Gaby Katz

Overview: “My Papa’s Waltz” by Marie Rose Napierkowski and Mary Ruby

The source describes the complicated relationship between the father and the son in the poem, revealing that Theodore Roethke’s father was very demanding of him. Even with these high standards, young Roethke still idolized his father, even with all of the abuse. The child viewed their dance as a playful time with his father, barely recognizing the unruliness of the situation. The argument the author of this source makes is how the relationship between the father and son could have been as easy going as a waltz, but it wasn’t. Instead, it was rambunctious and careless. The source does an accurate job of showing the metaphorical meaning of the relationship, revealing the deeper experience for the dance they have with each other. It shows how the son is clinging onto this father not only during the waltz, but to his father’s life, proving the boy recognizes the danger the father is in.

Forgiveness of Adult Children Toward Their Alcoholic Parents by Diana Breshears

This source describes a study used to find if adults who grew up with alcoholic parents would offer them any kind of forgiveness. The purpose of it was to study how a relationship in this kind of household may have had consequences, as well as the desire to forgive. The author makes the point of how much more negative the environment is versus nonalcoholic households, but the results of her study showed that most of the kids affected by alcoholic parents still wanted to find forgiveness for them. These children who wanted to forgive their parents either thought it was best for everyone’s interest just to forgive their parents, or that they viewed alcoholism as a disease. Those who chose not to forgive simply could not bear to revisit those emotions. The author did a good job of identifying the kinds of forgiveness there are, then placed the results in the appropriate categories to help determine what the people in the study felt. It helped give insight on the emotions children in these kinds of families have and how that can affect them in their adulthood. This relates to the poem because as Roethke writes the poem as an adult, he views his childhood differently than when he was a boy. The way he viewed himself still clinging onto an unhealthy relationship could be a result of Roethke trying to show forgiveness in a way, even with his memory.

Both sources analyze how a child is affected by an alcoholic parent, yet in different perspectives. The first source analyzed the poet himself by giving background on his childhood with his father and then analyzed each stanza of the poem and how it related to his relationship with his father. The second source analyzed adults who had to live with alcoholic parents as children and how that affected them as adults, more specifically with the feeling of forgiveness towards their parents.

Works Cited

Breshears, D. (2015). Forgiveness of adult children toward their alcoholic parents. Qualitative Research Reports in Communication, 16(1), 38-45. doi:10.1080/17459435.2015.1086419

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