less of a person than his father's inadequate.

Physical journey etc build life in Australia

pronoun defers cultural heritage to father; relating Peter...

Did his father ever feel the same isolation has him?
-> A changed perspective?
-> Peter's inner-journey continues.

On the back steps of his house,
Bordered by golden cypress,
Lawns – geraniums younger
Than both parents,
My father sits out the evening
With his dog, smoking,
Watching the stars and street lights come on,
Happy as I have never been.

positive connotations

emphasis on the simple things
contrast between father and son

At thirteen,
Stumbling over tenses in Caesar's *Gallic War*,
I forgot my first Polish word.
He repeated it so I never forgot.
After that, like a dumb prophet,
Watched me pegging my tents
Further and further south of Hadrian's Wall.

Time passing... growing up... inner-journey changes as physical world of life continues

forgetting cultural background + familial heritage

setting up life

symbol for the life that Feliks has set up, and how far from that Peter is moving

Purpose of the journey:

Following on from *Immigrants at Central Station*, which communicates the physical journey of immigration, and highlighted how the destination served as reason for the journey, this poem focuses more on the inner-journey of growing isolation that Peter experiences. Although Feliks has set up respectable life in Australia, he has managed to maintain much of his Polish heritage because he came as an adult; Peter loses this and comes to wonder how his father manages to keep such positivity about his tormented past.